

**BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING – AUGUST 18, 2015
MEETING ROOM B TOWN HALL**

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

Others Present: Sandra Dennies, CFO; Barry Bogle, Director of Health; Lori Kaback, Town Clerk; and Kendra Baker, reporter for the Wilton Bulletin

Call to Order

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

Approval of Minutes

Al Alper made a motion to approve the Minutes of July 21 as presented. Jeff Rutishauser seconded and the motion carried 5-0, with Richard Creeth abstaining as he was absent from the July 21st meeting.

Consideration of Acceptance of 2015-2017 Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant

Barry Bogle, Wilton Director of Health, gave an overview of this Grant. The State of Connecticut has changed the process going from an annual to a three-year grant. The amount of the continuing funding requested is \$12,612. Mr. Bogle requested approval to accept the Grant and initiate the program for Risk Factor Surveillance. Warren Serenbetz inquired what differentiated the Class 3 and Class 4 food establishments; Mr. Bogle explained the potential hazards involved in each Class. Mr. Serenbetz then asked for a motion to approve acceptance of the Grant. John Kalamarides moved to accept it; Lynne Vanderslice seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Acceptance of a \$3,000 Historic Preservation Program Grant

Lori Kaback, Town Clerk, informed the Board that the Grant is given annually for preservation and conservation of records. Her intent is to use the Grant to preserve various Town minutes of boards and commissions, starting with the Board of Selectmen's minutes. Currently they are on paper and stored in folders in her office. The preservation would involve microfilming and preservation as outlined in the Grant application. Richard Creeth questioned why microfilm vs. more easily accessible scanned .pdf's. Ms. Kaback will look into that with the preservation company, since her office does not have that capability. She also stressed the necessity of having the documents backed-up in the event something would happen to the vault.

Ms. Vanderslice asked if we need to keep a hard copy and the answer is yes, it is the law. The records have to be a permanent hard copy, such as land records. Jeff Rutishauser supported the .pdf suggestion. Mr. Serenbetz commented that, while Ms. Kaback could certainly pursue the .pdf possibility, he saw no reason not to approve this request. He then asked for a motion to approve the Grant. Lynne Vanderslice so moved, Al Alper seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Status Report, FY15 Year End

Sandra Dennies reviewed FY15 results, saying overall the year was good. Taxes were on target, and Collections exceeded budget. Education Intergovernmental was up slightly due to non-budgeting of excess special education funds. Town Intergovernmental Revenues were on target. Other Revenues and Interest were also above 100%. Debt Service was also on target.

Ms. Dennies pointed out that the books are kept open until the end of August. The BoE still has expenditures, but she feels their results will be fine. She also is confident that the Board of Selectmen's Operating Budget will come in under budget, even in light of extraordinary events. These included the two lifts in the garage requiring replacement, workers' compensation claims beyond those anticipated, and the lead issue in the Police Department. Ms. Dennies advised that a number of departments were exceptionally prudent with their budgets, contributing to the overall good results. She stated that the BoS Capital Budget ended at 81.32%, saying that most of the excess would be moved to the following year. Ms. Dennies reported that only \$18,000 of Charter Authority funds had been used for the Fraud Risk Assessment. Overall, the Town ended the year in the black, being slightly under projected expenses.

Lynne Vanderslice questioned certain items being under budget and if the big variances were all good numbers. Ms. Dennies replied yes and that nothing big is expected from the final check run. Ms. Vanderslice then asked if the BoF was actually over by \$11,000, after moving the \$18,000. Ms. Dennies replied that the \$11,000 represented additional conferences with the auditors. Richard Creeth commented on the favorable variance in Revenues and what could be actually considered the correct amounts. Ms. Dennies replied certain factors pushed up the Revenue on the Town-side; the sale of a fire truck, the final funds from FEMA, and principal received from 2002 grants. He also suggested a method to calculate the cost of payout of sick and vacation time for retirements, so as to avoid unexpected expense. Ms. Dennies responded that this is done annually for the Audit Report. The Board discussed the need to initiate a reserve to offset increasing payout of accrued time.

Discussion of Voting Trends

Jeff Rutishauser discussed a handout (attached) of 20-year voting results from the Registrar's Office. He stated the handout shows an absolute decline in the number of voters and a decline in approval of the Budget. He feels that those who do vote are saying they don't like what the BoF is recommending the last couple of years for the Operating Budget. He cited, even though this year's increase was the lowest in years, it was still rejected.

