

The Board of Finance held a special meeting on **March 23, 2011** in the Meeting Room of Windham Town Hall, 979 Main Street, Willimantic, CT 06226

Members Attending: Barbara McGrath, Charles Pennewill, Anita Sebestyen, Leo Santucci, Nina Ricardez, and Anna Crawford

Chairman, Barbara McGrath called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Public Comment

There was no public comment

Approval of meeting minutes

Upon a motion by Charles Pennewill, seconded by Anita Sebestyen to approve the meeting minutes from March 16, 2011.

Leo Santucci requested that the minutes reflect that he abstained.

The motion passed with Anna Crawford abstaining.

Discussion and possible action on cell tower lease

There was no action taken.

Discussion on the 2011-2012 General Government budget, Willimantic Service District budget, Ambulance budget, and the Capital Improvement Plan

The proposed mill rate was reviewed with the Town Manager's PILOT allocation and the current PILOT allocation of 41% Town and 59% Willimantic Service District.

Questions Charles Pennewill submitted were reviewed and answered.

Various budget line items were discussed.

Barbara McGrath asked what committee determined the funding for agencies. Neal Beets replied the Finance Administration sub-committee and Health and Human Services decided the funding amounts.

The code enforcement staff addition was discussed and it was stated that there are fees listed in revenues to pay for the positions. Neal Beets also commented there is a part-time bilingual position from the Town Hall budget that was moved to code enforcement.

Increases in medical insurance lines reflect an assumed 8% premium rate increase as well as increases due to employee elected changes in number of dependents. It was stated that final rates will be coming in mid-April.

Road and drainage budget increases were reviewed. The overtime for Third Thursday is being shown to give an idea of what the actual expenses will be for overtime for in-kind services provided by the Town.

Utilization of inter-library loan program was questioned with the hope that the amount budgeted for books could be lowered.

Recreation budget - The descriptions and line item dollar amounts don't match line item in community services. The amounts represented exact costs of most programs but the remaining amount was an allowance for additional events as determined by the department.

Barbara McGrath questioned the interfund transfer in Recreation. Where are the revenues and what positions are paid out of the recreation revolving fund.

Ambulance budget – The revenues from billing are not collected as billed due to insurance. There are 10 firefighters allocated to the ambulance department. There was discussion concerning the correct allocation of costs. Nina Ricardez would like to have more PILOT funds applied to the ambulance. Barbara McGrath commented that dispatch will also need to be looked at because this cost is budgeted in ambulance dept. as well as Police and Fire.

Leo Santucci asked if the Town Manager could propose where reductions would be made if necessary. The Town Manager would like the Board to hear the Board of Education and from department heads.

The Capital Improvement Plan was reviewed

Neal Beets commented on the Kramer building renovations that are being proposed. 60,000 sq. ft. of space is available. The third floor at Kramer is not occupied. One of the plans called for relocating the senior center to Kramer where the cafeteria was when it was a middle school. The Board of Education could co-locate to the Town Hall.

Charles Pennewill commented the need for security and additional parking at Kramer.

Barbara McGrath would like to spend funds on Town owned buildings rather than spending money to renovate some else's building.

Nina Ricardez would like to see the renovations to both buildings as long as the historic quality of the buildings are preserved.

Anna Crawford commented on being careful when repurposing a building as there can be unanticipated costs.

Barbara McGrath questioned why the police special duty revenue line was reduced. It was stated that the reduction reflects anticipated collections next year and that a corresponding adjustment was made in the expense line.

She also questioned the increase in pension for fire and police.

Tom Pesce replied the current year budget for fire and police pension is underfunded based on figures received in the fall of 2010. The amounts proposed in the budget are based on information received.

Anita questioned the increased in WSD telephone line.

Barbara questioned the overtime line in fire prevention. What is it used for.

Neal Beets commented the overtime line in Operations and Maintenance was reduce by 50,000 and moved to a new line item in fire prevention and training.

Barbara asked if there would be enough overtime in the operations and maintenance budget given the call in.

The dispatch allocation was reviewed. A handout was presented to the board.

The total amount the Town has to pay is divided between the fire and police departments. The fire portion of dispatch services is then divided for the ambulance share. \$383,000 is for WSD and \$164,000 for Ambulance. Town Council reduced this line in the WSD by \$25,000. In kind services were also reviewed. The memorandum of procedures describes the in-kind services estimated at \$4,000.

Barbara McGrath commented on the upgrade the switchboard had over the past year. Who owns the equipment? The equipment that was acquired through two grants is owned by the Town. There was another grant the switchboard applied for and that equipment could be owned by the switchboard association. There was an offer by QVEC for switchboard services for 50K. Charles Pennewill questioned if the State was doing a dispatch study then perhaps the Town should wait until the study is completed.

A motion by Leo Santucci, seconded by Nina Ricardez to ask the Town Manager to speak with the police chief and fire chief on dispatch services and do a preliminary internal dispatch study to see if there are any cost savings.

The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion on the 2011-2012 Board of Education budget and capital improvement plan

Anita questioned the savings that would come from bringing the services currently provided by the Eastconn facility in-house.

Leo asked what their plan for addressing school discipline, lower scores at middle school, transitioning out of the bilingual program and addressing rising special ed costs.

Public Comment

Adrian Duvall of Willimantic commented on the challenging job the Board of Finance has to do and asked that they pursue savings in dispatch and consider reductions to the Board of Education.

Upon a motion by Charles Pennewill, seconded by Leo Santucci, the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Attest: _____
Tom Pesce