



**THE TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE
BOARD OF FINANCE
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2022
6:00 PM**

A Virtual Joint Board of Finance / Board of Selectmen Meeting for the Town of Woodbridge using Webex was held on Thursday, March 3, 2022

Due to the Corona-19 Pandemic, this meeting was held virtually using Webex. Link to the YouTube recording:
<https://youtu.be/t6mF6PQVvfA>

BOF PRESENT: Chairman, Matthew Giglietti; Vice Chairman, Susan Jacobs; Tom Handler; Donavon Lofters; Dwight Rowland; Ellen Scalettar

ALSO PRESENT: First Selectman, Beth Heller; Administrative Officer / Director of Finance, Anthony Genovese; Budget Analyst / Payroll & Benefits Administrator, Karen Crosby

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

Matt stated that the purpose of this meeting is to review the Board of Selectmen budget recommendations and to discuss possible changes the Board of Finance will make. The Board of Selectmen came up with a 5.42% increase and Matt is looking to get the increase to 2%. This budget recommendation to the Preliminary Budget will be finalized on March 17th. The Board is going to discuss ideas and some things that Matt and Tony are suggesting.

Matt asked Tony to review the list of items that were sent to the Board.

Tony stated that the first was a letter from Dr. Budd stating that they are continuing to look at their budget and explore numerous possibilities in his budget in how to work collaboratively with the Town to support education but respect the taxpayers. The second were some informational items including a ten-year history of the Town, WBOE and Amity with the increases over the years comparing 2022 to 2013. The Town departments have increased 1.67%, the Town contribution to Amity Board of Education has increased 30.1% and does not take into consideration the surplus dollars that have been returned to the Town, Woodbridge Board of Education has increased 21.4%. The Woodbridge Board of Education has also returned surplus dollars.

Matt stated that over the last 5 years Woodbridge Board of Education has returned \$222,000 but the Town also had to fund \$386,000 to cover deficits. Over the past five years Amity returned \$3,380,000.

Tony explained the 1.67% increase and also stated that the capital budget has been reduced by 22% and debt service has also been reduced by a little under 14%, so the Town is borrowing less.

Matt asked Tony that over the past ten years the budget has increased by 15.38% or an average of 1.5%. Tony stated that he is correct, and it shows that it is not an expenditure problem, it is revenue along with a very low Grand List growth.

The next document provided was a full-time staff history in the Town departments. IN 2013 there were 85 full time positions that rose to a high in 2017 of 88 and in 2022 there are 78 full time positions. From 2017 to 2022 the are 10 less full-time employees. The Town was able to become more efficient while providing the same level of service over that time period.

Another document provided was a random sample of area proposed board of education budget increases which included Bethany and Orange.

Matt reported that the Amity Board of Education met to make their recommendation to the full Amity board. The Bethany Board of Finance member said that they are looking at about .5% and the Orange member said that they are looking at an increase of 3% or lower. Dr. Byars reported that in the Amity DRG the average increase was 4% and statewide the average increase is 3.7%.

The last document was a list of possible budget reductions which Tony reviewed which included using current Contingency Funds, Amity Surplus Funding, not funding the new officer position, three healthcare adjustments, and putting Amity and Beecher both at 3.99% increases. The total adjustments amount \$1,476,348 which would put the mill rate increase at 2.39%.

Matt stated that the Woodbridge Board of Education request is not possible. Ellen asked Tony to go through what Beecher started at and what reductions have been made and what the Board of Selectmen did.

Tony reported that their original request was 13.8% and they made some adjustments to healthcare and moved two items (oil tank removal & another item) to the Capital Budget which reduced their operating budget increase to 8.92%.

Tony reported to get to a 2% increase it is \$1.7M and it is at \$1.4M now. If the Board wants to get to 1%, it would be finding \$2.2M in reductions. That would put the increase to .9%.

Susan asked if any of the Beecher increase attributed to the pandemic. Tony stated that Dr. Budd would have to answer that.

Susan asked Tony if he knows how a budget cut to get to as 3.99% increase would affect them. Susan stated that Beecher is actually 2.5 elementary schools. Matt stated that it has been that way even when his children were there. He stated that he doesn't ever remember an increase for Beecher like this year.

Susan asked Tony if he could find out if there are and COVID related expenses and what a \$765,000 reduction would mean.

Ellen asked Tom Handler if the Beecher Board is inferring that in comparison to the other DRG B schools that Beecher is underfunded. Tom stated that he thinks that is their position. The other DRG B schools have not had the budget cuts in the past like Beecher has.

Matt stated that everyone should take the next two weeks to look at the budget and take the suggestions that he and Tony had put together and bring any other suggestions on March 17th. That is when the Board will make the recommendations too the Preliminary Budget Hearing.

Ellen asked Tony to report on how the mill rate increase relates to a tax increase.

Tony stated that Governor Lamont is discussing a motor vehicle cap. The State is supposed to offset the cap in grant funds. The last time this happened we got a portion of money and the second year the cap was above the Woodbridge mill rate, so Woodbridge was not affected.

Ellen asked Tony to do a calculation on what it would be if we only got 50% of the funds from the State for the Motor Vehicle taxes.

The meeting adjourned at 6:43 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Crosby

Karen Crosby
Budget Analyst
Payroll & Benefits Administrator