

**Board of Finance  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
March 3, 2015**

**1. Call To Order:** Chairman Michael Dougherty called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**2. Roll Call:** Michael Dougherty, Ronald Cabana, Frederick Chmura, David Hosmer, Glen Lessig, George McCoy, David Fortin, David Richardson and Mark Shamber were present.

Absent: None

Others present: Allan Walker, William French, Cliff Davis, Michelle Woz, Julie Woodland, Linda and Michael Bernardi, Karen Munroe, Frank Baran, Joan Fortin and daughter, Wayne Durst, Valerie Law, Steven Smock, Megan Bard-Morse, Jeremy Serwer, and Hans Frankhouser.

**3. Seat Alternate if Necessary:** None needed.

**4. Approve Minutes from the February 10, 2015 Regular Meeting:** George McCoy, seconded by David Hosmer moved to accept the minutes of the February 10, 2015 meeting. David Fortin would like to amend the minutes to reflect that he asked what the \$93,000.00 in "all other" in the Board of Education's quarterly report was. **Motion to accept minutes as amended passed unanimously.**

**5. To consider and act on a resolution recommending an appropriation and borrowing authorization for costs related to the replacement of all or portions of the roofs of the Woodstock Elementary School and Woodstock Middle School, and related improvements and repairs, and for costs related to the financing of the projects:** George McCoy, seconded by Glen Lessig moved to accept the following resolution as written:

RESOLUTION OF BOARD OF FINANCE  
(Woodstock Elementary and Middle Schools Roof Replacement)  
March 3, 2015

RESOLVED, That the Board of Finance recommends that the Town of Woodstock appropriate \$2,789,580 for costs related to the replacement of all or portions of the roofs of the Woodstock Elementary School and Woodstock Middle School, and related improvements and repairs which may include but are not limited to rooftop mechanical equipment, gutter and drainage systems, and positive air ventilation system improvements, and for costs related to the financing of the projects; and that the Town authorize the issuance of \$2,789,580 bonds, notes and temporary notes to finance the appropriation. The School Facilities Upgrade Committee shall be authorized to determine the scope and the particulars of the projects, and to reduce or modify the scope of the projects as necessary or desirable; and the entire appropriation may be expended on the projects as so reduced or modified. The Town anticipates receiving grants from the State of Connecticut Department of Education equal to approximately 47% of cost of the projects to defray in part the appropriation.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

**6. Board of Education Budget Presentation:** Superintendent of Schools Frank Baran gave a brief overview of the Board of Education 2015-2016 budget.

The 2015-2016 budget requested is \$17,064,376.00, an increase of \$572,610 from last year's budget.

Some of the significant increases are in the following areas in non-certified and certified salaries, WA regular education tuition and tuition at VOAG, Quinebaug Middle College and Adult Education, health insurance and other benefits, technology services and equipment, legal fees, and electricity.

Areas of significant decreases are in transportation, heat, unemployment and worker's compensation, and special education tuition and services.

Dr. Baran further explained that in regards to staffing the Board of Education is looking into hiring a Math Intervention teacher at the Woodstock Elementary School to help regular education students who are struggling with math.

Glen Lessig asked Dr. Baran if the math intervention teacher was a requirement due to the Common Core curriculum. Dr Baran responded that it was not, but that Woodstock Elementary School principal Viktor Toth and the teachers felt that many students needed the benefit of extra help in Math.

The Board of Education would like to hire one more additional part-time teacher's aide for a new special education student incoming next year, and to re-instate six regular teacher aides and increase two part-time teacher's aides to two full-time positions.

The Board of Finance had many questions about the need for more teacher aides and class sizes. Michael Bernardi, chair of the Board of Education, explained that the teachers, especially in the lower grades felt the need for additional help in the classrooms. It was felt that a teacher's aide could work closely with students who may need a little extra help. At this point the average class size at the Woodstock Elementary School is in the high teen/ low twenties.

Chairman Michael Dougherty feels that this budget is way above what the tax payers of the Town of Woodstock can fund, and that much more work needs to be done to bring this budget into line.

Next Chairman of the Board of Education, Michael Bernardi, asked the Board of Finance if there were any questions or comments on the Board of Education's Five Year Capital Needs Plan.

David Hosmer commented that he was glad that many of the items on the School Facilities Upgrade list had now been moved to the Five Year Capital Needs Plan.

Ronald Cabana asked if two new buses would be purchased this year. Mr. Bernardi explained that they are trying to replace two buses every year. There are currently 23 buses in the school fleet.

