

The Board of Finance held a regular meeting on **May 18, 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, Anna Crawford, Nina Ricardez

Chairman, Barbara McGrath called the meeting to order at 8:40 p.m.

Public Comment

Murphy Sewell commented failing schools does not mean the schools are bad. Trusting the Board of Education, there is no reason not to. The Board of Education budget is on line. The Education commissioner was in Town last Saturday. The Board of Education is looking forward to working with the special master. If the district does not approve the budget, the State can submit a bill and that will be the budget.

Nicole Bay commented on transparency and what is needed. She asked the Board to be transparent if a reduction is made.

Jeffrey Viens commented people can't afford the taxes and don't trust the Board of Education. Once the Board of Education is given the money they are not open and honest because they can spend the money as they want.

Kevin Hoxie commented if the special master doesn't work out the Town will have to pay next year. We will also end up paying for the magnet school. Be aware of what is going on.

Lori Jeffers commented the acting commissioner said they could send a bill. If every teacher in the school system lived in Windham, the budget would have passed.

Pamela Viens commented English is not her first language. Throwing more money in the budget won't work. She would like the Board to wait until the special master comes in before a decision on the budget is made. Concessions need to be made.

Henry Crane commented we can't wait for the special master to come in. A decision needs to be made tonight.

Bernie Dauteuil commented it is a team effort. Take care of the kids and make a decision. Make sure the funds are spent the right way.

Charlie Kratt of Willimantic commented on the credibility of the school system. The magnet school could be part of the credibility. He asked where the State Representatives were tonight. They should be fighting for the Town in Hartford.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Anna Crawford, seconded by Charles Pennewill, to approve public hearing minutes from April 13, 2011, public forum minutes from April 20, 2011, special meeting minutes from April 20, 2011, and special meeting minutes from May 10, 2011.

Corrections to the April 13th minutes are to correct Dennis Kronan to Dennis Cronin
Corrections to the April 20th minutes are to correct Norman French to John French

The motion passed unanimously.

Presentation from the Tax Collector on the 2010-2011 General Government and Willimantic Service District tax revenues

The revenues were reviewed for the current year. The General Government and Willimantic Service District revenues will come in within budget for the current year. The prior year tax revenues will be short in both the General Government and Willimantic Service District.

Leo Santucci asked if the 470 properties are Town wide and how many were in Windham and Willimantic. The tax collector did not have that break down.

Leo Santucci asked how many properties are going for a tax sale in August.
The tax collector replied there will be 21 properties going up for a tax sale.

Tax sale is scheduled for August 4th.

Discussion and possible action on Collector of Revenue suspense tax book

Upon a motion by Charles Pennewill, seconded by Leo Santucci, to approve the suspense list presented to the Board.

The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and possible action on the 2011-2012 Board of Education Budget

Barbara McGrath commented the Board of Finance cannot tell the Board of Education how to spend their funds. The Board of Finance cannot put money aside for the special master to spend on books, school supplies, etc.

At this time the special master cannot come to the Board with a bill to the Town. The special master can say more money is needed but that will have to go through the regular appropriation procedures

Upon a motion by Nina Ricardez, seconded by Anna Crawford, to make an appropriation of \$600,000 from fund balance and to reduce the Board of Education budget by \$400,000.

Leo commented he is in favor of a reduction but would like to see a higher cut to the Board of Education budget and less to fund balance.

Anita also commented she would like a higher reduction to the Board of Education budget and less to fund balance.

Charles Pennewill asked what the fund balance was and what is the percentage to keep in there.

Tom Pesce replied 9.5% is what we had as of 2009 audit and it should be 10% after the 2010 audit.

The motion passed with Nina Ricardez, Anna Crawford, Charles Pennewill, and Barbara McGrath voting yes. Anita Sebestyen and Leo Santucci voted no.

Upon a motion by Nina Ricardez, seconded by Charles Pennewill, moved to set the Board of Education budget at \$43,057,854.00

The motion passed unanimously.

Town Controller's Report

Town Controller's report was presented by Thomas Pesce.

A draft of the audit was presented to the Board members. There will be a special meeting on Wednesday May 25, 2011 at 6:45 p.m. for CCR to present the 2009-2010 audit to the Board members.

The current year revenues and expenditures were reviewed. The General Government revenues should have a favorable variance. The Willimantic Service District budget is tight. There is a shortfall in revenues but there will be a surplus in expenditures. The School Resource Officer funding in the revenues will not be received but there will be no expenditure for the School Resource Officer. There will be an overall surplus.

Great West will be submitting the final version for the pension plan. A complaint to the insurance commissioner may be submitted if an acceptable response is not received from Great West.

Discussion and possible action on the time, date, and place of the Annual Budget Meeting

Upon a motion by Anna Crawford, seconded by Charles Pennewill, to set the Budget meeting for 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday June 1, 2011 at the Windham Town Hall auditorium.

The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and possible action on the time, date, and place of the referendum vote

Upon a motion by Charles Pennewill, seconded by Nina Ricardez, to set the referendum vote for Tuesday June 7, 2011 from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and two locations to be determined by the registrar.

The motion passed unanimously.

Any other business appropriate to come before the BOF

Barbara McGrath spoke about putting a question on the ballot asking if the Board of Education budget is too high or too low.

Nina Ricardez commented it will open trouble if questions are added.

Anna Crawford commented a straight question won't give us information.

Leo Santucci commented it makes sense to have questions on the ballot.

Upon a motion by Leo Santucci, seconded by Anita Sebestyen, to add two questions to the ballot. The questions will be: Do you feel the Board of Education budget is too high?

Do you feel the Board of Education budget is too low?

The motion passed with Nina Ricardez opposing.

Charles Pennewill commented the Town Council approved the tri-board. Barbara McGrath commented the Mayor will appoint members to the Board.

Public Comment

Teri Santucci commented the board is nuts and there will be union concessions that will raise the budget. She presented the cost of a referendum to the Board members.

Lori Jeffers commented the Board took money out the Board of Education budget and put back \$200,000.

Bernie Dauteuil commented on the money appropriated to the Board of Education. He would like the question to be is the Board of Education budget too high or is the budget too low. Need to take care of the kids but need to come up with another way. We need some professionalism with the Board of Education system.

Kevin Hoxie commented the board got a very little cut. He would like someone to give him \$100,000 so he could spend it as he wishes.

Jeffrey Viens commented on the Board of Education getting their facts straight. He felt the total amount should have been taken off the Board of Education appropriation. He asked if the members of Board have invested in the Town.

Henry Crane commented on the reduction in the mill rate and the tax payer will be paying less taxes. If a meeting is in the auditorium, please have a microphone so people can hear.

John French commented the reduction is only a hole that has been created.

Upon a motion by Anna Crawford, seconded by Leo Santucci the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Attest: _____
Thomas Pesce