

JOINT MEETING
GREAT BARRINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN/FINANCE COMMITTEE
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM
TOWN HALL
334 MAIN STREET, GREAT BARRINGTON, MA
APRIL 6, 2011
7:00 P.M.
PUBLIC HEARING

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

SEAN STANTON, CHAIRMAN

DEBORAH PHILLIPS, VICE CHAIRMAN

WALTER ATWOOD

STEPHEN BANNON

ALANA CHERNILA

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

THOMAS BLAUVELT, CHAIRMAN

MARK LEFENFELD

LOUIS J. STARK

ALICE REILLY

JOHN BREASTED

ALSO PRESENT: KEVIN O'DONNELL, TOWN MANAGER
LAUREN SARTORI, FINANCIAL COORDINATOR

I. Call to Order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. O'Donnell did a Power Point presentation highlighting the FY 12 Budget.

Operating budget is up 1.1%.

The Berkshire Hills Regional School District Assessment for Great Barrington of \$11,313,439 is up 3.34%.

Total Property Tax for Great Barrington is up 4.6%

The State aid has been decreased by 7%.

Fuel is increased by \$68,500.

\$50,000 was added back to the debt service when it was voted to increase the road borrowing amount back to the \$500,000 so we will be able to do \$826,000 worth of road work.

Operation per Departments:

We broke out the fuel for the various departments based on the aggregate that was accrued at the last meeting.

CIP:

Restored the \$500,000 in borrowing and will be using Chapter 90 monies as well.

WWTP has not changed. There won't be an impact on the operational budget relative to the sewer rates.

The \$30,500 for the court house upgrade was transferred for park improvements. The overall levy has been reduced by \$18 to \$20 for the average home. We have levy capacity of \$858,000. The property tax will be increased approximately \$216.80 for the average home with what the school district is proposing and the Town is proposing.

Breakdown of Capital Improvements Over 5 Years:

CIP – Approximately \$21 million. This does not include improvements to the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

\$50,000 was kept in the budget for the Engineering/Bridge Repairs/Rehab.

The Road Improvements includes the \$500,000 plus using the Chapter 90 monies.

Sewer Rate: No rate increase.

Berkshire Hills Regional School District:

Mr. Breasted spoke in regard to the letter that was sent to the school district requesting that they retain the 60/40 split in the tax levy and to reduce their budget by \$700,000.

Mr. Breasted said he thought they needed more of a notice. Ms. Phillips suggested that the school budget, budget policy and strategic planning policy be discussed at a workshop during the summer. There could also be a capital workshop in the fall once the tax rate is set.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Ms. Phillips to open the public hearing at 7:30 p.m.

SECOND: Mr. Bannon

VOTE: 5-0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Mr. Lefenfeld to open the public hearing at 7:30 p.m.

SECOND: Ms. Reilly

VOTE: 5-0

Ms. Mooney asked about the \$12,000 appropriated for advertising. Mr. O'Donnell advised that all advertising for all public notices for every department comes out of this account. The Town's official newspaper is The Berkshire Record. The schedule of events for the senior center is advertised in the Shopper's Guide. The library advertising comes out of State aid. There was a brief discussion on funding for the Senior Center and if people attend the center from other towns. It was noted that the Senior Center is a community center where everyone is welcome.

Ms. Chernila noted that there is no line item for the Agricultural Commission. She thought that \$2,000 should be included in the budget for expenses. It was noted that the commission has access to the postage meter or the advertising fund. After discussion, it was decided to add a line item but not fund it.

MOTION: Ms. Chernila to add the line item for Agricultural Commission but not fund it.

SECOND: Mr. Bannon

VOTE: 5-0

MOTION: Ms. Reilly to add the line item for Agricultural Board but not fund it.

SECOND: Mr. Lefenfeld

VOTE: 5-0

Mr. O'Donnell said that he would create a second line item called Advisory Boards and Commissions. In the future, when the budget instructions are sent out, he noted he would contact all the advisory boards and commissions saying that if they need funds request it and justify it. If funds are being requested for just advertising it can probably be absorbed in the existing fund.

Ms. Siegel spoke on the tax situation and the fact that taxes are increasing because Great Barrington subsidizes services to residents of other Towns. She also inquired if the DPW can use some type of material that would last longer so they don't have to return so often to refill potholes. Ms. Sartori noted that it is hard to cut taxes without cutting services and people don't want the Town to cut services.

