



# THE TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE BOARD OF FINANCE MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES JUNE 16, 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 Thursday, June 16, 2016 at 6:00 pm

**PRESENT:** Chairman, Matthew Giglietti; Vice Chairman, Sandy Stein; Andrew Esposito; Paul Kuriakose

**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

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

## **ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER / DIRECTOR OF FINANCE REPORT**

Tony reported the auditors are coming in July for the first review of our accounts. The Year End balance is up to \$528,000 this is an example of conservative budgeting and with a \$400,000 allocation from Fund Balance, things happen during the year that, because of our conservative approach, that increase our surplus. This has to do with the Board of Education in two aspects. The first is in Intergovernmental revenue and Tony had projected the Special Ed Excess Cost revenue to come in at \$40-\$50,000 but with the expenses in special education at Beecher, the reimbursement is \$137,000. This figure comes out late in the year. Also, in intergovernmental revenues there are some surpluses conveyance taxes in building permits and the pool has a deficit as previously discussed.

Tony reported that the Center Building is doing well with utilities this year. The Police has a surplus of about \$45,000 primarily due to vacant positions. The Board of Education deficit has been reduced to \$140,000 and may go down even further. Sandy reported that it is now \$128,000.

## **Bond / Note Sale**

Tony reported that there is the annual bond/note sale coming up. The first is the taxable notes for the Country Club purchase coming up that is about \$5.2M. We have to roll those notes over. The second is for the Beecher School project. We have about \$13.3M total. Last year we borrowed \$5M based on where we were with the project. The issue is the State Grant and how much we are going to get from the grant. We don't want to issue too much in bonds because that would be for twenty years. We will issue \$4.5M in bonds and the rest in notes until we know how much we will receive in grant funds.

Matt stated that we did not spend the \$400,000 allocated from Fund Balance to balance the budget; we are actually returning at least \$128,000 that will be returned to fund balance.

Tony reported that Moody's has started a new process where they issue annual comments on each of the towns that they follow. In addition to the comments that are issued when the town borrows.

Sandy stated that by following normal practices, this is what we do every year; this is what we set aside to cover from the Fund Balance, the result where we return funds to the fund balance. Due to the conservative budgeting we do, and Tony's expertise, this is where we end up. We haven't done anything differently than we have done for years.

Ellen stated that by budgeting this way, we avoid unnecessary tax increases. Without the fund balance funds, we would be raising the mill rate when it would not have been needed.

Matt stated that in addition, we read in letters from candidates for the Woodbridge Bd of Ed and a letter from the Amity Bd of Ed and several other letters that we would be losing our credit rating. The Town of Woodbridge credit rating has been reaffirmed at Aaa. He read from the Moody's Report:

*"Woodbridge's credit position is extremely strong, and its Aaa rating far surpasses the median rating of Aa3 for US cities. Notable credit factors include a sizable tax base with a superior socioeconomic profile, and a mid-ranged debt burden with a negligible pension liability. It also takes into account a healthy financial position."*

Matt further noted that we can safely say that Woodbridge is in excellent shape under the financial guidance of Tony, Ellen, the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance, we are in great shape.

Ellen stated that she meant to bring it with her, but the Town has won the GFOA Audit award this year.

Tony also noted that there is another Moody's report regarding the State of Connecticut. Due to the Town not relying heavily on State funds, the State rating will only have a minimal Impact on our rating.

Tony also reviewed the fixed costs relative to budget. Fixed costs are debt service costs, pension liabilities, OPEB costs, retiree health care costs. Woodbridge fixed costs are approximately 10% to 11% and the State of Connecticut is 27.4% and increasing.

Sandy stated that the report indicates that Bridgeport, New Haven, and Hartford are exposed to the State's fiscal stress because of their heavy reliance on State Aid.

### **APPROVAL OF SUSPENSE LIST**

Matt stated that this was reviewed at the May Board of Finance Meeting.

The Board of Finance voted (Giglietti/Stein) unanimously to approve the Suspense List as received from Pat Crisco, Tax Collector.

**FUNDING REQUESTS**

1516-14 Allocation.....\$4,000 (Line Item Transfer)

To: **Fire/Communications – Cellular** 1230-00/54220  
From: **Fire/Rentals-Equipment** \$3,000 1230-00/53610  
**Fire/Gear Replacement** \$1,000 1230-00/55125  
For: Increase in cellular service due to iPads in all trucks  
Vote: (Giglietti/Stein) Unanimous

Sandy asked if they included this in their FY17 budget request. Tony will get the answer for them.

