

The Board of Finance held a special meeting on **June 7, 2011** in the auditorium of Windham Town Hall, 979 Main Street, Willimantic, CT 06226

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

Chairman, Barbara McGrath called the meeting to order at 8:35 p.m.

Public Comment

Doug Lary thanked the board for adding questions to the ballot. The results proved interesting; apparently showing the people wanted an even lower budget amount.

James Flores commented town is divided and 100 votes is to close to call. Perhaps an additional cut of \$100,000 is needed.

Jeffrey Viens commented budget was voted down. Many more people answered the budget is to high. The budget should be reduced to the MBR

Henry Crane commented on the questions and felt the board was looking for acceptability on the budget. The board should make more than a 100K reduction. How much does the budget need to be reduced in order for it to pass? He thanked the board for putting the questions on the ballot.

Charlie Kratt commented the total number of voters was less and maybe it was because the referendum wasn't well publicized. The budget needs to be reduced to get it to pass.

Discussion and possible action to Adopt General Government and Board of Education Revenues for Fiscal Year 2011-2012

No action was taken

Discussion and possible action to Adopt Willimantic Service District Revenues for Fiscal Year 2011-2012

Upon a motion by Leo Santucci, seconded by Jeffrey Smith the following direct revenue estimates were adopted for the 2011-2012 fiscal year:

Willimantic Service District: \$ 3,961,416

The motion passed unanimously

Discussion and possible action to set the General Government and Board of Education mill rate for fiscal year 2011-2012

No action was taken.

Discussion and possible action to set the Willimantic Service District mill rate for fiscal year 2011-2012

Upon a motion by Leo Santucci, seconded by Jeffrey Smith, the following mill rate was adopted for the 2011-2012 fiscal year:

Willimantic Service District: 9.81 mills

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

Discussion on the Board of Education budget and the reasons for its failure took place.

Barbara McGrath commented that perhaps before the Board submits a budget for the next referendum, they should let the special master come in and seek input from him or her. She is not comfortable with making any decisions at this time.

Leo Santucci commented we knew this budget wasn't going to pass. The Board of Education has had excess stimulus money with no results. He recommends cutting the budget to the MBR and then let the special master come in and tell the Board what is needed.

Jeffrey Smith commented the Board should think about lowering the budget but suggested waiting until the special master arrives.

Charles Pennewill agrees with Barbara's plan and doesn't feel cutting to the MBR is the answer. He would not support that reduction.

Anna Crawford questioned if there was a referendum in September and the budget was voted down what happens next.

Barbara McGrath replied that the Town Council would need to appropriate a second quarterly expenditure and perhaps the vote would be in late August so that a second vote, if needed could occur before September 30th.

Leo commented on not waiting to get the results from the special master. The message is clear the budget should be cut and the 600,000 taken back. People can't afford the taxes.

Barbara McGrath commented the State of Connecticut is intervening. Give the State time to do the evaluation.

No action was taken.

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

No action was taken

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

No action was taken.

Public Comment

Bernie Dauteuil commented on the need for new people on the Board of Education. He would like a question on the next referendum to read: Are you willing to pay for the education budget with a new board to monitor the spending? The kids need to be educated.

Jeffrey Viens commented voting will be against the Board and to do something about the budget.

James Flores commented to accept that the people voted down the budget. There are 16,000 voters and only 11% voted. He also questioned if the \$600,000 will stay in the budget?

Lori Jeffers commented on two reasons the budget did not pass. It is because the budget is too high and no changes have been made in educating the children. The Board of Finance has failed in its responsibilities. The Board should withhold some money and allocate to the Board of Education after they specify how it will be used.

Barbara McGrath commented the Board of Finance does not have the legal ability to mandate how the Board of Education spends their appropriation. If the public is concerned about that issue they should direct their comments directly to the Board of Education. The Board of Education is responsible for how children are educated and the Board of Finance does not have that authority.

Henry Crane commented on the possibility of doing a grant for the Board of Education. Since the budget did not pass, is the 600,000 now gone? He asked the Board to crunch the numbers. People participated in the vote and answered their questions.

Neida Rosado commented she is in favor of the budget even though she has concerns about how the money would be spent. She suggested that instead of arguing with each other the focus should be placed in the number of electors that did not vote. They should come out and vote.

Upon a motion by Jeffrey Smith, seconded by Leo Santucci the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Attest: _____
Tom Pesce