

**Board of Finance
Public Hearing
April 8, 2014**

Present: Wayne Durst, Ronald Cabana, Michael Dougherty, David Richardson, Fred Chmura, and Glen Lessig.

Absent: George McCoy, David Hosmer, and Mark Shamber.

Guests: Treasurer Donna Stefanik, Clerk Christine French, members of the Boards of Selectmen and Education, and approximately 25 citizens.

Michael Dougherty, chairman of the Board of Finance, called the Public Hearing to order at 7:00pm.

Ronald Cabana, seconded by Wayne Durst, made a motion to seat alternate member David Richardson for tonight's meeting. **Motion carried.**

Mr. Dougherty explained to the audience that Ed Higgins would be moderating tonight's meeting, and he asked that all speakers limit their comments to three minutes.

First Selectman Allan Walker presented the General Government budget's increases and decreases, and explained where some of the cuts have been made, such as in the health insurance account, the Highway Department, and in Public Health and Recreation. He also briefly explained the 5-Year Capital Plan, which he hoped that grants could help fund.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Frank Baran reviewed the Board of Education budget for the 2014/2015 Fiscal Year. He explained that the Board of Education has seen significant increases in the Special Education costs, health insurance costs, maintenance on buildings, Woodstock Academy Regular Education tuition, and new buses. To reduce the budget by the \$756,962.00 that the Board of Finance required from the Board of Education the following line items have been decreased: heating oil, tuition reimbursement for teachers and teacher assistants, legal fees, sick leave stipends for custodians and teacher assistants, District financial software, equipment, supplies, professional development for teacher evaluation, nurse substitutes, tuition at the Voag and ACT schools, tuition reduction to transport WA foreign students, books, rental fees for concerts, athletic program, nurse clerks, WES enrichment program, WMS Gifted and Talented program, a Grade 3 position, Language Arts coordinator, Special Education secretary, eight Regular Education Teacher assistant positions, and disability insurance for Regular Education Teacher Assistants.

Following the presentation Moderator Ed Higgins opened the floor up for comments and questions.

Mary Ellen Ellsworth, a member of the Camp Nahaco Park Commission requested that \$10,000.00 be put back in the Camp Nahaco Park Commission's budget for the replacement of the well house.

Ronald Cabana asked Dr. Baran if the cuts in teacher assistant positions eliminated all teacher assistants at the school. Dr. Baran assured him that it did not.

Preston Shultz suggested that the Board of Education develop a maintenance plan for the schools.

There were further questions on the bus lease and the enrichment and gifted and talented programs.

Being no further discussion Ronald Cabana, seconded by Glen Lessig, motioned to adjourn at 7:30PM. **Motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

Christine G. French

Clerk