1516-22 Allocation.....\$110,143 (Funding Request)

To: **CNR Fire/Machinery Airpacks** 302-2300/57410/AIRPK  
From: **Bd of Finance/ Contingency** 1170-00/56800  
For: Fund Airpack Capital Project requested in FY17 budget with FY16 Contingency Funds  
(this project was removed from the FY17 capital budget)  
Vote: (Giglietti/Esposito) Unanimous

Tony stated that there are three funding requests that will be done next month for FY16. The first is the Woodbridge Board of Ed, the others are for the Fire Department truck repairs, and the last is the outstanding union contracts that are not settled.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Board of Finance voted (Giglietti/ Kuriakose) unanimously to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2016 meeting as presented.

**FIRST SELECTMAN’S REPORT**

Ellen reported on the following since the last Board of Finance Meeting:

**Areas of Appreciation**

- Our first responders have been very busy. There were two very serious accidents last week. One involved a fatality and the other involved young children and one was critically injured. Ellen thinks the child is now doing ok. Ellen just wanted to let them know how much they are appreciated. The police, fire and AMR all worked very well together. The second accident needed five ambulances.
- Person of the Month for June is Nate Case. He is extraordinary for what he does for the Town. He is a volunteer fire fighter, he is a Boy Scout troop leader, and he is one of the most dedicated people for keeping up the Alice Newton Street Park.

**Town Projects**

- Ellen has appointed an ad-hoc Information Technology committee of which Paul is a member. Hopefully they will be getting started soon. They will be looking at information technology town-wide and see if there are ways to coordinate better and plan for the future.
- There is also an ad-hoc committee looking at the first responder radio needs. We really need to get on the same page with police and fire.

The Town has been working with the Department of Health in getting a bathroom at the Senior Center using remaining Small Cities Funds. That project should be going forward soon.

- Had a meeting on the solar project for the Landfill and the company doing the project has received a very high estimate from UI on connection charges and we are now looking into that.

### **Community Events**

- We have a first-time partnership with the New Haven Festival of Arts and Ideas. On June 22<sup>nd</sup> there is a performance of Air Play, a comic adventure for all ages. There is a discount for Woodbridge residents and a reception afterwards.
- Attended and participated in the swearing in of Chief of Police Frank Cappiello.
- Attended the Rotary Wine Tasting
- Attended the Garden Club Annual Luncheon – they do so much for the Town.
- Attended the retirement dinner for Dr. Stella
- Memorial Day there were two ceremonies. First at the Fire House and the larger Town ceremony was held indoors. Barry Joseph did a great job.
- Attended Anthony Luciani's Eagle Scout award.
- Attended Darling House Tavern Night

### **School Events**

- Attended DARE Graduation. Officer Vinny Lynch does a great job with the students. They received a national award.
- Beecher Road School ribbon cutting ceremony for the project. The project came in on time and on budget.
- Attended the 8<sup>th</sup> grade promotion at Bethany Middle School, Amity graduation and Beecher Road School graduation. All three events were lovely.

### **Economic Development and Regional Coordination**

- Betsy Yagla has been organizing some business sector meetings
- DOT follow-up meeting regarding Exit 59. There is a terrific team at DOT working on this project. They answered every question at the public meeting. There were some changes as a result of some of those comments
- Attended the monthly South Central Connecticut Regional Council of Governments meeting
- Continues her monthly meetings with Mayor Harp

Andy stated that they are putting a 7-Eleven down on Litchfield Turnpike right where all the traffic problems are. That is going to increase the traffic problems.

Ellen stated that DOT is working as quickly as they can regarding the tunnels. She stated it is not going to be good in that area for some time.

