

The Board of Finance held a special meeting on **March 25, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.** in the **Bellingham Auditorium at Town Hall, 979 Main Street, Willimantic, CT 06226**

Members Attending: Lynne Ide, Tyler Griffin, Paula Haney, Anita Sebestyen, Thomas White, and Ken Folan

1. Call to Order

Chairman Lynne Ide called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. Public Comment

James Flores commented on the budget and the 1.5 million surplus of last fiscal year.

Thomas DeVivo commented on the budget and supports the budget. The Town Council moved the entire cost of Dispatch into the General Government budget. The Town is working on a contract with Dispatch. There has been no discussion of expanding the police.

Lloyd Niles commented it is unfair to move the dispatch budget into the General Government Budget. He will be paying for services he does not get.

Ernie Eldridge commented on a new outside agency, CLICK. They are a good agency and hopes the Board will keep them in the budget.

3. Board of Finance Comment

Lynne Ide commented on the calendar for the budget. Last week the Board of Education presented their budget, this week the Town Manager will present the Town and Willimantic Service District budget. On April 15th, there will be public hearing at 6:00 p.m. followed by a Board of Finance meeting covering all budgets. April 21st is the last day to make changes. The annual Town meeting for the budget will be May 5th, and the budget referendum will be May 12th.

4. Presentation and Special Reports

Presentation from Town Attorney on Charter Changes:

Town attorney, Richard Cody, answered questions on the Charter changes that take effect July 1, 2015.

The Board of Finance will have no role in the Willimantic Taxing District budget.

If the Willimantic Service District budget doesn't pass by July 1, 2015, the Willimantic Taxing District will now have the power to oversee the budget.

The Board of Finance has bottom line authority on the Board of Education budget and line item authority on the Town department budgets.

Transfers for the Willimantic Taxing District will be approved by the Council.

How can a taxing district be established without legislation.
The Willimantic Service District is changing its name. It is already established.

Tom White commented the Town Council does not have the right to raise taxes and that is a Board of Finance decision. It was not properly done by the Charter Commission.

Will the Willimantic Taxing District have separate tax bills?
Tax bills should remain the same way they have been.

Will the Willimantic Taxing District need to have a separate checking account?
No, it should be the same as it currently is.

Who will supervise Willimantic Taxing District employees?
Supervision will be the same as it currently is.

Presentation from the Switchboard Association:

Jan Mott treasurer from the Switchboard Association presented the Board with their budget. Most of their budget is labor for services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. Last year there were approximately 3500 ambulance calls, 1,500 fire calls, and 20,000 police calls.

Presentation from Town Manager on Town and Willimantic Service District Budget:

Neal Beets, Town Manager, presented the Town and Willimantic Service District budget. A copy of the power point presentation was handed out to the Board. Seven collective bargaining unit contracts are up for negotiation. We are still self-insured for health insurance, and will be going self insured for workers compensation. The biggest changes in the Town's budget are the additional cost in dispatch (page 44) which has the total cost including the Willimantic Service District and Windham First Taxing District. Debt service costs (page 73) also have a large increase. We are looking at refinancing the energy performance lease. Additional costs are also from the Non-profit agencies, Senior Center, and Economic Development. In fiscal year 2015, Economic Development was only budgeted for part of the year so 2016 has a budget for the full year. The only new staff would be a part-time bi-lingual case worker at the Senior Center and this is only if the new location of the Senior Center at the former Access Agency was to open during the fiscal year. There is no additional staff in the Willimantic Service District budget. The Police pension contribution has gone down and the Fire pension contribution has gone up based on actuary recommendation.

Page 105 – Capital Budget – One year and 5 year plans were reviewed. The Town's standard requests include to replace a plow/dump truck, roads and sidewalks, and 2 energy efficiency projects. New requests include a new ambulance and funding for Noznick Park as recommended by the Capital Tri-Board. The Planning and Zoning commission has also recommended funding for POCD. The Willimantic Service District requests include replacing three police vehicles, a study for jail renovation, and new telecommunication system.

5. Discussion and possible action on the 2015-2016 Proposed General Government budget

Dispatch contract is close to being settled. Lebanon is officially coming back effective July 1st.

No action was taken.

6. Discussion and possible action on the 2015-2016 Willimantic Service District budget

No action was taken

7. Future agenda items

Board of Education and Willimantic Service District budgets will be discussed on April 1st
Town budget will be discussed on April 8th
There will be Public Hearing on April 15th followed by a regular meeting
Breakdown on ambulance calls
Attorney response on the Statue for the Taxing district

8. Public Comment

Mark Scrivener asked to come to the April 8th meeting to discuss the Fire and Ambulance budgets.
Former Fire Chief Walsh is being inducted in the Fire Chiefs Hall of Fame on April 15th.

Kevin Hoxie commented on the Town Attorney responses on Charter questions.

James Flores commented on the information provided to the Board on the revenue surplus from Fiscal Year 2014. Why was the information provided when a Board of Finance person asked for it and not when he asked for the same information.

Susan Johnson thanked the board for all their hard work and to stay in touch with her.

Bernie Dauteuil commented on the overtime budget for the police department. He suggested a study be done to see why the department cannot keep officers.

Thomas DeVivo commented on the charter and the Willimantic Taxing District will be an agent of the Town like Water and Sewer are. The dispatch costs should be the same if there are 1,000 calls or 10,000 calls. It's one Town and one Dispatch Center.

Thomas White commented he requested a document as a member of the Board of Finance.

Ken Folan commented it is unacceptable behavior for a member of the community to publicly name a member of a Board.

9. Adjournment

Upon a motion by Thomas White, seconded by Anita Sebestyen the meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Attest: _____

Thomas Pesce