Ms. Sartori explained Article 11 – authorization of the use of Pension Reserve Fund. There is 1.2 million in the Pension Trust Fund and \$450,000 in unfunded trust benefits. The Town withdraws \$100,000 with permission from the State Pension Fund (PERAC) which reduces the tax rate and offsets the retiree's health and pension costs. The Town funds the liability for retirees for unfunded benefits. \$750,000 is put away in a trust fund to fund the unfunded benefits.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Ms. Phillips to close the public hearing at 8:30 p.m.

SECOND: Mr. Bannon

VOTE: 5-0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Ms. Reilly to close the public hearing 8:30 p.m.

SECOND: Mr. Lefenfeld

VOTE: 5-0

WARRANT ARTICLES:

ARTICLE 1 – REVOLVING FUND:

- a. Plumbing Inspector (\$15,000)
- b. Wire Inspector (\$20,000)
- c. Gas Inspector (\$15,000)
- d. Town Code Printing (\$10,000)
- e. Parks Commission (\$5,000)

- f. Recycling /Green product Sales (\$5,000)
- g. Cemetery (\$5,000)

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Ms. Phillips to authorize the use of Revolving Funds which together shall not exceed the sum of Seventy Five Thousand Dollars (\$75,000.00).

SECOND: Mr. Bannon

VOTE: 5-0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Ms. Reilly to authorize the use of Revolving Funds which together shall not exceed the sum of Seventy Five Thousand Dollars (\$75,000.00).

SECOND: Mr. Stark

VOTE: 5-0

ARTICLE 2 - SETTING SELECTMEN'S SALARIES:

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Ms. Phillips to fix the salaries of all the Selectmen at \$7,500 for the period of July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012.

SECOND: Mr. Bannon

VOTE: 5-0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Ms. Reilly to fix the salaries of all the Selectmen at \$7,500 for the period of July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012.

SECOND: Mr. Stark

VOTE: 5-0

ARTICLE 3 - AUTHORIZE THE USE OF CHAPTER 90 MONIES:

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Mr. Bannon to authorize the use of Chapter 90 Monies.

SECOND: Ms. Phillips

VOTE: 5-0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Mr. Lefenfeld to authorize the use of Chapter 90 Monies.

SECOND: Mr. Breasted

VOTE: 5-0

FY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT REQUESTS:

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Ms. Phillips that the Town borrows \$1,410,000.00 for Capital Improvements.

SECOND: Mr. Bannon

VOTE: 5-0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Ms. Reilly that the Town borrows \$1,410,000.00 for Capital Improvements.

SECOND: Mr. Breasted

VOTE: 4-1

ARTICLE 5 – TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE:

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Ms. Phillips to approve the expenditure of \$1,927,000.00 for Capital.

SECOND: Mr. Bannon

VOTE: 5-0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Mr. Lefenfeld to approve the expenditure of \$1,927,000.00 for Capital.

SECOND: Mr. Breasted

VOTE: 4-1

WASTE WATER ENTERPRISE FUND CAPITAL:

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Ms. Phillips to approve the Waste Water Enterprise Fund Capital of \$305,000.00

SECOND: Mr. Bannon

VOTE: 5-0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Mr. Stark to approve the Waste Water Enterprise Fund Capital of \$305,000.00

SECOND: Mr. Lefenfeld

VOTE: 5-0

ARTICLE 6- RESCIND MONEY FOR NEW FIRE STATION:

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Ms. Chernila to rescind \$340,000 of the \$9,480,000 authorized to build the new fire station.

SECOND: Mr. Bannon

VOTE: 5-0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Mr. Stark to rescind \$340,000 of the \$9,480,000 authorized to build the new fire station.

SECOND: Mr. Breasted

VOTE: 5-0

ARTICLE 7 – BORROWING FOR FIRE TRUCK:

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Ms. Phillips to borrow \$190,000 for the purchase of a new Fire Truck.

SECOND: Mr. Atwood

VOTE: 5-0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Mr. Lefenfeld to borrow \$190,000 for the purchase of a new Fire Truck.

SECOND: Mr. Breasted

VOTE: 4-1

ARTICLE 8 – OPERATING BUDGET:

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Ms. Phillips to recommend the total Operating Budget of \$10,035,751.00.