### **LIAISON REPORTS**

Amity – Matt attended the meeting and it was Jack Levine's last meeting. It was a little controversial. They are planning on a \$2M bond issue to take care of a few projects. The Finance Committee has to approve any contract over \$35,000. One of the contracts up for approval was the Site Based Grounds Maintenance Program. That is the company that cuts the grass, fields and takes care of the property. Sports Turf of Connecticut has been the only bidder for years. This is a \$200,000 contract. This year someone else bid on it and it was \$25,000 less than Sports Turf of Connecticut. The people in charge looked into the low bid and they said they found that his work wasn't good. The Board recommended awarding the bid to Sports Turf of Connecticut. The low bidder showed up with his attorney from Wiggin and Dana. He had a book with letters

from the towns that Amity said gave the low bidder poor recommendations with good recommendations. The Finance Committee voted 3-1 against awarding the bid to the higher bidder. The current company takes wonderful care of the high school but not the other fields. Matt stated that Amity says Fairfield said they did a poor job and they guy comes with a letter from Fairfield saying he does a great job.

The Board voted 7-4 to approve the higher bidder. The chairman of the Finance Committee didn't let the board know how Finance Committee voted on the issue. Matt stated that he thinks there will be a law suit or FOI request. It is not necessarily that he was low bidder and didn't get it, it was more of the detrimental things that were said. Matt suggested that they table this to find out who was telling the truth about the recommendations they received regarding the low bidder.

Matt contacted the Amity Board and told him to be prepared because the low bidder and his attorney were in the back taking notes.

Matt stated that there will be more to come on this.

Matt stated that he wanted to talk to Ellen about the Amity Board of Education not taking or considering the recommendations of the Finance Committee.

Matt also reported that there have been discussions of disbanding the Finance Committee. Sandy asked if it would be appropriate to have a discussion with Bill Blake, and discuss with him the importance of the Finance Committee. Ellen stated that she thinks she should start with Derry Gorski and Jim Zeoli.

Fire Commission – Paul reported that the commission hasn't met yet this month.

Police – Andy reported that it was Frank's first meeting and it was mostly done in executive session regarding personnel.

Matt stated that the Woodbridge fields are pristine – they are in great shape. He gave kudos to the parks department and the work they do.

Library – Sandy reported that she attended the commission meeting. Ginny Calistro will be stepping down from the commission. The book sale was very successful. They participate in a swap with Beecher Road School one a year. The Commission recommended the hire of Jennifer Sullivan as the Adult Services Librarian. There is still a problem with the delivery service run by the State. The met with the State Librarian and he is aware of the situation. He is suggesting that perhaps the participant may have to fund an additional person and vehicle to make this program work. There is more to come on this. The budget related issue is that they used to get their internet for free and will stop at the end of June. Eric is looking to Optimum to supply internet service. Tony made Eric aware of the remaining funds in the library building account. Eric is looking to purchase a large screen television and a new projector for the room.

Andy asked how the air conditioning and humidity issue at the library. Sandy and Tony reported that there are not reported complaints. The elevator is also working well.

Woodbridge Board of Ed – Sandy reported that from a special education perspective they were over budget by \$400,000 and to get that down to \$128,000 shows the work they did to find the funds. The building project helped with the utilities. They are still saving even with installing the air conditioning. There were also some personnel and insurance savings. Sandy reported that there were some retirements from Beecher this year – Sandy Simowitz, Joe Halowienko, Larry Hurwitz, and Adrienne Coleman. The turnover happens when they offer an incentive.

Sandy reported that the University of New Haven no longer has the intern program. Dr. Stella tried to get something started with Southern Connecticut State University to no avail.

Andy stated that in budgeting this year we talked about the computers being part of the Beecher operating budget and not the capital budget.

Sandy stated that she has discussed this with the Finance Committee. They will take that under consideration; Sandy explained that if it is essential to curriculum it should go in their operating budget. If there are infrastructure components that need to be added then it could go into the capital budget. She reminded them that the capital budget is the first place the Boards look to cut. She also stated that technology was cut throughout the Town budgets. If they don't want to see this happen again, they need to change their strategy.

Matt stated that this is the last meeting of the fiscal year and he wants to express his great appreciation of the Board of Finance. It was a challenging budget year and in the end the Board put together a sensible budget that addresses the needs of the town and keeps taxes fairly reasonable.

Matt stated that our esteemed member, David King, is under the weather right now. You don't get any better than David King, he is a terrific guy and has been a great member– if he is watching we want him to know he is in our thoughts and prayers and we hope to see him in July.

The Board of Finance voted (Giglietti/Stein) unanimously to adjourn at 6:50 pm

Respectfully submitted,

*Karen Crosby*

Karen Crosby  
Budget Analyst