

The Board of Finance held a special meeting on August 25, 2010 in the Auditorium of Windham High School, 355 High Street, Willimantic, CT 06226

Members Attending: Barbara McGrath, Charles Pennewill, Anita Sebestyen, Jay Handfield, Leo Santucci, Thomas DeVivo

Jeffrey Smith attended by teleconference.

Chairman, Barbara McGrath called the meeting to order at 9:21 p.m.

### **Public comment**

Henry Krane of Willimantic thanked the Board of Education members for attending the meeting.

### **Approval of meeting minutes**

Upon a motion by Charles Pennewill, seconded by Leo Santucci to approve the meeting minutes from June 22, 2010.

Leo Santucci commented on receiving previous meeting minutes during the most important budget meeting of the Town. The minutes should never be this far behind. The most recent should be done first because we are trying to pass a budget.

Barbara McGrath commented the finance department staff is making sure the minutes are as complete as has been requested. There is a freedom of information requirement to complete the minutes.

The motion passed with Leo Santucci abstaining.

### **Discussion and possible action on the 2010-2011 Board of Education budget**

Barbara McGrath commented the Board of Education has recommended a reduction of \$122,000. Reductions of \$100,000, \$200,000, \$400,000, and \$645,000 were reviewed. A reduction of \$100,000 would result in a mill rate increase of 1.11 for the Board of Education. A reduction of \$200,000 would result in a mill rate increase of 1.00 for the Board of Education. A reduction of \$400,000 would result in a mill rate increase of .78 for the Board of Education. A reduction of \$645,000 would result in a mill rate increase of .50 for the Board of Education.

There has already been a \$225,000 reduction from the Board of Education's original request.

Leo Santucci commented on the minimum budget requirement. Last year a truck was added to the Board of Education budget and this did not have any effect on the students. This did effect the minimum budget requirement so the Board has to be careful with what is added to the budget. This year there is \$3,448,172 in stimulus money going directly to the Board of Education and we were recently informed that an additional \$1.4 million in new stimulus money will also be going to the Board of Education. He also questioned if it is true that there are not

enough books in classrooms.

Mark Doyle commented there are not enough books in all the schools.

Barbara McGrath asked the Board of Education to get the cost of books for all the schools.

Upon a motion by Thomas DeVivo, seconded by Jeffrey Smith to reduce the Board of Education budget by \$200,000 and set the Board of Education budget at \$38,345,339.

Barbara McGrath commented the \$38,345,339 does not include the \$3,448,172 that will go directly to the Board of Education.

Thomas DeVivo commented he hopes the community will support the reduction.

Charles Pennewill commented he cannot support the reduction because it will hurt the kids.

Jay Handfield commented the primary focus for the Board is to pass the budget. We need a quality education for the kids.

Thomas DeVivo commented the total reduction to the Board of Education budget will be \$425,000.

Jeffrey Smith commented the reduction is too much but he will support it.

Barbara McGrath, Jeffrey Smith and Thomas DeVivo voted yes.

Leo Santucci, Charles Pennewill, Anita Sebestyen, and Jay Handfield voted no.

The motion did not pass.

Upon a motion by Charles Pennewill, seconded by Thomas DeVivo to reduce the Board of Education budget by \$122,000 and set the Board of Education budget at \$38,423,339.

Jay Handfield commented we need to get the budget passed and we will probably be going through this process again.

Charles Pennewill commented this reduction is recommended by the Board of Education and he is challenging them to get the voters to come out and vote.

Thomas DeVivo, Barbara McGrath, Charles Pennewill, and Jeffrey Smith voted yes.

Leo Santucci, Anita Sebestyen, and Jay Handfield voted no.

The motion passed.

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

Upon a motion by Thomas DeVivo, seconded by Charles Pennewill to have the Town Meeting for the Board of Education budget on September 7, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. in the auditorium at Town Hall.

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 Thomas DeVivo to have the referendum on September 14, 2010 with the time and place to be determined by the registrar.

The motion passed unanimously.

### **Public comment**

James Flores of Willimantic commented he will work hard to help get the budget passed. He feels there is a need for more Latino teachers in the school system.

Lori Jeffers of Willimantic commented she does not feel the budget will pass.

Kathy Doyle commented there is not a teacher in the system that does not work twelve months a year. The budget is not passing because of the half truth being said.

Michelle Dupuis of Windham commented she is glad the budget was not cut more than the \$122,000.

Bill Powers of Windham questioned if it would be possible to have someone from the State help communicate the budget to the community. Maybe that will get the voters to come out and vote.

Mr. Mastoni of Windham commented he is glad the Board only cut \$122,000.

Mr. Daluka of Windham commented it is tough to get people to move here. We need to improve the quality of the schools.

Henry Krane of Willimantic commented he is upset that people do not go out to vote and questioned if absentee ballots are done for the referendum.

Barbara McGrath commented absentee ballots are available.

Upon a motion by Thomas DeVivo, seconded by Charles Pennewill the meeting was adjourned at 10:07 p.m.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Williams, Clerk