

## **Board of Finance**

### **Regular Meeting**

**March 25, 2014**

**Present:** David Richardson, Ronald Cabana, Michael Dougherty, George McCoy, Glen Lessig, Fred Chmura, Mark Shamber, Wayne Durst.

**Absent:** David Hosmer

**Others:** Treasurer Donna Stefanik, Clerk Christine French, members of the Board of Selectmen, members of the Board of Education, and approximately 35 members of the public.

#### **1. Call to Order – Seat Alternate Member:**

Michael Dougherty called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Michael Dougherty asked for a motion to seat an alternate member for this evening's meeting. George McCoy, seconded by David Richardson motioned to seat Michael Dougherty as voting member for tonight's meeting. **Motioned carried.**

Michael Dougherty would like to **2A – Citizen's Comments** to the agenda. George McCoy, seconded by Ronald Cabana, motioned to add 2A – Citizens Comments to this evening's agenda. **Motion passed.**

#### **2. Approve Minutes from March 4, 2014 Meeting & March 11, 2014 Meeting:**

George McCoy, seconded by Ronald Cabana, moved to approve the March 4, 2014 Meeting minutes as presented. **Motion carried.**

In regards to the resignation of the chairman, at the March 11, 2014 meeting, it has been discovered that when the Chairman of the Board of Finance resigns, a Special Meeting must be held in order to fill that vacancy. George McCoy made a motion to strike everything passed David Hosmer's resignation in the March 11, 2014 minutes from the record. Fred Chmura believed that what happened after David Hosmer resigned should remain in the minutes. George McCoy, seconded by Glen Lessig, moved to make a note in the minutes that a correction in the appointment of Chairman of the Board of Finance will occur at a Special Meeting to be held on April 1, 2014, at 7:00pm, at the Woodstock Town Hall. **Motion passed.**

Glen Lessig would like to amend the minutes of the March 11, 2014 Meeting to include his question into why \$10,000.00 was cut from the Open Space Land Acquisition Fund, and Allan D. Walker's reply that the Board of Selectmen felt that this was a good place to cut, because the Open Space Land Acquisition Fund has money put aside for future projects.

George McCoy, seconded by Ronald Cabana, moved to accept the minutes of the March 11, 2014 meeting as amended. **Motion passed.**

## **2A. Citizens Comments:**

Michael Dougherty stated that he has received emails from the following: Steven and Tara Smock, Sarah Bentley, Jennifer Griffin, Heather Mydlarz, Sarah Gorgone, Jim Reynolds, Eric and Annmarie Thibodeau, Sonia M. Greene, Jen and Sean Dutson, Norma Jean Loftus, Erin M. Rhault, Rick and Janet LaMarre, Tara Murphy, Wendy and Eric LeBoeuf, Bethany Scalfidi, Susan Fleck, Steven Schimmel, Cassandra Ryan, G. Leslie Sweetnam, Holly Dearborn, Kirsten Rigney, Katie and Sean Farrell, Jock McClellan, and Woodstock Academy urging the Board of Finance to present the budget to the voters at the Proposition 46 limit of a 1.06 mil increase.

Before Michael Dougherty opened the floor up to public comment, he informed the Board of Finance and the audience that the Town Attorney has disallowed all of the emergency expenditures from the Proposition 46 calculations.

Judy E. Walberg, Town Clerk, explained to the Board of Finance that foreclosures have increased steadily. In the Fiscal Year 2011/2012 there were 31 foreclosures. In the 2012/2013 Fiscal Year there were 42. So far in the 2013/2014 Fiscal Year there has been 55.

William Loftus, a former member of the Board of Education, feels that a good education can never be funded under the restrictions of Proposition 46. He stated the Board of Finance should explore a creative way to circumvent Proposition 46.

The majority of the speakers asked that the Board of Finance present to the voters of the Town of Woodstock the budget at the Proposition 46 allowable limit. Many audience members felt that the voters would approve a 1.06 mil increase.

