

**BOARD OF FINANCE
TOWN OFFICE BUILDING
40 OLD FARMS ROAD
WILLINGTON, CT 06279**

BUDGET MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 23, 2017

Members Present:

Jim Bulick, Chairman
John Patton, Vice Chair
Elizabeth Treiber
Robert Wiecenski
Peter Tanaka
Barry Walleth
Geoff Prusak – Alternate

Members Absent:

Annemarie Poole - Alternate

Also Present: Christina Mailhos, 1st Selectman; Kim Kowalyshyn, Selectman; John Blessington, Selectman; Dr. Jacqueline Jacoby, Superintendent; Donna Latincsics, Business Mgr; Tish Ignatowicz, Treasurer; The Willington Board of Education; Town Employees; Various Town Board Members; Members of the public

Chairman Bulick called the meeting to order at 7:01 P.M

SEATING OF ALTERNATES - not needed

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Barry Walleth **motioned** to approve the Budget meeting minutes from March 16, 2017 as presented, Elizabeth Treiber seconded. All were in favor, **motion carried**.

PRESENT TO SPEAK

1st Selectman Mailhos asked that the Board to put forward the budget (to a vote) as is. Consider zero salary increases, and there are no “wants”, only “needs”. She is concerned with the revenue based challenges. Cuts would mean decrease in services and maintenance. The Board should not be under the false assumption that a higher budget will not pass. We have great Town employees and she doesn’t want to lose any of them. She asked the Board to put the budget out there and try it.

Laurie Semprebbon, Turnpike Road, agrees with Christina. We need to provide services and keep the schools strong.

Melissa McKinnen, 15 Williams Road also voiced her concern of not known when we would be having Board of Education discussions.

Kim Kowalyszyn, Selectman, Lindsey Lane, said that we should visit fees for the transfer station and building permit fees. She also shared the mil rate of neighboring towns and said Willington was one of the lowest around. Kim recommended bringing the budget to the people to decide.

Michelle Cunningham, Vice-Chair BoE, said that they put forth a frugal budget with an increase of 1.5% and it should go to referendum.

Joe Colangelo, Jared Sparks Rd, supports changing the Rec Director's position to full time.

Debbie Linears, Eldredge Road, works for the library 50 to 70 hours a week and only gets paid for 15 hours. She would like the Town to work together. She's concerned with paying taxes and then having to pay additional fees (for library services).

Christina Bryant, Y Road, thanked the Board for the work they do. She wants the Board to trust in the Town and invest in the Town. The increase would be no surprise to anyone.

Katie Kalager-Ryan (Library Board of Directors) spoke in favor of the Library budget request.

Stephanie Summers, Y Road, spoke of how critical it is to keep schools strong, the crowds at River Road because of the Rec Dept and the Teenager basketball. The Town is doing a great job.

Dave Giller, Depot Road spoke of the amazing change with the new rec director. We had 5 teams with teenagers from this town. He express that the director be full time.

Rich Mailhos told the Board that what the rec director is doing is more of a mentoring program that's above and beyond the children.

Peter Latincsics, Trask Road, complimented the Board. He asked that they work hard and is anxious to see what the Board puts forward. He asked the Board to look at the budget as a Willington family would during these economic times.

Bob Shabot, 17 Jared Sparks Rd, spoke of the Board cutting to the bare bones. He is concerned with the Town's promise to purchase land for preservation. Chairman Bulick said that the CIP Committee had a problem setting aside funds for a future unknown cost. But, the Board of Finance is committed to funding open space out of the general reserve or perhaps through bonding in the out years of the CIP plan as we have done in the past. Bob then spoke about the reserve fund getting less and less. The money will be drained down. He asked that we build up the reserve so that bonding is not needed. Let the people decide on the budget.

Walter Parcel, Timber Lane said that this is a quiet country town and he's been a resident for 22 years and there is uncertainty in town, not the time to add people and costs. Thinks of the people who an increase would be a big deal. Please keep them in mind.

George Paquin, Czar Road, spoke of the rec director working on her own time helping. 9th and 10th grades went to the championship and everyone showed up. The rec director supports the coaches.

Chairman Bulick said that this is not an easy task for the Board. The decrease in revenue from the State, and the decrease in property assessments due to the foundation issue, and the new TRB (Teacher Retirement Benefit) requires us to work harder to keep spending under control. Even modest increases in spending have a compounding effect and add a lot of uncertainty. Everyone has justified their zero

based budgets. We make spending recommendations on what we have control of. There is a policy of keeping the general reserve fund at a certain minimum level to manage risk, and a maximum level to avoid over taxing.

Vice Chairman Patton added that we have a duty as the Board of Finance to go through each item line-by-line and try to sort out wants and needs. It would be attractive to send off the decision to someone else. We have a good fund balance and the capital reserve is in good shape. We have a low mil rate because of the business base. (Spending for) Open space competes against everything else.

