

The Board of Finance held a special meeting on **April 4, 2013 at 6:30 p.m.** in the **Meeting Room of Windham Town Hall, 979 Main Street, Willimantic, CT 06226**

Members Attending: Anita Sebestyen, Charles Pennewill, Thomas White, Paula Haney, Nectalis Martinez.

1. Call to Order

Vice Chairman Thomas White called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

2. Public Comment

Barbara Lacy spoke regarding libraries and that they need to be adequately funded.

Doug Lary spoke regarding the cost of municipal buildings

Kevin Hoxie commented he is not happy with the Board of Education and Natchaug roof project. The Board of Education is not clear on their expenses. The education system has not improved and he would like to know where the money is going.

Mr. Baron spoke in support of the library. The Willimantic Public library supplies services to the community.

Dennis O'Brien thanked the board for the job they are doing and also thanked town employees for all they do.

James Flores commented on libraries and the services he has used in the Willimantic Public Library.

Bernie Dauteuil commented the board should not take a vote on the budget with members missing.

3. Board of Finance Comment

There was no Board of Finance comment

4. Chair's Report

Thomas White commented State Representative Susan Johnson was here to talk about the State revenues.

State Representative Susan Johnson commented the elimination of the car tax is still up in the air. Payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) is still being looked at. There are decreases in state funding throughout the State. She is working to keep PILOT as it is.

Thomas White questioned the transportation revenues for education.

Susan Johnson replied they are still looking at it. Transportation revenues were put back in the budget but a sub-committee is looking at it so it could be changed.

Thomas White asked Susan Johnson to fight for us. We need every dollar we get.

Charles Pennewill questioned if the extra ECS funds would affect the minimum budget requirement.

Susan Johnson replied it would not.

5. Discussion and possible action on the 2013-2014 Board of Education Budget

Anita Sebestyen questioned if the school resource officer and truancy officer were removed from the Board of Education budget.

Jeff Nelson commented it is the intention for the Board of Education to pay \$100,000 for the truancy officer and school resource officer in this fiscal year.

The Board of Education is looking to contract with Eastconn for a truancy officer next fiscal year.

Anita Sebestyen questioned the funding of text books and instructional supplies at the Middle School and what are we paying curriculum specialists for.

Thomas White reminded the Board that we can only make a bottom line change and cannot tell the Board of Education how to spend their budget.

Two qualified zone academy bonds and an EPC totaling \$506,944 have been removed from the Board of Education budget.

Upon a motion by Charles Pennewill, seconded by Anita Sebestyen to reduce the Board of Education budget by \$506,944.

Charles Pennewill commented on the appropriation in each school and he does not see the harm in reducing the expenses.

Paula Haney commented the enrollment is less but the cost per student is more.

The motion passed unanimously.

Charles Pennewill commented we are sending our children to other schools. This money could be spent on educating our own students.

In the State of Connecticut, parents have the choice to send their children to other schools.

The Town has an agreement with NFA, Lyman, and E.O. Smith so parents have the choice to send their children to one of those schools.

Thomas White does not agree with sending kids to other schools when we have our own school system.

Upon a motion by Charles Pennewill, seconded by Paula Haney to approve the Board of Education budget of \$43,251,319 for a public hearing on April 10, 2013.

The motion passed unanimously.

6. Discussion and possible action on the 2013-2014 General Government budget

Thomas White commented on adding the \$506,944 to the budget. This would be added to the debt service line items in the budget.

Charles Pennewill would like to see what it would cost to bundle this with new money or other financing. Tom Pesce commented this could change the principal payment but we would have to do this before August and it could be difficult to get it done by then.

Jeff Nelson commented there have been reports to show the savings on electricity, natural gas, and oil.

Thomas White questioned if the detail on the outside agencies was available. We need to know where cuts are made.

Charles Pennewill asked the Town Manager how he feels about the extra position in the finance department.

The Town Manager replied he feels strongly about keeping the position in the budget. It could be used to fund a part-time position and also used to fund improving the technology in the department.

Gay St. Louis commented on the Town Council's reduction in the Collector of Revenue budget. There are software contracts that have to be funded. Outside contractors cannot be reduced.

Upon a motion by Charles Pennewill, seconded by Paula Haney to put back the reduction of \$35,694 in budget 50105 that had been reduced by the Town Council.

The motion passed unanimously.

Upon a motion by Charles Pennewill, seconded by Paula Haney to approve the General Government budget of \$14,041,044 for a public hearing on April 10, 2013.

The motion passed unanimously.

7. Discussion and possible action on the 2013-2014 Willimantic Service District budget

Police Chief, Lisa Maruzo-Bolduc, spoke in regard to the school resource officer.

Anita commented the school resource officer has been a help given the environment we are in.

Jeff Nelson commented the school resource officer position wasn't deliberately cut and it should be looked at again.

Thomas White commented if the school resource officer position was added back, the board would consider adding \$50,000 in the budget. The board wants assurance from the Board of Education that the school resource officer will be used.

Charles Pennewill asked if there are any major concerns the chiefs have regarding their budgets.

Fire chief, Marc Scrivener, commented it is a tight budget but we can live with it.

Police chief, Lisa Maruzo-Bolduc commented she is concerned with the patrol budget overtime.

Upon a motion by Charles Pennewill, seconded by Anita Sebestyen to approve the Willimantic Service District budget of \$9,116,496 for a public hearing on April 10, 2013.

The motion passed unanimously.

11. Discussion and possible action on the Capital Improvement Plan

Charles Pennewill commented to increase the police cruiser line to \$105,000.

Upon a motion by Anita Sebestyen, seconded by Charles Pennewill to approve the one year capital improvement plan of \$7,944,777 for a public hearing on April 10, 2013.

The motion passed unanimously.

There will be a special board of finance meeting immediately following the Public Hearing on April 10, 2013.

15. Public Comment

Kevin Hoxie commented on the Board of Education budget.

Doug Lary commented on the \$500,000 not being allocated in the general government budget. Tuition is a good thing as we received tuition from other towns.

James Flores commented on the lack of communication between the Town and the Board of Education. There needs to be more tri-board meetings.

Gay St. Louis thanked the board for their work and also thanked Neal Beets supporting the additional position in the Tax Collectors budget.

Bernie Dauteuil commented on the Board of Education budget and that people should have to pay a premium to educate their kids.

16. Adjournment

Upon a motion by Paula Haney, seconded by Charles Pennewill the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Attest: _____
Thomas Pesce