

April 14, 2014

The Board of Finance held a special meeting on this date at the Stonington High School commons. Members present were John O'Brien, Chairman; Glenn Frishman, Secretary; Dudley Wheeler; Bryan Bentz; Sandy Grimes and June Strunk. Also present Maryanna Stevens, Director of Finance, Selectmen, Town and SPS staff, BOE members and residents.

Mr. O'Brien called the Budget deliberation portion of the adjourned Public Hearing to order at 7:00 pm.

Budget Deliberations

Mr. Frishman stated that after the Public hearing last week he is in support of restoring funds to the BOE operating budget. He added that Mr. Wheeler has told him of several properties with liens for unpaid fire taxes. He suggested restoring funds to the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center and for the Public Works seasonal help for field maintenance.

Mr. O'Brien was in support of restoring funds to the BOE, PNC and the libraries.

Mrs. Strunk was also in support of restoring funds to the BOE, Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center and for the Public Works seasonal help for field maintenance.

Mr. Grimes was in support of restoring funds to the BOE, Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center, Public Works seasonal help for field maintenance and ambulance companies.

Mr. Bentz was in support of restoring funds to the libraries and the PNC. He wanted to restore full funding to the BOE and let the taxpayers decide. He suggested using the Fund balance for the BOE safety items from CIP budget.

Mr. Wheeler was in support of restoring funds to the BOE, Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center and for the Public Works seasonal help for field maintenance.

After discussion, the consensus was to restore \$25,000 to the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center, \$5000 to Mystic & Noank Library, \$5000 to Westerly Library, \$10,000 to the Stonington Free Library, \$1000 each to Stonington, Mystic River and Westerly Ambulance, \$25,000 to Public Works seasonal help for field maintenance.

Request from Police Chief Darren Stewart to take \$20,000 from the CIP item *Technology Upgrade/Communication Equipment Upgrade* and apply to the Police budget line *Salary of Regular Officers*.

Mr. O'Brien addressed the General Fund revenue item Magnet School transportation. The Town is reimbursed from the State, proposal to set up a separate fund already set up for State grant revenues outside of BOE operating budget thereby reducing the BOE overall budget \$65,000. This brings the cuts to the BOE to \$460,000.

Mrs. Strunk asked if the proposal was to use the Fund Balance to cover these items, Mr. Bentz stated that no he had only intended to use the Fund Balance for the BOE CIP safety items. Mr. Bentz was not comfortable using the Fund balance for the operating budget, Capital Improvement items were okay, there should be an honest balance when put to a vote. Mrs. Strunk and Mr. Grimes did not want to go over a .49 mil rate increase which would mean all restoration of funds would come from the Fund Balance.

There was a discussion as to the importance of maintaining the Reserve for emergency items.

Mr. O'Brien stated that the Town has to live within its means and raise taxes, if the budget falls than cuts will be made. Mrs. Strunk and Mr. Grimes do not want to increase the mil rate over .49. They want to use the 'rainy day fund'.

There was a discussion as to the impact after a partial restoration of funds to the BOE budget with regard to teacher positions. Superintendent Riley stated that one teaching position is approximately \$70,000. Discussed Tax Collection rate, Grand List growth.

Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Bentz, Mrs. Strunk and Mr. Frishman were in support of restoring \$270,000 to the BOE budget. Mr. Bentz still did not support using the full amount from the Fund Balance.

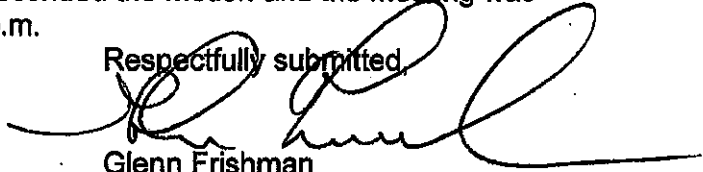
Mr. Grimes and Mrs. Strunk did not want to go over the .49 mil rate increase, taking the full restoration of \$343,000 from the Fund balance. Mr. Wheeler was not in favor of \$270,000 restoration to the BOE.

Mr. O'Brien suggested taking \$171,500 from Fund Balance and adding \$171,500 to the budget. Mrs. Stevens provided the numbers, members discussed-a .55 increase.

Motion made by Mrs. Strunk to set the mil rate at 20.43 with expenditures totaling \$58,520,662 and to forward to the Board of Selectmen to set the call for Town Meeting for the 2014-2105 budget. Seconded by Mr. O'Brien. Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Grimes were opposed.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Frishman made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Grimes seconded the motion and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Glenn Frishman', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the printed name and title.

Glenn Frishman
Secretary

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