

**Board of Finance
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 10, 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 and David Richardson were all present. Absent: Mark Shamber Others: Wayne Durst, Ernest St. Jean, Allan Walker, Karen Fitzpatrick, John Navarro, Julie Woodland, Judy Walberg, Mitchell Eaffy, Chandler Paquette, Megan Bard-Morse, William French, Christine French and a WINY reporter.

3. Seat Alternate if Necessary: None needed.

4. Approve Minutes from March 03, 2015 Regular Meeting: David Hosmer, seconded by George McCoy motioned to accept the minutes. Michael Dougherty said that under Old Business, under section B the matching funds for Camp Nahaco should be \$10,000.00, and not \$5,000.00. **Motion to accept the minutes as amended passed unanimously.**

5. Board of Selectmen Budget & Capital Plan Presentation: First Selectman Allan Walker gave the Board of Finance a brief overview of the 2015-2016 General Government Budget.

The proposed budget for the Fiscal Year 2015-2016 General Government Budget is \$5,480,726.00. This is an increase of \$127,512.00 or 2.38% from last year.

Some of the increases are in the following areas: wages, GIS mapping services from NECOGG, Open Space Land Acquisition, Woodstock Emergency Medical, the town beach and the libraries. The Highway had increases in the Snow and Ice Removal Account and the Dirt Roads and Roads account. There is also an increase in hauling and disposal fees in the Transfer Station line item.

Next, Mr. Walker turned to the Five-Year Capital Plan. He stated that these are projects that they hope to be able to accomplish in the future. These programs include road projects, bridges, and new equipment for the Highway Department. Some of these projects may be partially funded through grants.

John Navarro, the Highway Foreman, explained that the cost of running the Transfer Station has started to decrease because of the new regulations for bulky loads and better policing. However, Mr. Navarro informed the Board of Finance that Willimantic Waste has not raised the hauling fees in quite a while and he is concerned that when the fees are increased the rise will be significant.

Mr. Navarro also informed the Board that the snow and ice removal line item is \$18,424.24 over in this year's budget, and will probably be closer to \$22,000.00 over by the end of the fiscal year. He has heard that the price of salt may increase to \$100.00 per ton for next year's season.

Board Member Glen Lessig complimented the Highway Department on the good job they have performed during this difficult winter season.

First Selectman Walker explained that the increase in the Open Space Land Acquisition Professional Services line item is to pay for surveys and appraisals that will be needed for future open space purchases. Mr. Walker further explained that the Open Space Land Acquisition Committee is looking at three properties for future acquisition of development rights at this time. Selectman D. Mitchell Eaffy stated that the State of Connecticut is very interested in purchasing prime agricultural property and Woodstock is one of the areas that the State has an interest in. However, he and First Selectman Walker advised the Board that the Governor is proposing to use money set aside at the State level for funding the purchase of development rights to fund the State budget.

David Fortin was informed that the \$15,000.00 in the Tree Warden's line item was for removing dangerous trees at the recommendation of the tree warden.

David Fortin stated that he was very concerned about the state of the economy. The Grand List has not increased, the housing and building market is down, and the State is decreasing money to the Towns. Both he and David Richardson feel that the Board of Selectmen should have come to this meeting with a zero-increase budget, with a list justifying other needs and wants. They both feel the guidance that was given at the joint meeting with the Board of Education and Board of Selectmen was ignored. George McCoy reminded the members that the Board of Finance "recommended" that the Boards of Selectmen and Education come in with a zero-increase budget. It did not tell the two boards that they "shall" come in with a zero-increase budget.

Selectman D. Mitchell Eaffy feels that it is the Board of Selectmen's duty to present a realistic budget, and then make the necessary cuts after they have been given firm numbers.

Michael Dougherty stated that by the March 24th meeting, the attorney will have notified the Board of Finance what increases will be allowed under Proposition 46. After that, hard work will need to be done on the budgets that were presented by the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education.

6. Old Business:

A. By Laws: Glen Lessig informed the Board that he has no new information about the By Laws, and that he will report back to the Board after the budget preparations are over.

B. Matching Funds Update on Camp Nahaco: Michael Dougherty explained to the Board of Finance that for bookkeeping purposes the Board must vote to return the money assigned to Camp Nahaco to the Capital Non-Recurring/Undesignated fund. This money can be returned to Camp Nahaco if needed at a later date. George McCoy, seconded by David Hosmer, motioned to move the Camp Nahaco funds to the Capital Non-Recurring/Undesignated fund. **Motion passed unanimously.**

7. New Business: None.

8. Citizens Participation: Megan Bard-Morse appreciated the fact that the Board of Selectmen restored the money that was cut from the Town Beach line item last year, and that the Town has increased the library budget per the libraries' request. She also asked if the Woodstock Emergency Medical line item included the ambulance. Ms. Bard-Morse was informed that it did include the ambulance.

David Fortin and David Richardson reiterated that the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education should have made cuts to the budget to bring it in at zero before their initial presentation.

Julie Woodland, as a member of the Board of Education, stated that she feels that it is not fair for a few members of the Board of Finance to expect the Board of Education and the Board of Selectmen to change the way their budgets are prepared and presented at this point in the process. Both Boards feel it is important to show the Board of Finance what staff and programs are needed to provide the Town with proper services. She feels that once the final numbers have been decided upon, then each Board is prepared to do the hard work to make necessary cuts.

David Richardson feels that significant savings could be made in the health insurance premiums. He feels that the Town's employees and the Board of Education's employees should get together on one insurance plan. David Hosmer said this has been tried in the past, and failed.

9. Correspondence and Announcements: Michael Dougherty reminded the Board that the next meeting will be held on March 24th. He also said he planned to attend the Board of Education's Community Forum about the budget on Thursday, March 12th.

10. Adjournment: David Hosmer, seconded by George McCoy made a motion to adjourn at 8:40pm. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,
Christine G. French
Assistant Town Clerk