



THE TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE BOARD OF FINANCE MEETING MINUTES March 2, 2016

A Board of Finance Meeting for the Town of Woodbridge was held in the Central Meeting Room at the Town Hall, Woodbridge, Connecticut on Wednesday, March 2, 2016 at 6:00 pm

PRESENT: Chairman, Matthew Giglietti; Vice Chairman, Sandy Stein; Karen Cusick; Andrew Esposito; David King

ALSO PRESENT: First Selectman, Ellen Scalettar; Administrative Officer/Director of Finance, Anthony Genovese; Budget Analyst, Karen Crosby

Chairman, Matthew Giglietti, called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

Tony reported that the Board of Selectmen met recently and modified their budget recommendation. The revenues increased slightly and the expenditures were reduced. The Board of Selectmen funded the Country Club Pool only from July through Labor Day not the spring of 2017. The one area of risk is the fees. The Recreation Commission lowered the fees and think that they will have more people sign up and would generate more revenue. With the change in the Country Club of Woodbridge Pool, the budget recommended by the Board of Selectmen is 4.97%.

Tony stated that we are still trying to figure out the impact of the car tax with the State. Ellen stated that the leadership of the General Assembly is very committed to the funds that go along with the car tax cap. It is a very important initiative for them and at the same time we are reading about the severe budget problems. Hopefully, the State budget will be done before we have to conclude this budget.

Matt stated that one of the biggest things impacted the budget this year is the increase we received from Amity. That is not to say that Amity's budget is out of control. It is a very responsible budget with an increase of less than 3%. The reason we have an increase of 6.86% from Amity is because of the daily census as of October 1, 2015. The number of Woodbridge students has attending Amity has increased by seven, but at the same time both Orange and Bethany population went down, so the Woodbridge percentage increased.

Matt stated that the Board should talk about the large items that may be able to be put off a year. Matt stated that Sandy had come up with a few ideas and Sandy was asked to explain them.

Sandy thanked Tony and Karen for attaching the dollar amounts to her ideas. She stated that we should look at group items that we can't take care of this year: new vehicle requests, truck replacement requests. Sandy stated that Karen put together the vehicle requests with the dollar amounts. Sandy stated that maybe we should look at Technology requests including the Board of Education. It is not that we don't support the request, we just can't afford it. Also, the Board should take a look at outside IT contractors. The Fire Department has a company, and the Town Hall and Police use another. She thinks we need to get an outside consultant to see how this can be combined. We don't have an IT expert on staff to help with this. Another thought regards the Former Fire Station, we are not using it but yet we still pay utilities, why not mothball it until we decide what to do with it.

Also, we have a lot of copiers and printers and maybe we should consolidate those. We are committed to fixing our roads every year, but maybe we can't afford the \$700,000 this year. A 4.97% tax increase for the residents is more than is reasonable for the Town residents.

Matt stated that we should talk about the Beecher Technology expenditures. He stated that we have surely given Beecher more than \$1,000,000 over the years. Maybe we should remove their \$110,000 from the Capital Budget.

Ellen asked if the \$110,000 was a reduction from what their original request was. Tony stated that the Board of Education requested \$125,000 and the Board of Selectmen reduced it to \$110,000.

Sandy stated that opposed to targeting individual dollars and there are certain things that we can't do. She feels that singling out one group is not necessarily the way she would want to go. Matt asked if she wanted to take technology from every department. Sandy stated that unless there is a compelling reason, that we are not funding new equipment this year.

Tony stated that at some point there may be a server or a router that needs to be replaced.

Andy asked what our goal is, is it 4.97%. Matt stated he would like to get it under 3%.

Tony stated to get it under 3%, we need to reduce \$850,000 and 2 ½% will take just over \$1,000,000.

Ellen stated that some of the Beecher Technology request was to provide iPads to more grades.

Matt asked if we take the technology request out of each budget and if a department has a critical need, then we can add some back. Tony stated that he can find out if there are any critical needs. The Technology reductions include:

WBOE - \$110,000 – Capital Budget
Fire Department - \$30,000 – Capital Budget
Police Department - \$7,000 - Capital Budget
Town Clerk Computer - \$1,300 – Operating Budget
Information Systems Computer - \$6,000 – Operating Budget
Police Department Computer - \$2,300 – Operating Budget
Library Computer - \$1,800 – Operating Budget
Fire Department Computer - \$11,000 – Operating Budget

Matt stated that once we get by the Board of Education, the requests are small. If a computer dies, we could surely find the funds to replace it. Tony will check with the departments if there are any critical needs. He will then report to the Board at the next meeting.

Andy asked about paving and what do we want to do there. David asked if the costs may be lower due to the petroleum that is used. Matt asked if they wanted to reduce the request to \$500,000. David asked if Tony could find out how much the road work costs per mile. Tony stated that we do get about \$300,000 from the State each year toward paving.

Matt stated that the Library has some HVAC repairs that total \$25,000 that both he and Tony think can be paid from the Noyes D. Clark Fund (Library Fund)

Darling House - \$7,000 in abatement projects that can wait.

Fire Department Air Packs – Tony stated that they are definitely needed and it is spread over two years but the Town can spread over three years and pay very little interest and save approximately \$46,000.

