

April 19, 2010

The Board of Finance on this date held a public hearing on the proposed budget for fiscal year 2010-2011 at 7:00 p.m. at the Stonington High School auditorium. Members present were Glenn Frishman, Chairman; Andrew Rines, Secretary; John O'Brien; Dudley Wheeler; Bryan Bentz and Sandy Grimes. Also present Maryanna Stevens, Director of Finance; Board of Education members, Town Hall staff and residents of the Town.

Mr. Frishman opened the public hearing at 7:00 p.m. He introduced the First Selectman Ed Haberek, Selectwoman Glee McAnanly Board of Education Chair Gail MacDonald, Superintendent of Schools Leanne Masterjoseph and Town and BOE staff present. Mr. Frishman stated that the budget represents the fabric of the community.

The budget presented totals \$54,760,545. General Government stands at \$22,626,173., Board of Education totals \$31,474,838., and CIP totals \$659,535. These carry a mil rate of 15.43, which is a .33 mill rate increase. In order to get to a zero increase, an additional \$1,019,371 would need to be cut from the budget. He added that the Town spent more money than it took in this past year. Health Insurance, Pension and Municipal Employee Retirement System are main cause for increase.

Mr. Frishman asked Board of Education Chair Gail MacDonald if she would like to speak regarding the Board of Education budget. Mrs. MacDonald explained the process in which everything is analyzed and scrutinized to meet all needs of students. Zero percent increases to staff salaries helped considerably, most importantly, class sizes were kept down and there was a reorganization of the Administrative staffing.

Mr. Frishman addressed the audience directing them to page 72 for any comments or questions regarding the BOE budget.

John Nickerson-Pawcatuck asked if an additional High School teaching position is still in the budget, Leanne Masterjoseph stated that yes it is, it is a split position. Mr. Nickerson asked the Board of Finance to restore the \$100,000 cut at the last meeting.

Rob Marsiglia – stated that he is in support of the BOE budget as it stands now.

Liz Hall – stated that she is a parent of a gifted student taking Mandarin for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year. She does not want to see the class cut.

Cindy Nadeau – Pawcatuck is in favor of the BOE budget and would like to see the \$100,000 restored.

Mr. Frishman directed the audience to the Town budget.

Don Maranell-Stonington asked if there was a plan if there is a significant reduction in revenue from Hartford. Mr. Haberek stated that it appears the state budget has been finalized. Mr. Frishman added that they did adopt a Fund balance policy last year in order to provide a sound financial base for present and future budgets.

Tracy Swain – Pawcatuck asked if there was a safer way to address the mosquito abatement. Mr. Haberek stated that they would be addressing this the same as previous years. The flooding could cause increased issues.

John Nickerson asked why the BOF is looking for more money than the department request under Human Resources. Mrs. Stevens explained that this represents the first year of a three-year plan to bring the pension plan up to 80% actuarial funding.

Tracy Swain stated that one year the mosquito abatement was over budget, why was that and is it over for 2009-2010. Mrs. Stevens replied that there is a set # of applications in the cost and it should not go over. Mr. Frishman added that the one year it was over budget was due to the West Nile virus.

Lou Allyn – Mystic asked if the Pawcatuck River Harbor Management Commission generates any revenues. Mr. O'Brien replied no.

Tracy Swain asked what is the status of tax collections and how have foreclosures affected this. Mrs. Stevens replied that is about the same as last year with a small decrease. Marsha Standish, Assessor replied that foreclosures are picked up and handled by the bank with no negative impact to the Town.

John Nickerson commented on the high amount of the Police Overtime line. Chief Stewart replied that the TOS is at the low end of compared to neighboring towns. This line covers unanticipated situations such as accidents, the flood, etc. He added that OT is monitored very closely.

Lou Allyn commented that he would like to see increased safety on the waterways.

Joyce Pandolfi of the Stonington Free Library mentioned that they sustained \$50,000 in damage from the flood. Please keep funding level.

Russ Partridge and John Butler – W.A.R.M. – thanked the Town for their continued support

Robert Ortiz expressed his gratitude for and spoke in support of funding for the Westerly Adult Day Services.

Fran O'Neill commented on the Stillman Ave. bridge and the disruption to the area, will there be funding for this. Mr. Haberek replied that he is looking to the Westerly DOT to take the lead on repairs. He added that the divers should get there sometime this week. Funding was submitted with the FEMA request.

Sam Cannon – Stillman Ave. stated that he could not be happier that the bridge is closed. This is not a safe area as people do not obey the stop sign and often speed through the area. Mr. Haberek suggested he speak to the Chief or Captain to increase police presence for traffic monitoring.

Rob Marsiglia stated that he lives at Aimee Dr. and while the lower section of Greenhaven was repaired, the upper spots are in bad shape. Director of Public Works Joe Bragaw stated that there are many areas in need of repair and they are addressing them as quick as possible.

Stephen Bessette thanked the Board for the MMS field repair.

Carleen Donnarummo asked if there was a Plan B if FEMA does not come through for the flood damage. Mr. Haberek replied that there should not be any problem it looks good.

Mr. Frishman stated that the Board plans to create a line for disaster mitigation.

Bill Sternberg discussed the Meadow Avenue drainage. He also asked if there was any information regarding the location of the Stonington Borough Seawalls. Don Maranell, Boro Warden stated that several areas have been completed including Wall and Diving Streets and they plan to work on Omega, Church and Cliff Streets next.

Don Maranell stated that the drainage problem at Meadow Avenue affects many other areas and believes dredging may be the best solution for the future.

Scott Bates – Borough wanted to thank all the emergency responders for their hard work during the flood and also thanked the Board of Finance for their work. He supports the budget.

Liz Hall questioned the \$200,000 for the Animal Control facility. Chief Stewart replied that the building is in dire need of repair and the funding is all LoCip money.

There being no further budget questions or comments for the Board of Finance,  
Mr. Frishman closed the hearing at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Laurie Pickett".

Recording Secretary