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Frank Baran, and Chairman of the Board of Education, Michael Bernardi, feel that the Education budget is a bare bones budget. \$1.1 million was cut from the Board of Education budget before it was even presented to the Board of Finance.

Selectmen D. Mitchell Eaffy and Chandler Paquette, agreed that it has been an incredibly difficult budget year. They feel that the budget should be presented to the voters at the Proposition 46 allowable limit.

## **3. Combined Budget & Revenues:**

Michael Dougherty informed the Board of Finance and the public that the budget can only increase \$597,055.00 to reach the allowable Proposition 46 increase. He then asked his fellow board members for input.

Glen Lessig and George McCoy felt that the budget should be presented to the voters at the allowable Proposition 46 increase of 1.06 mils.

David Richardson feels that a more realistic budget should be presented to the voters.

Wayne Durst explained that he felt that the average tax payer could not afford a 1.06 mil increase. He pointed out that there is an increase of Woodstock citizens requesting help from TEEG, and that there are 9 properties going to tax sale this year.

George McCoy asked that if a budget fails does it have to be lower the next time it is presented to the voters. Treasurer Donna Stefanik did not think that this was the case, as long as it meets the Proposition 46 allowable, but that she would check into it.

Michael Dougherty explained that the Board of Finance could request the Board of Selectmen to put an advisory questions on the ballot. If the Board preferred an exit poll the Board of Finance would need to coordinate that with the Registrar of Voters.

Glen Lessig, seconded by George McCoy, moved to advance the combined budgets of \$21,844,980.00, or a 1.06 mil increase to referendum. **Motion passed, with Wayne Durst and Ronald Cabana voting in the negative.**

George McCoy, seconded by Ronald Cabana, moved to allocate \$447,791.00, or 75% of the \$597,000.00 to the Board of Education, and to allocate \$149,264.00, or 25% of the \$597,000.00 to the General Government budget. **Motion passed.**

George McCoy, seconded by Glen Lessig, made a motion to approve the new budget for the Board of Education at \$16,491,766.00, and the new Board of Selectmen budget at \$5,353,214.00. **Motion carried.**

George McCoy, seconded by Fred Chmura, moved the table the Capital Expense Plan until the Special April 1, 2014 meeting, and to send the Town Clerk a revised agenda for this meeting. **Motion passed.**

#### **4. Suspense List:**

Tax Collector, Linda Bernardi, explained that the accounts on the suspense list are deemed uncollectable, because the person is either deceased, bankrupt or has moved. This is the first year that the State of Connecticut has allowed abandoned Real Estate to be added to the list.

Fred Chmura asked if these properties have liens placed against them. Mrs. Bernardi said that they were. However having the properties on the suspense list takes the properties out of the receivable column.

Linda Bernardi also announced that the tax collections are at 100%, and that they are hoping to bring in extra revenues before the end of the Fiscal Year. At this point the tax collections are \$71,000.00 over the projected collection for this year.

Glen Lessig, seconded by George McCoy, moved to accept the suspense list as presented.

**Motion carried.**

#### **5. Correspondence & Announcements:**

Michael Dougherty reminded the Board of Finance that the Special Meeting to square away the Chairman's vacancy will be held on April 1, 2014, and that the Public Hearing will be on April 8, 2014.

The Board of Education has invited the Board of Finance to a budget hearing on April 9, 2014 at the Woodstock Elementary School.

#### **6. Citizens Comments:**

It was the general consensus of the audience that the Education budget has been cut enough and can't be cut further.

Many members of the public felt that it was inappropriate for an individual member of the Board of Finance to write letters to the newspapers in regards to the budget.

Glen Lessig volunteered to be the Board of Finance representative to the Open Land Acquisition Committee.

#### **7. Adjournment:**

George McCoy, seconded by Fred Chmura, moved to adjourn at 8:34pm. **Motion passed.**