Youth Services – We can save \$20,000. Tony explained that this is a separate fund that the Town subsidizes for Youth Services. There is a balance in the fund that allows the Town not to subsidize next year.

Contingency – there may be \$100,000 savings in this year's Contingency that could help with some FY17 Capital requests.

Labor Contracts - The contracts have not been settled and there could be savings with fringe benefits. Tony hopes to have a better idea in the next few weeks and would hopefully have better numbers by the budget hearing.

Matt asked Tony for the total budget reduction at this point. Tony reported a reduction of \$567,000 with the Technology, Roads, Contingency, and the other small amounts.

Matt asked to review the Capital Budget.

Animal Control – Vehicle replacement – Tony stated that this is funded by the three Towns. It is a 2006 Ford Explorer and it definitely has some transmission problems and needs to be replaced. It might be able to get another year, but something may happen and a replacement might be needed in October.

Assessor – Revaluation – Spreading the cost over a few years.

Thomas Darling Roof Repair -- Must be done

Fire Commission – Assistant Chief's Car – There is \$26,000 in reserve. There are a number of problems with the vehicle. Matt asked if maybe the Association can help out with.

Fire Department – Assistant Chief's Vehicle - the vehicle is a Ford Expedition with 180,000 miles. It currently has a head gasket problem. Tony will talk with the Chief and see if the Association can help. They will take the \$35,000 out of the budget for now.

Police Vehicles - Tony will talk with the Assistant Chief to see if they can forego the vehicles for a year. Reduce the budget by \$47,000 for vehicles for now.

Public Works – Request is to replace a plow truck. Matt asked Tony to speak with Warren to see if the truck could last another year. Take out the \$179,000 for the truck for now.

Matt asked Tony about IT and if we can reduce Software Maintenance. Tony stated that the software maintenance is for the critical computer programs used by various departments on a regular basis. He further stated that there is probably an opportunity to get an outside expert to come in and help us come up with a more comprehensive town-wide technology plan. One who will evaluate the departments and review the funding for technology in the departments and the timeframe on computer replacements.

Sandy stated that this means there should be dollars put aside for this type of consultant to come in.

Former Fire Station - Matt stated that we just can't shut the building without any expenses. Tony stated that there is some heat and electricity that would be needed. Sandy stated that the building hasn't been used and we are paying to store the fire department equipment and should we continue this. Tony stated that we would have to ask them about the equipment and if that building is the best place for the equipment. Ellen stated that even if we closed the building, there would be minimum utilities that needed to be paid.

The Board reviewed the Operating budget department by department to see if there are any areas for reduction.

Tony updated the Board with the reductions made so far. The total reduction brings the budget to a 3.05% increase. So there are no reductions in fringe benefits or the contingency amount at this point.

Matt stated that for the most part, the departments submitted very reasonable budgets.

Public Works – Matt asked Tony to get more information on leasing the sweeper for the next meeting.

Recreation – Sandy asked Tony is there was anything that he might be able to do regarding the banking fees. Tony will look into that. Recreation fees were increased to compensate for the addition of banking fees for credit card payments. They increased fees by about \$50,000. Tony reported that they did get quotes from several banks for the on-line payments.

Matt stated that we all know what an asset is to the Town. Matt also asked that when the contracts are settled, will John also get an increase. Tony reported that he would. Matt stated that in a year where we are looking for savings that for one person to receive a \$10,000 raise plus two cost of living increases is a lot. He thinks that maybe giving his a \$4,000 would be appropriate. The Recreation Commission is trying to rectify this issue that has been going on for a long time.

Country Club Pool – Sandy asked that given the number of residents that use the Pool, should we not run the program this summer. We don't have a guarantee of the revenue at all and it may cost us more money. Ellen stated that there is a lot of support for the pool. This keeps the pool running at least for the time that we are having golf continue. She thinks the pool is something that people value very much. Andy asked "how many people" are members of this pool. Ellen reported that there are 45 households as members. Ellen stated that the Recreation Commission feels that with the reduction in the rates that there will be many more members this summer.

Sandy stated that if there were no other alternatives for swimming in the summer, then maybe we should continue but there are other alternatives. Why should we be subsidizing and competing with these other alternatives who are also tax paying facilities and should we be doing this.

Sandy stated that we don't have to decide this tonight, but there should be a discussion.

Matt asked if for one year we don't spend \$75,000 on books in the Library would that be a problem. Sandy stated that a lot of that is for subscriptions, and we would have to ask Eric about it. Tony will check with Eric and report back to the Board.

Employee Benefits – Matt stated that when the contracts are settled, there should be savings here.

Sandy asked that two more items be looked at for next meeting. One would be look at printers and copiers. Tony stated he will put together a schedule of when leases expire and a plan to move forward. The second item is printing and binding in a number of departments and how much of that do we really have to do. Many times many more copies are made than what is used. A lot of the information is available on-line now.

After a review of all departments in the Operating Budget, the following changes were made:

Recreation Department Director Salary was reduced by \$5,395

The Board has brought it to a 3.03% budget increase.

Matt stated that Tony will bring back more information at the March 17, 2016 meeting and we will have that night to make the recommendation to the Preliminary Budget Hearing.

The Board of Finance adjourned at 7:10 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Crosby

Karen Crosby
Budget Analyst