David Richardson stated that there are currently 4 spare buses, which means that 30% of the buses are spares, and that the buses are running at half capacity. Michael Bernardi explained that if there were less buses on the road some students would be on the bus much longer than an hour each run. However he did assure the Board of Finance that there would be a meeting with the bus director and some of the drivers to see if any changes could be made to the bus runs.

David Fortin asked why there was a plan to add 4 classrooms at the Woodstock Elementary School in 2019-2020 if the student enrollment is declining. Michael Bernardi explained that this was put in the plan in case the State of Connecticut required full-time Kindergarten or Pre-K in the future.

David Fortin also asked about the \$274,000.00 for the possibility of expanding the parking lot, restructuring the access road for car riders, and repaving the access road to Butts Road, at the Woodstock Middle School. He feels that this is more than what was discussed at the walk thru of the schools late last year. Karen Munroe explained that the access road being discussed does not lead out to Liljegren Road, then to Butts Road, but is the road that goes behind the Hyde School Round building and out to Butts Road.

David Fortin also asked if enclosing the vestibules at the Woodstock Elementary School could be funded through a security grant. Michael Bernardi answered that the project was not eligible for a security grant.

David Richardson stated that this budget is so far above the zero increase that was requested of the Board of Education at the January 6, 2015 meeting. He is troubled that the Board of Education spent 3 months working on a budget that will not go anywhere. He feels that the Board of Education should have put together a practical budget and then made an argument for whatever else needs to be added.

Michael Bernardi reminded that Board of Finance that he told them at the January 6, 2015 meeting that there would be a \$350,000.00 increase to the Board of Education budget without adding anything to it. He does not feel that working on the budget was a waste of time. He feels that the Board of Education has a statutory responsibility to present a budget that will provide an adequate education. David Richardson disagreed and stated that the state statute said that the Board of Education budget must be practical.

Chairman Michael Dougherty said that the Board of Finance has a statutory duty to the tax payers of Woodstock to present an affordable budget. He told the Board of Education that it needs to present a budget that comes closer to a zero increase, and have arguments for why there needs to be increases.

David Fortin is also concerned that the Grand List is not growing very much each year and that the revenues from the State are decreasing each year. The tax payers of the Town of Woodstock cannot afford this budget.

## **7. Old Business:**

**A. By Laws:** Glen Lessig reported that there is very little on Board of Finance by laws on line. He suggested that perhaps Policies and Procedures would be a better term for what needs to be accomplished. He suggested that policies that have been written in the past be gathered into an easily accessible handbook. He also suggested that these policies be looked at, updated, and that some that are not valid any longer be discarded. Mr. Lessig agreed to do more research into this matter.

**B. Matching Funds Update on Camp Nahaco:** First Selectmen Allan Walker explained that the Town of Eastford does not have the funds to match the \$5,000.00 that the Town of Woodstock has set aside for repairs at Camp Nahaco. He also believes that the Town of Eastford will not be including those funds in the 2015-2016 Budget. Mr. Walker would like to hold this money aside in the undesignated fund. Mr. Dougherty reminded the Board of Finance that this money could be transferred for another use in case of an emergency with the permission of the Board of Finance.

**8. New Business:** None.

**9. Citizens Participation:** Cliff Davis, a member of the Board of Education, feels that presenting a budget as was done this evening is the best way to do it. He feels that this is the best way to outline to the Board of Finance and the tax payers what is needed for the schools.

David Richardson and David Fortin asked Cliff Davis if he were speaking for the entire Board of Education and if he felt that the joint meeting held in January was a waste of time.

Cliff Davis responded that he was only speaking for himself, and not the entire Board of Education. He does not feel like the joint meeting was a waste of time, but that sending the letter to the Board of Education and the Board of Selectmen asking for a zero increase was a waste of time.

Steven Smock understands the hard work that goes into preparing a budget, and he understands it is not going to get easier in the future. He thanks everybody for the hard work that they do.

Tax Collector Linda Bernardi reported that she has collected 97.5% of the taxes owed this year. Everything collected beyond this point will be extra revenue. However she informed the Board of Finance that there is very little old accounts left to be collected on.

**10. Correspondence and Announcements:** Chairman Dougherty announced that the Board of Education will have a Community Forum to discuss their budget on March 12, 2015, at 7:00pm.

The Board of Selectmen will be presenting the General Government budget for 2015-2016 to the Board of Finance on March 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm.

The final budget presentation will be on March 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm.

**11. Adjournment:** George McCoy, seconded by Glen Lessig, motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:25pm. **Motion passed unanimously.**