

BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING – APRIL 21, 2015
MEETING ROOM B TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Warren Serenbetz, Lynne Vanderslice, Richard Creeth, Jeff Rutishauser, John Kalamarides
Absent: Al Alper

Town Employees: Richard McArdle, Phil Damato, Lt. Rob Kluk, Steve Pierce, Joe Burke

Others Present: Kendra Baker, Wilton Bulletin

Call to Order

Chairman Warren Serenbetz called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

With the exception of revised language to the Budget Deliberation Meeting minutes of March 31, all minutes listed in the Agenda were approved, seconded and carried unanimously. The revisions to the March 31st minutes were to correct wording regarding Debt Service and the Ending Fund Balance. Ms. Vanderslice read her recommended corrections, after which Richard Creeth made a motion to approve the March 31st minutes as corrected. Ms. Vanderslice seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Ms. Vanderslice gave Mr. Serenbetz the typed revised language, which will be incorporated into these minutes.

2015 Suspense List

Tax Collector Phil Damato presented the estimate of uncollectable taxes for transfer to the Town's Suspense Tax Book. He informed the Board that although items on the list are transferred to the suspense list, they are still collectible. Most of the list is comprised of out of state motor vehicle taxes, noting that motor vehicles are billed in arrears and most taxpayers don't realize that. Mr. Damato advised that of the \$340,000 balance on this list approximately \$25,000 will drop off because of the 15 year rule, a State Statute. This year to date \$2,719 has been collected and there is \$4,425 interest on that amount. After discussion, Lynne Vanderslice made a motion to approve the transfer of \$24,940.95 to the Suspense List. Richard Creeth seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

JAG Grant – Police Department

Lt. Rob Kluk gave a brief overview of the JAG Grant. He informed the Board that the grant would be used to acquire six body cameras and the software system to support them. Ms. Vanderslice asked his opinion of how a body camera might change policing. Lt. Kluk replied they had not yet written a policy on when cameras would be activated and used but said most likely they would be used during traffic stops, arrests made, or when routine calls escalate. There is also a \$5,000 grant in addition to this JAG Grant which would be used towards the equipment. In response to how many cameras these grants could purchase, Lt. Kluk informed the Board that they did not know the exact cost as they were still pricing these, but most are in the \$800 - \$1,000 range plus the cost of software. John Kalamarides made a motion to accept this JAG Grant, which has already been approved by the Board of Selectmen and signed by First Selectman Brennan. Richard Creeth seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

FY 15 Status Report – March 31, 2015

Richard McArdle, Wilton's Controller, presented the report as Ms. Dennies was unable to attend. He informed the Board that the town is in good shape going forward through June. The foreclosure scheduled for this month will most likely now be in Fiscal 2016 due to the lengthy legal process. He expects an uptick in additional revenues in May and June, with people buying Merwin Meadows passes. Mr. McArdle also noted that the \$133,334.85 in Unrealized Gain is actually the interest for the period with the Actual Gain being \$28,000 through March. To date, we have not drawn down on the Charter Authority.

Ms. Vanderslice asked if the lifts at the garage were done yet. Work has been done but Mr. McArdle advised depending on how Public Works finishes the year will determine if we need to go to Charter Authority. Jeff Rutishauser asked if the state road reimbursement would still come in this year. Mr. McArdle replied that filing cannot be done until March 31st and when the reimbursement comes in, it will be accrued as revenue to offset expenses. Mr. Rutishauser asked if Cost Sharing and Excess Special Ed should be considered offsets. Ms. Vanderslice offered an explanation that satisfied his query. Another question involved the (\$11K) in Education Expenses; if it was a carry-over or a refund. Mr. McArdle advised he would look into it and get back to the Board. He added it may still be used for Miller-Driscoll, but he was not certain without further research. Lastly, Mr. Serenbetz asked if the Legal Notices for the Annual Town Meeting had been put in the papers, to which Mr. McArdle responded yes. The Board was satisfied with his responses and had nothing further to ask him.

