

The Board of Finance held a special meeting on **April 13, 2011** in the Auditorium of Windham Middle School, 123 Quarry Street, Willimantic, CT 06226

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

Chairman, Barbara McGrath called the meeting to order at 7:42 p.m.

### **Public Comment**

Lori Jeffers commented that taxpayers will have to pay for the magnet school and has asked for a revote on the magnet school.

Henry Crane commented on giving a rapid assessment test to students.

David Walencewicz commented on the ambulance budget and how the request for proposal that was done years ago had a dispatch clause that made it non competitive.

Peter Quercia commented to go ahead with the budget amount as requested by the Board of Education and see what happens.

Jeffrey Viens commented there is no confidence in the Board of Education and requested a zero increase for all budgets.

Alona Stone commented on the need to bring the community back. The Board of Education is one piece and we need to look at the total picture. The fire and police departments are amazing and they always come through. She can't say that for the Board of Education.

Bernie Dauteuil commented the million dollars hasn't been passed at the legislature and believes the people don't have faith in the Board of Education and how the money is being spent.

Ernie Eldridge thanked the board for their time on the budget and feels they will do the right thing.

### **Discussion and possible action on the 2011-2012 General Government Budget, Willimantic Service District Budget, Ambulance Budget, and Board of Education Budget**

Barbara McGrath commented on the proposal the Town Manager, Neal Beets, presented to the Board with reductions of \$150,000, \$250,000, and \$350,000 to the General Government budget. There are savings in the medical insurance lines that can affect all the budgets.

The savings in medical insurance to the General Government budget would be \$50,400, and the savings to the Willimantic Service District would be \$66,000. His proposal also had a reduction in the Reserve for Capital Improvements of \$120,000. Assuming we go forward on the cell tower lease buyout, there would be potentially \$200,000 in revenues. He would like that revenue to go directly into the Reserve for Capital Improvement Fund. The other reductions in the

proposal to reach the \$250,000 and \$350,000 amounts would be to eliminate leaf collection, reduce the funding for street lights, and a reduction in Town staff. If the Board was to take the reduction in health care premiums and the reduction in the reserve for capital improvements, the General Government budget would have a .08 mill rate increase and a budget increase of less than 1%.

Jeffrey Smith commented on not cutting the Town or Willimantic Service District budget and that the Reserve for Capital Improvements should not be under funded.

Barbara McGrath commented on taking some of the reductions the Town Manager has recommended.

Jeffrey Smith questioned funding in Reserve for Capital Improvements for the auditorium.

Charles Pennewill questioned funding for an audio system in the auditorium because it is a large room and it is hard to hear people talking.

Barbara questioned if recreation has portable microphone system that could be used in the auditorium.

The Recreation Director, Tara Risley, replied that there is a cordless microphone that could be used in the auditorium.

Jeffrey Smith would like to have \$100,000 taken out of the budget for the dispatch.

Tom Pesce commented information has been received from the Council of Governments in Lowell, MA. A request for proposal and feasibility study was done there. This information will be shared with fire and police chiefs. Mr. Pesce also talked with the company doing the consolidation study for the State of Connecticut. It should be completed by August 1<sup>st</sup>.

WINCOG has also been approached regarding dispatch

Jeffrey Smith commented Danbury is also doing the same dispatch search and we could contact them for information.

Upon a motion by Jeffrey Smith, seconded by Leo Santucci as described in the Town Managers proposal dated April 13, 2011 to reduce various medical insurance accounts in the General Government budget by \$50,400, reduce various medical insurance accounts in the Willimantic Service District by \$66,000, and to reduce interfund transfer out-RCIP by \$120,000; to reduce the Board of Education budget by \$400,760; to instruct the Town Manager to make further reductions in dispatch services by \$100,000 and to instruct the Town Manager to make the necessary adjustments to the appropriate line items.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mark Doyle presented a handout to the Board of Finance regarding a reduction in medical costs that totaled \$375,759.80. The transportation costs were also looked at and there is also a reduction of \$25,000. The total reduction in the Board of Education budget is \$400,759.80. It is the intention to bring the sports program back to the middle school.

Leo Santucci questioned the meeting with the commissioner from the State and adding a school resource officer to the middle school and high school.

Mark Doyle commented bringing in a school resource officer is only for the remaining of this school year. It is not in the budget for next year.

Nina Ricardez would like the 10 firefighters to be taken out of the ambulance budget and put in the Willimantic Fire Department budget.

Jeffrey Smith would like a percentage allocation for fires and ambulance.

Barbara McGrath commented we don't have a policy decision. The ambulance budget has been on the list of review for the past year and a half. We can't make a change in the ambulance this year.

Nina Ricardez commented she went to speak with the town manager and the controller about the ambulance budget. She cannot support the General Government budget but will support the Board of Education budget.

### **Discussion and possible action on the Capital Improvement Plan**

Upon a motion by Jeffrey Smith seconded by Charles Pennewill to approve the Town Manger's five year capital plan and the funding for fiscal year 2011-2012 as referenced in the capital plan noting that any projects calling for the issuance of debt would require further action.

The motion passed unanimously.

### **Public Comment**

Joe Marsalisi commented the request for proposal for dispatch services was stipulated to have 4 EMT's in the ambulance budget. 28 firemen are needed to staff the fire department regardless of the ambulance. The City has an agreement to pay the town for employees. The switchboard has an antenna tower site and the lease needs to be reviewed.

Police Chief Lisa Maruzo-Bolduc commented that last week it was decided to set aside \$20,000 to do a study for dispatch and now the Board is reducing the dispatch budget which will impact the police department communication with police officers.

Barbara McGrath commented the request for proposal should be done for January 1<sup>st</sup> and working through WINCOG this could be less expensive. We can't continue to pay this much for dispatch.

Raphelo Calixo questioned the increase in code enforcement budget when other budgets have reductions or a very small increase. He supports the Board of Education budget.

Barbara McGrath commented the code enforcement increase will be paid for by revenues that will be collected. If the revenues options are not passed the positions will not be filled.

Jeffrey Viens commented cutting the Fire Marshall department and moving it to the fire department because they use to do the inspections.

Henry Crane commented on the school resource officer.

Kevin Hoxie commented on the dispatch center and the need for safety in town.

Lori Jeffers commented the code enforcement officer should go.

David Walencewicz delivered an analysis of Public Works costs in surrounding towns

George commented on the volunteer fire department and the tax break they receive.

Mr. Doucette commended the volunteers for the work they do. The career guys need the backup.

Nina Ricardez commented on public works and that they take care of the cemeteries, sweeping the streets, working in police cars. You can't compare the work from other towns.

Tara Risley commented on the board of education and hopes the sports program will stay in the budget even if the budget fails. \$20,000 is a drop in the bucket for the sports program.

A taxpayer commented on the analysis for public works and that we need to look at more areas of where we can save.

Upon a motion by Charles Pennewill, seconded by Nina Ricardez the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tom Pesce