

JOINT MEETING
GREAT BARRINGTON SELECTBOARD
and
GREAT BARRINGTON FINANCE COMMITTEE
GREAT BARRINGTON FIRE STATION
37 STATE ROAD
MONDAY, AUGUST 15, 2011
6:00 P.M.

PRESENT: STEPHEN BANNON
 ANDREW BLECHMAN
 ALANA CHERNILA
 DEB PHILLIPS
 SEAN STANTON
 KEVIN O'DONNELL, TOWN MANAGER

FINANCE COMMITTEE – BUD ATWOOD
 TOM BLAUVELT
 MARK LEFENFELD
 ALICE REILLY – not present
 JIM STARK

6:00 P.M. – Public Session – Fire Station

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Sean Stanton called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Approval of Joint Meeting Minutes by Finance Committee- 3/30/11 & 4/6/11.

MOTION: Mark Lefenfeld to approve minutes from the March 30, 2011 joint meeting

SECOND: Jim Stark

VOTE: 2-0-1 Jim Stark abstains

MOTION: Mark Lefenfeld to approve minutes from the April 6, 2011 joint meeting

SECOND: Jim Stark

VOTE: 2-0-1 Jim Stark abstains

The Finance Committee voted on a warrant for annual dues.

MOTION: Bud Atwood to approve warrant for annual dues

SECOND: Jim Stark

VOTE: 4-0

3. Review/ Discuss Outlying Years of Capital Improvement Program.

Kevin O'Donnell reviewed the CIP for 2013. He stated that some items are included in grants and said that there have been few changes to FY 12 CIP. He said that they factored in federal stimulus money for the Dewey School. The upgrade to Monument Mountain High School is upcoming with no exact date yet.

Stephen Bannon said that that the school has gone out to bid for a project manager, so it won't be anytime soon.

Kevin said that the Ramsdell project was put off until 2017, when there is State grant money available. He also said that the municipal bond market is very strong. The computer replacement systems are planned for 2012. Kevin is working with the Library Board to go forward with the project in January. The approximate cost for this is \$60,000 for Mason Library and \$40,000 for Ramsdell Library. Joe Sokul said that there will be repairs to the Cottage Street and Bridge Street bridges. He said this project can be postponed due to the Main Street Reconstruction project if needed. Joe Sokul said that the Vice Chair of the Fire District is aware of Town's need for equipment storage of the items that are presently stored in the old Fire Station. He has offered some options including building a minimal building on their land. They would use the current garage as a base for determining space size.

Kevin O'Donnell reviewed the FY13 draft CIP.

Eileen Mooney said that the Library Trustees were going to ask for a new furnace for the Ramsdell Library to be put on the CIP.

Joe Sokul said that the Access Barrier Removal (ABR) Project for the Ramsdell Library is planned for the future and recommends that a new furnace should be put in during that project. He said that the current furnace is operational for now.

Jim Stark asked if Joe agrees with the heating proposal. Jim said that heating pumps are another option.

Joe Sokul said that mechanical engineers looked at it and will continue to look at other options.

Diego Gutierrez said that the Library Trustees spoke about doing some upgrades without affecting the 'envelope'. He said that 4 years is awhile to wait for improvements.

Joe Sokul said that he will look at the building to see what can be done without hindering upcoming projects.

Diego also asked about money set aside for the energy committee.

Kevin O'Donnell responded that \$35,000 has been earmarked to perform audits as example.

Diego asked if this is enough.

Kevin responded that this is all he can give right now.

Alana Chernila said that it is important that, with the help of this money, the energy committee will create a plan to go along with the CIP projects. She is hoping for a dynamic process where they work hand in hand.

Kevin O'Donnell said that \$35,000 will go towards the Housatonic Task Force plan in order to move on to the next steps.

Deb Phillips said that the tax base is not growing at this point and expenses are getting higher. She said that they can't keep moving forward by "putting a finger in the dike." She said that the Board needs to find a way to keep growing the budget without continuing to borrow. She said this requires creative thinking.

Stephen Bannon said that the budget pages need to be broken down between grant and non-grant money. He said just because there is a CIP doesn't mean we are ok.

Alana Chernila said that they need to change direction and talk about cutting services.

Stephen Bannon said money should not be given to the Housatonic Task Force until there is a firm plan. He feels that it should be done without adding money to the tax rolls.

Steve spoke about the road improvements saying that Fairview Hospital is asking for some road repairs for West Avenue, which is not in good shape. He asked that West Avenue and Lewis Avenue be looked at.

Stephen Bannon recommended that they do not borrow more than 1.4 million in outlying years.

Alana Chernila said whatever project they can invest in sustainability wise would be a good idea. Alana suggested that they find a consultant to look at their budget and projects to get some other ideas and who may look at things differently.

Jim Stark agreed with this suggestion.

Kevin O'Donnell said that they will start looking at the CIP, using a target of spending levels for FY12 and will come back with a prioritized list of projects.

Bud Atwood said this has been a discussion for years and reminded everyone that they only control 40% of the budget. He recommended that the Board set a number that the school can spend and not more.

Andrew Blechman said that we can't grow our way out of this but wants to look at even modest growth.

Alana Chernila said that the CIP is what the Board has control over, not the schools. She said if they really want to see change, they should look at a scenario to reduce.

Mark Lefenfeld said looking at where they will be if they kept the budget level is a great place to start.

Deb Phillips asked if people can make donations to particular projects.

Lauren Sartori responded that donations have always been welcome but said a stabilization fund cannot be created.

Diego Gutierrez asked if there is a formal process for a person to make a donation.

Kevin O'Donnell responded that a person can make a donation with specific direction.

Kevin O'Donnell agreed to look at the budget with Lauren Sartori to see what can be done to keep the budget level and not borrow more than 1.4 million in the outlying years. He will come back with a list of priorities to show the BOS.

4. ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion by Stephen Bannon, seconded by Deb Phillips, the Board adjourned its meeting at 7:33 p.m.

On a motion by Bud Atwood, seconded by Mark Lefenfeld, the Finance Committee adjourned its meeting at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cara Becker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cara Becker
Recording Secretary