Parks & Rec Audit Update

Steve Pierce of Parks & Rec and Joe Burke of the Parks & Rec Commission appeared before the Board. Mr. Pierce spoke to the audit comments on segregation of duties. The department is implementing the audit recommendations they are able to, with its small office staff of four while striving to maintain a level of customer service.

Cash handling solutions at Merwin Meadows are being researched. Short-term includes a summer intern with the responsibility to bring the cash to Finance. The long-term goal would be an electronic point-of-sale system so credit cards are accepted, to reduce the amount of cash and make a tighter paper trail. John Kalamarides asked about purchasing I-pads with the attachment to run credit cards for now. Per Mr. Pierce by next year they should have internet capability to tie into the whole system and he was not sure if I-pads would integrate. Mr. Rutishauser reinforced Mr. Kalamarides' view saying since hand-held devices are so inexpensive that getting cash out of the system was more important than waiting to integrate. Mr. Pierce agreed to talk with Finance this week. Ms. Vanderslice asked that they verify the hand-helds would work with the new system. All BoF members felt this is an acceptable short-term solution to get cash out of the system. Ms. Vanderslice had more questions about existing controls over cash handling and credits. She will meet with Mr. Pierce at Parks & Rec's office to view their procedures. Mr. Pierce commented that as part of the Comstock renovation, computers would be put outside the office to encourage the public to self-register for programs using credit cards.

Mr. Creeth inquired about the energy surcharge for non-compliance of lights off at the fields. Steve Pierce replied he has educated groups on this with moderate success. He told the Board that there is a phone system with codes to dial in to get the lights turned off after field use. Jeff Rutishauser asked the leagues were billed for lights. The answer was that leagues are billed for actual hours, so they are eligible for a credit of unused hours. This is the incentive of using the phone-in system.

Mr. Kalamarides expressed appreciation that Mr. Pierce takes this audit seriously to improve efficiency and generate money for the Town as his department continues to grow with more demands placed on it. Parks & Rec is viewed as a great resource and benefit to adults and high school students in the community. Mr. Pierce also said new programs are starting in the fall that will bring in more people.

Financial Reporting

Lynne Vanderslice brought up the open item of reconciling the 2014 Budgetary Basis Audit financial to what the Board is receiving monthly in the Status Report. The big difference was the treatment of purchase order encumbrances and the Board of Ed A/P. She, Ms. Dennies and Mr. McArdle met with Blum Shapiro with two options discussed. She commented BoE A/P could be handled the same as the Board of Selectmen's A/P, although no decision was made. Mr. McArdle said when the auditors are here in May it can be discussed. There was discussion among the Board members about the accounting for the excess cost grant for the Board of Ed. There is basically no change in how it is currently being reported but Blum is ok with a change in presentation of the results. She has shared this information with Ken Post.

Committee Reports

John Kalamarides/Miller-Driscoll: The Board of Selectmen voted to go with Eversource project. This will result in a very significant cost savings. Their next meeting is on April 30th. There was brief discussion between Messrs. Rutishauser and Kalamarides about the type of boilers in the Miller-Driscoll budget because until the gas line was approved the boilers would have to have been oil boilers. Mr. McArdle explained that the switch from oil to gas in the budget was basically an offset of one type of cost for another. Ms. Vanderslice will go back to Ken Post to verify the total savings for all the schools. Mr. Creeth reiterated the Town will achieve significant savings with the conversion to natural gas. Richard Creeth/Comstock: Mr. Creeth reported that there have been a couple meetings, at one month into Phase I. All is proceeding to plan and looking good. There were no other Committee Reports.

Other Business

Lynne Vanderslice stated that follow-up on management comments needs to be added to the May meeting agenda. This is reflective of what had been implemented prior to the audit. She will forward a memo from Bill Brennan about Eversource and the Management Letter to BoF members.

Public Participation

None.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kris Fager
(from video recording)