SECOND: Mr. Bannon

VOTE: 5-0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Mr. Lefenfeld to recommend the total Operating Budget of \$10,035,751.00.

SECOND: Ms. Reilly

VOTE: 4-1

ARTICLE 9 – WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT BUDGET:

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Mr. Bannon to approve the Wastewater Treatment Plant Budget of \$1,460,994.00.

SECOND: Ms. Phillips

VOTE: 5-0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Mr. Breasted to approve the Wastewater Treatment Plant Budget of \$1,460,994.00

SECOND: Mr. Lefenfeld

VOTE: 5-0

ARTICLE 10:

BERKSHIRE HILLS REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT:

Mr. Bannon stated that he is a member of the Berkshire Hills Regional School District and according to the State Ethics Commission because the school district and the Town of Great Barrington are separate entities, he is not in conflict.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Ms. Phillips to recommend \$11,313,439.00 for Great Barrington's portion of the Berkshire Hills Regional School District Budget.

SECOND: Ms. Chernila

VOTE: 5-0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Ms. Reilly to recommend \$11,313,439.00 for Great Barrington's portion of the Berkshire Hills Regional School District Budget.

SECOND: Mr. Breasted

VOTE: 5-0

ARTICLE 11 – AUTHORIZE USE OF PENSION RESERVE FUND:

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Mr. Atwood to recommend using \$100,000 of the Pension Trust money to reduce the tax rate.

SECOND: Ms. Phillips

VOTE: 5-0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Mr. Lefenfeld to recommend using \$100,000 of the Pension Trust money to reduce the tax rate.

SECOND: Ms. Reilly

VOTE: 5-0

ARTICLE 12 – AUTHORIZE THE USE OF FREE CASH TO REDUCE THE TAX LEVY:

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Mr. Bannon to recommend using \$2,054,640.00 of Free Cash to reduce levy.

SECOND: Ms. Phillips

VOTE: 5-0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Mr. Breasted to recommend using \$2,054,640.00 of Free Cash to reduce the tax levy.

SECOND: Mr. Lefenfeld

VOTE: 5-0

ARTICLE 13 – OVERLAY TRANSFERS:

Mr. O'Donnell explained that this has no property tax impact. It is connected with the Brownfield Tax Abatement for Map 20, Lot 61 located at 100 Bridge Street, New England Log Homes, which the Town is working on with CDC. It goes back from 1992 to 2009. The Town is essentially writing the taxes off. This account is funded for taxes that are not able to be collected.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Ms. Phillips to appropriate the transfer of \$95, 528, 21.00 of the overlay funds

SECOND: Ms. Bannon

VOTE: 5-0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Ms. Reilly to appropriate the transfer of \$95, 528, 21.00 of the overlay funds.

SECOND: Mr. Lefenfeld

VOTE: 4-0-1

ARTICLE 14 – TAX INCREMENT AGREEMENT (TIF) FOR IREDALE:

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Ms. Phillips to recommend the Tax Increment (TIF) for Iredale as it applies to the former Bryant School.

SECOND: Mr. Atwood

VOTE: 5-0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Ms. Reilly to recommend the Tax Increment (TIF) for Iredale as it applies to the former Bryant School.

SECOND: Mr. Lefenfeld

VOTE: 5-0

ARTICLE 15 – ESTABLISHMENT OF MUNICIPAL LIGHTING PLANT (WIRED WEST)

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

MOTION: Ms. Phillips to recommend.

SECOND: Mr. Bannon

VOTE: 5-0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

MOTION: Mr. Lefenfeld to recommend.

SECOND: Mr. Stark

VOTE: 5-0

Article not requiring vote of Finance Committee:

Home Rule Petition: Adoption of health Care Plan outside of collective bargaining.

Mr. O'Donnell explained that in August of last year, the Board of Selectmen considered special legislation for Health Care Planning to allow the Town to take Health Care Planning outside of collective bargaining. In order to get it approved a special home rule petition had to be submitted saying unilateral changes can be made without going through collective bargaining. Benefits cannot be reduced below the Government Insurance Commission. This would give us the opportunity to modify the co-payment and a health

care plan design. He noted that Representative Pignatelli and Senator Downing are open to sponsoring the bill but it needs to be passed at Town Meeting. Mr. O' Donnell advised that no action needs to be taken at this time.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carolyn Wichmann".

Carolyn Wichmann
Secretary