Vice Chairman Patton asked Derek about the Public Works budget. Discussion followed.

Robert Wiczenski asked about the hydrants and what we're paying \$7,000 for. Do we even get a report on the water pressure? Christina said she will ask.

NEW BUSINESS

Budgets Discussions

The following topics were discussed:

- P&Z Assistant: Only funding the position ½ year, starting January 1, 2018. There appears to be a genuine need for upcoming projects on the books but have not yet started construction, including possible foundation work.
- Rec Department: The board recognizes that the workload is increasing and that there are potential revenue opportunities here as the programs grow. The boards decided to fund 2/3 of the increase requested, and recommended more fundraising options be explored.
- Library: Flat funding from last year. Recommending the Library Board review how their endowment is invested, and then use that income to make up the difference for their programs. It should be achievable with only modest investment gains.
- Public Works: Budget for pumping catch basins reduced \$15,000.
- Board of Education: Superintendent Jacoby thought it is possible to reduce the overall budget request by 1% (overall budget is increasing very modestly at 0.88% over last year).
- Teacher Retirement Benefit (TRB): Is being included in the K-8 budget since this is an education expense that the State of Connecticut is now requiring the towns to pay. However, this may unfairly perceived as a large increase in the K-8 spending. A Co-authored letter between Board of Finance, Board of Selectmen, and Board of Education will be written to inform the taxpayers of the situation.

Budget Approvals

Motion to accept the budget request for #0121 Probate Court of \$3,552 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for #0126 Election Officials of \$30,321 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0130 Accounting Services for \$200,092 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for #0131 Board of Finance of \$4,544 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for #0132 Treasurer of \$31,294 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for #0133 Auditor of \$32,750 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0134 Assessor for \$94,273 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for #0135 Board of Assessment Appeal of \$1,335 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0137 Revenue Collector for \$82,444 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0141 Town Counsel for \$32,000 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for #0151 Town Clerk of \$105,779 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for #0161 Conservation Commission of \$1,500 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for #0171 Planning & Zoning of \$123,964 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for #0172 Zoning Board of Appeals for \$4,579 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for #0175 Economic Development of \$5,400 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for #0176 Inland/Wetlands Comm. of \$2,000 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0181 Town Office Operations for \$150,511 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0182 Town Hall Operations for \$6,053 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0183 Consulting Engineers for \$20,000 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0185 Senior Center Operations for \$31,128 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for #0221 Ambulance Grant of \$461,487 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber with \$10,000 coming from Fund 17. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for #0231 Fire Marshall of \$23,948 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for #0232 Fire Protection of \$254,111 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0233 Public Safety & Welfare for \$31,238 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for #0234 Emergency Management Dir for \$6,000 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0235 Fire Main & Hydrants for \$7,006 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. Robert Wiecenski & Peter Tanaka opposed. All others were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0241 Building Official for \$27,787 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0311 Public Works for \$1,165,803 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0342 Cemetery for \$2,000 was by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0351 Transfer Station for \$219,498 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0504 Capital Reserve for \$185,511 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0507 Housing Authority for \$2,114 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0510 Accrued Sick Days for \$25,000 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0511 Dog Fund for \$22,842 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for #0512 Recreation Commission for \$58,245 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0513 WYFSS Grant for \$43,500 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for #0517 Library of \$185,189 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0811 Social Security for \$86,026 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0821 Unemployment for \$1,000 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0831 Employee Insurances for \$351,312 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0841 Pension for \$61,309 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0851 Insurances for \$81,407 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0871 Miscellaneous for \$2,500 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0910 Debt Services for \$219,444 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the #0930 Capital Expenditures for \$52,800 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. All were in favor, **Motion carried.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the Board of Education for \$8,126,510 was made by Peter Tanaka and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. No one approved, **Motion Failed.**

Motion to accept the budget request for the Board of Education for \$8,740,249 was made by John Patton and seconded by Elizabeth Treiber. This includes the State mandated TRB. Peter Tanaka voted no, all others approved. **Motion carried.**

Motion to approve the Annual Report was made by Peter Tanaka, Elizabeth Treiber seconded. All were in favor, **motion carried.**

Motion to approve the CIP plan as presented was made by Peter Tanaka, Elizabeth Treiber seconded. All were in favor, **motion carried.**

OLD BUSINESS - none

CORRESPONDENCE - none

GOOD & WELFARE

Chairman Bulick thanked the town departments, boards, and commissions for the hard work and difficult choices made in preparing their budgets. He also thanked the townspeople who came to our meeting to offer their thoughts on the budget.

ADJOURMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra L. Lewis

Debra L. Lewis
BOF Recording Secretary