Comments to his handout follow:

Richard Creeth feels the real problem is low voter turnout, not just in Wilton, but all over Connecticut and in other states. He sees younger voters abdicating from the voting process. Mr. Creeth also said a group in town encouraged voting this last Annual Town Meeting, but was against anything the BoF, BoS and BoE proposed. He feels this makes it more difficult to get people out to vote. Mr. Creeth further said low voter turnout also affects the BoS. Al Alper viewed the downward approval trend as both a "no" vote and as a complacency vote. He views it as voters have great concern about spending but do not know where to affiliate themselves. Mr. Serenbetz views the big issue as the tax burden; taxes on homes in Wilton are too high. Ms. Vanderslice agreed with Mr. Serenbetz that taxes are too high, saying

there is a push towards wanting lower taxes and the BoF needs to respond to this. Mr. Kalamarides feels Wiltonians are saying they don't understand why taxes are higher here than other towns. They are supportive of local business but not the high taxes. He feels they want to know where their money is going, so this then brings up the issue of transparency. Mr. Kalamarides would like to see a very good First Selectman campaign to get these issues out to encourage people to go to the polls. Mr. Alper disputed the observation of cutting taxes results in cutting services; i.e., police and fire. Finally, Mr. Creeth suggested when the budgets start to come in [during the budget process], that they be monitored against actuals, because tax increases are unsustainable. All concurred with his suggestion. Ms. Vanderslice said a one-time adjustment might be considered, but the Board could discuss that further into the budget process.

Committee Reports

Investment Committee: Mr. Rutishauser said the August 12th special meeting had a review of the Pension portfolio, with no changes recommended. The Pension is up slightly over benchmark. Pension fund assets also exceeded \$100 million for the first time since inception. The other part of the meeting was an experience study presentation by the Actuary. This depicted the expected and actual experience in retirements and longevity of life to recalibrate the liability side, assessing the impact if assumption changes had been made. He said the biggest change was to reduce the valuation assumption to 6.875% from 7.125%, as the actuary pointed out this was best for the interest return assumption. This motion was passed at the meeting.

There were no other Committee Reports.

Other Business

Mr. Serenbetz advised at the September meeting the Board will be setting the guidelines for the BoE and BoS. Mr. Rutishauser said with respect to the BoE two major concerns are: does Special Ed track with the decline in expected students; and the term "Per Pupil Expense" is generating a lot of sensitivity. Mr. Rutishauser suggested the wording "enrollment change factor". Mr. Rutishauser and Mr. Creeth, who sit on the BoE subcommittee, will bring these comments back there.

Public Participation

None

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kris Fager
(from video recording)

Wilton Annual Town Meeting

Voting History 1996-2015

Voter Turnout

Meeting Date	Eligible Voters	Total Voting	Total Non-Voting	Percent Voting	APPROVE Total	REJECT Total	% APPROVE	% REJECT
1996	9,906	3,645	6,261	36.8%	1,423	1,973	41.9%	58.1%
1996 R*	10,052	2,328	7,724	23.2%	1,798	524	77.4%	22.6%
1997	10,710	2,620	8,090	24.5%	1,778	763	70.0%	30.0%
1998	10,391	2,062	8,329	19.8%	1,302	651	66.7%	33.3%
1999	10,460	2,643	7,817	25.3%	2,053	452	82.0%	18.0%
2000	10,438	1,862	8,576	17.8%	1,358	442	75.4%	24.6%
2001	10,940	2,862	8,078	26.2%	1,563	1,100	58.7%	41.3%
2002	10,698	2,707	7,991	25.3%	1,784	763	70.0%	30.0%
2003	10,523	2,734	7,789	26.0%	1,610	966	62.5%	37.5%
2004	10,486	2,244	8,242	21.4%	1,446	685	67.9%	32.1%
2005	11,408	1,624	9,784	14.2%	1,157	454	71.8%	28.2%
2006	11,071	1,513	9,558	13.7%	1,041	414	71.5%	28.5%
2007	11,075	1,228	9,847	11.1%	862	346	71.4%	28.6%
2008	10,993	947	10,046	8.6%	628	318	66.4%	33.6%
2009	11,595	1,228	10,367	10.6%	844	384	68.7%	31.3%
2010	11,218	2,087	9,131	18.6%	1,383	703	66.3%	33.7%
2011	11,014	1,677	9,337	15.2%	931	746	55.5%	44.5%
2012	11,121	1,341	9,780	12.1%	800	525	60.4%	39.6%
2013	11,647	806	10,841	6.9%	514	291	63.9%	36.1%
2014	11,236	1,074	10,162	9.6%	668	389	63.2%	36.8%
2015	11,278	1,294	9,984	11.5%	602	688	46.7%	53.3%

= Budget Outvoted at Annual Town Meeting

= Budget Approved by Default With Voting Less than 15% of Eligible Voter Threshold

Percentage of Voters that Approved vs Rejected the Budget

