

The Board of Finance held a regular meeting on **June 15, 2011** in the Meeting Room of Windham Town Hall, 979 Main Street, Willimantic, CT 06226

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

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

### **Public Comment**

Harry Carboni stated it's not a matter of money; the Board of Finance should set the Board of Education budget at the minimum budget requirement and maybe adjust 2% for cost of living.

James Flores stated that he will continue to work hard to get the vote out so the Board of Education budget will pass.

Mayor Ernie Eldridge suggested the Board of Education budget needs to pass now so that the Board of Education will know what funds they have so they can plan throughout the summer. He suggested a Board of Education budget reduction of \$600,000 and a corresponding elimination of the \$600,000 from fund balance. If after the State's Special Master completes his/her review and there is a recommendation for additional funds then those dollars can be authorized at that time, by the Board of Finance, perhaps from the fund balance of the Town.

Lori Jeffers suggested that the Board of Finance should cut the Board of Education and not wait until September.

A taxpayer spoke in support of the Board of Education.

Jim Hudson a Windham High School teacher asked for support of the Board of Education budget and spoke about the many outstanding students we have in Windham.

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Upon a motion by Jeffrey Smith, seconded by Charles Pennewill, to approve public hearing minutes from May 18, 2011, regular minutes from May 18, 2011, special meeting minutes from May 25, 2011, and special meeting minutes from June 7, 2011.

The motion passed unanimously.

### **Discussion and possible action to amend the five year Capital Improvement Plan**

Upon a motion by Jeffrey Smith, seconded by Charles Pennewill, to approve an amendment to the one- year and five year capital plan which increases the LoCIP funds allocated in fiscal year ending June 30, 2012 for the skateboard park from \$120,000 to \$150,000.

A memo from Joe Gardner, Town Engineer was presented to support the request. The additional funds are needed because the bid came in over \$120,000 and that additional costs will be incurred by the public works department.

The motion passed unanimously.

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

Barbara McGrath suggested taking no action on the BOE budget this evening. She stated that she spoke with the State Board of Education Commissioner and emphasized the sense of urgency in getting the special master on board. He concurred and said it might be helpful if they provided additional guidance before the next budget referendum.

Board of Education Finance Chair Mark Doyle distributed a copy of the duties of the Special Master. He supports the Chairs recommendation to wait on acting on the board budget.

Anna Crawford questioned the importance of not having a firm budget to work with right now. Mr. Doyle stated that some staff would not be hired.

Nina Ricardez asked if the savings in tuition costs would be reallocated to other areas. The School Superintendant explained how the savings would be reallocated.

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

No action was taken.

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

No action was taken.

### **Town Controller's Report**

The Controller stated that we are reviewing the pension agreement with Great West and hope to have it as an action item in July. We are in the process of reviewing proposals for workers compensation and property liability insurance and expect to be within next year's budget allotments. The consultant has been engaged to assist in closing the current fiscal year. We will be consolidating funds as requested by the auditors. The finance office will be keeping the Town manager advised of the status of the close out process on a weekly basis. We anticipate more collaboration with the Board of Education on how to streamline our accounting activities.

The Controller stated that the undesignated fund balance within the ambulance budget was approximately \$116,000 and that for the current year we expect a budget to actual deficit of just under \$100,000. The cost of the replacement ambulance is in the \$170,000-\$195,000 range. If recommended by the Town Council then the finance office will present financing alternatives to the Board of Finance.

The Chair of the School Building Committee was invited to attend the July Board of Finance meeting to provide an update on the Windham Magnet School.

The controller distributed year to date revenue and expenditure reports and transfer requests for the Town, and the Willimantic Service District. It was explained that the transfers include allocating an additional \$100,000 to the police pension fund and to the Fire pension fund. Surplus in regular salaries was largely due to vacancies and workers compensation which also caused the overtime accounts to be in deficit.

There was some discussion concerning whether or not transfers within a department needed to go before the Board of Finance.

#### **Discussion and possible action on any General Government 2010-2011 budget transfer requests**

Upon a motion by Jeffrey Smith, seconded by Charles Pennewill, to pass the transfer requests for the General Government totaling \$172,070 as presented.

The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Discussion and possible action on any Willimantic Service District 2010-2011 budget transfer requests**

Upon a motion by Jeffrey Smith, seconded by Charles Pennewill, to pass the transfer requests for the Willimantic Service District totaling \$463,566 as presented.

The motion passed with one abstention.

#### **Any other business appropriate to come before the BOF**

None

**Public Comment**

Lori Jeffers stated that the Board of Finance ignores the will of America and we will see what the voters do this November.

Henry Crane thanked the Board of Finance for doing their duty.

James Flores stated that his main concern was for the students but wants to know why doesn't the Board of Education work harder to get the budget passed.

Upon a motion by Jeffrey Smith, seconded by Charles Pennewill, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas Pesce