

March 9, 2011

The Board of Finance held a special meeting on this date at the Police Department meeting room. Members present were Glenn Frishman, Chairman; Andrew Rines, Secretary; John O'Brien; Bryan Bentz, Dudley Wheeler and Sandy Grimes. Also present Maryanna Stevens, Director of Finance; First Selectman Ed Haberek, Town staff and residents.

Mr. Frishman called the meeting to order at 7:42 p.m.

Previous minutes

Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Rines addressed some needed amendments to the Feb. 16, 2011 minutes. Mr. Wheeler made a motion to accept the corrected minutes of the Feb. 16 meeting. Mr. O'Brien seconded the motion and voting was unanimous.

Additional Appropriations/Bid Waivers

WPCA – BioMag – Mystic Treatment Plant Mr. Hal Storrs, WPCA Director and Jim Sisk, Chairman were present. Mr. Storrs explained the need for the bid waiver. Mr. Rines made a motion to approve the Bid Waiver request for BioMag – Mystic Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements- to waive the provisions of Section 9-7 pertaining to bid requirements for the purchase of a BioMag wastewater treatment process system provided by Cambridge Water Technology, CWT being a "sole source provider". Mr. Wheeler seconded the motion and voting was unanimous.

BOE – Textbook Purchase (French and Spanish) – Mr. Bill King, Operations Manager stated Vista Higher Learning was chosen after extensive research and review. They are a sole-source vendor. Mr. Rines asked about the number of students enrolled in each of the languages - Mandarin-15, French-167 and Spanish-456. Mr. Grimes questioned why the books are being purchased now. The reply was that vendors come into the schools and a committee, which consists of Teachers and Administration rates them. In addition, different publishers have different rules, these textbooks were not piloted. Mr. Bentz made a motion to approve the bid waiver for the purchase of French and Spanish textbooks from Vista Higher Learning. Mr. Rines seconded and voting was unanimous.

Correspondence

BOE – Special Revenue Account – Mrs. Gail MacDonald, BOE Chair and Ms. Leanne Masterjoseph, Superintendent of Schools spoke to the benefits of this account. Its purpose to record the revenue generated from an advertising campaign. This will raise revenues to pay for extracurricular opportunities for the students thereby reducing the burden to raise funds via taxes. Mr. Frishman agrees with Mrs. Stevens, Director of Finance that this special account is permissible. After a brief discussion regarding possible avenues for generating revenue as well as logistics Mr. O'Brien made a motion to approve the establishment of a special revenue account dedicated to raising revenues to pay for extracurricular opportunities for students. Mr. Frishman seconded the motion, along with Messrs. Rines, Wheeler and Grimes. Mr. Bentz opposed the motion.

Budget Hearings FY 11-12

Board of Education – Mrs. MacDonald introduced BOE members and school employees present. Mrs. MacDonald stated that after attending meetings in Hartford our community is fortunate compared to other Towns. She added that she believes the 2011-2012 budget presented is fiscally responsible without decimating programs. The recommended budget represents a 2.23% increase. Ms. Masterjoseph stated that there are some personnel cost reductions primarily in Special Education. Virginia Brown, Director of Special Services elaborated on the community collaborative to provide in-district support in lieu of cost outplacements. These 'Community Classrooms', Avalon Health Center, Mystic Aquarium, Mystic Chamber of Commerce and Westerly Hospital realize a cost savings in that students are not being transported to organizations such as SHARPE Training, ARC and Puffins. They stated that the children are chosen through a planning and placement process. Mr. Rines asked about the CIP increase, he was told that it does include C and D items. In response to questions from Mr. Grimes, the following was discussed: interdisciplinary staff, block scheduling. Mr. Grimes also questioned the budget transfers at the end of last fiscal year and why the sprinkler system was not taken care of then. Mr. King stated that at the time it was still under investigation because testing can only be done during the summer months while the schools are empty.

In response to a question, Judith Samokar, Finance Manager explained that in April all departments are told to freeze purchases. If funds are available in June, already allocated purchases can be made.

Items also discussed were increases to Tuition and Classroom books, reductions in foreign language enrollment and overall enrollment in the district. Mr. Wheeler asked if students were being asked in class to make signs to Vote Yes for the budget. Ms. Masterjoseph stated no, she was unaware of this.

Mr. Frishman thanked the Board of Education adding that after speaking with Senator Maynard things are not going well in Hartford.

At 8:30 p.m., Mr. Frishman called a brief recess. The meeting continued at 8:40 p.m.

Mr. Frishman called attention to the communication from the Director of Finance. Mrs. Stevens had provided for the members Revenue projections, she stated that any "revenue increases" proposed by the governor's budget were not included since OPM is unable to give a good explanation as to how they came up with the alleged increases. The hotel and sales tax increases are also not included, as the #'s do not make sense. A discussion ensued regarding the conveyance tax. Mr. O'Brien stated that he feels the Governor is doing what he said he would, Education Cost Sharing and Town Aid road.

Mr. Frishman stated that to bring the budget to a zero increase the amount to cut would be \$1,957,820. Mrs. Stevens went over the revenue projections with the members. The submitted budget has a mil rate of 16.06. Members discussed the current fund balance and where they would like to get before the Public Hearing. Messrs. Frishman, O'Brien, Rines and Bentz were ok with a .23 mil rate increase.

It was agreed that deliberations would begin next week.

Director of Finance

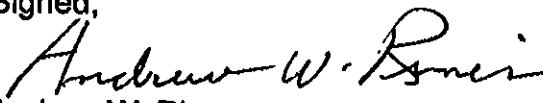
Mrs. Stevens informed the members that they met with the Department of Revenue Services again regarding the sales tax audit and got nowhere. Payment for the current charges is on the March 21st Board of Selectmen agenda and the appeal will continue.

Subcommittee reports

Nothing to report.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. O'Brien made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Grimes seconded the motion and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Signed,


Andrew W. Rines
Secretary

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