

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON
JOINT MEETING
GREAT BARRINGTON SELECTBOARD & FINANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2011
6:00 P.M. – TOWN HALL - BOARD ROOM**

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

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Tom Blauvelt – Chairman
John Breasted
Alice Reilly

Jim Stark – not present

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

II. Continued Discussion Long Term Impact for CIP

Kevin O'Donnell recapped the CIP report and said that FY12 borrowing will be \$1,410,000 and the tax levy will be \$274,000.

Police Chief Walsh stated that the 2004 Chevy Tahoe needs to be replaced; it will have 90,000 miles on it by July. He said that the Ford Crown Victoria, the front line patrol vehicle, has been on the road for one and a half years and has 88,000 miles on it. If it is used for another year, the projected mileage is 154,000 miles. He stated that they have been saving maintenance money by keeping the fleet 'fresh' and said that the problem with extending the life of the cars is dependability and reliability.

Lauren Sartori stated that there will be a new computer system installed for the police and the police laptops in the cruisers will need to be replaced as well.

Anne Just, Library Director said that staff were originally told by the State that the accessibility grant for Ramsdell Library would position us for the next building grant. The State has made a change and is allowing design grant applications to be submitted the summer of 2011 that will enable us to apply, cover 60% of the cost through the grant using State aid funding.

Kevin O'Donnell reviewed the plan to push back Ramsdell Library to 2016; Dewey School- the Town will have to take on the cost themselves, without a federal earmark; and the Main Street project does not use Town funds.

Stephen Bannon asked for a procedural change, that in the future, there be a breakdown of items into: level-funded, what amount they are asking for in grants, and borrowing amounts.

Kevin O'Donnell stated that the driving force is Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP drives expenditures.

He also said that we are property dependent, 75% of the general fund, and we need another alternative source of revenue.

Sean Stanton asked what the projected debt is in 5 years.

Lauren Sartori replied that the debt issued will be \$10 million.

Alana Chernila asked if there is any flexibility with the things that don't hit the levy, because residents can't afford any increases.

Alana Chernila asked what can be done to broaden the tax base.

Kevin O'Donnell said much of the land is not buildable so we have little hope of expanding the commercial tax base significantly.

There was discussion about the option of a split rate.

Kevin O'Donnell stated that it costs \$90,000 for street hauling of snow, trash removal, Police enforcement, Fire Department work with holiday lights downtown.

Kevin O'Donnell said that if we don't do borrowing for roads, we will be behind, but that is short term solution. We can also postpone bridge construction or take money out of the Dewey School allocation.

1. MOTION: Stephen Bannon-- to re-appropriate \$30,500 from Dewey School (Court House) to Park CIP.

SECOND: Deb Phillips

VOTE: 4-1 Bud Atwood oppose

Alice Reilly recused herself since she works for the court.

No quorum.

Stephen Bannon welcomed all to come to the school public hearing at 7:00 at the Middle School.

2.MOTION: Deb Phillips-- to write a letter to the School Committee stating the importance of maintaining the 60/40 split on the property tax levy.

SECOND: Bud Atwood

VOTE: 5-0

MOTION: Alice Reilly-- to write a letter to the School Committee stating the importance of maintaining the 60/40 split on the property tax levy.

SECOND: John Breasted

VOTE: 3-0

Kevin O'Donnell said that he will draft a letter for both chairman to sign.

Sean Stanton asked what has to be done to Ramsdell Library.

Joe Sokul replied that the furnace needs to be replaced.

Kevin O'Donnell asked if it is agreed upon that we won't do the renovation at Ramsdell Library.

Consensus was to delay the renovation.

Kevin O'Donnell recommended that the storm water project be put on hold. This is a \$605,000 project.

Alana Chernila asked what would be the cost of not doing the storm water project.

Joe Sokul said that there is very old pipe in the ground and the system is undersized, but it can be put off.

Alana Chernila asked why this project can't be added to the Main Street Reconstruction project.

Joe Sokul said that there have been conversations with the State about funding it, but at this point we will have to pay for it.

3.MOTION: Stephen Bannon to defer the storm water construction project

SECOND: Deb Phillips

VOTE: 2-2-1 Alana abstained Bud Atwood and Sean Stanton oppose

Motion Failed

4.MOTION: Bud Atwood to remain in the budget the engineering for bridge repairs for \$50,000

SECOND: Alana Chernila

VOTE: 5-0

MOTION: John Breasted to remain in the budget the engineering for bridge repairs for \$50,000

SECOND: Alice Reilly

VOTE: 3-0

5.MOTION: Bud Atwood to borrow \$500,000 for road improvements as proposed in the CIP

SECOND: Sean Stanton

VOTE: 2-3 Stephen Bannon, Alana Chernila, and Deb Phillips opposed

MOTION: Alice Reilly to **not** borrow \$500,000 for road improvements

SECOND: Tom Blauvelt

VOTE: 2-1 John Breasted opposed

6.MOTION: Bud Atwood to borrow \$65,000 for 2 new police cruisers as proposed in the CIP

SECOND: Stephen Bannon

VOTE: 4-0-1 Deb Phillips abstains

MOTION: John Breasted to borrow \$65,000 for 2 new police cruisers as proposed in the CIP

SECOND: Alice Reilly

VOTE: 2-1 Tom Blauvelt opposed

Motion Carries

Chief Jennings stated that the Fire Department has a 1988 Ford F450 (23 years old) that is under powered, the replacement parts are no longer available and the current system will not support future NFPA. It is the only vehicle that is able to carry the water rescue boat.

7. MOTION: Bud Atwood to borrow \$190,000 for a new fire vehicle as proposed in the CIP

SECOND: Deb Phillips

VOTE: 5-0

MOTION: John Breasted to borrow \$190,000 for a new fire vehicle as proposed in the CIP

SECOND: Alice Reilly

VOTE: 3-0

Wastewater Treatment : Sean Stanton asked if we can increase the rate and put it into a fund.

Lauren Sartori stated that she does that already.

Stephen Bannon said that he would like to come back and see what would happen if we increase the rate to 450 or 500 beginning in FY12.

Kevin O'Donnell said that they will run a scenario to see what the revenue will be generated for residential sanitary sewer charge at \$450, \$500, \$550, and \$600.

Deb Phillips asked if a by-law can be created to deal with the phosphate problem.

Tim Drumm replied that he will give the Board a list of rules and regulations that they can amend.

Kevin O'Donnell said that he will put this together.

Alana Chernila asked if the computer systems can be put off.

Lauren Sartori said that it is a 5 year old system that will be 6 years old when they are replaced.

At this point, they will be unusable program and system wise.

Kevin O'Donnell recommended that if they want to keep \$274,000 from hitting the levy, than he can come up with options.

III. **Adjournment-** On a motion by Stephen Bannon, seconded by Bud Atwood, the Board adjourned its meeting at 9:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Cara Becker