

Board of Finance
Special Meeting – March 10th, 2009
MINUTES

Attending:

Board of Finance Members: Al Alper, Robert Kelso, Jim Meinhold, Warren Serenbetz, Lynne Vanderslice, Andy Pforzheimer (8:13PM)

Others:

Bill Brennan, Susan Bruschi, Harold Clark, Richard Creeth, Ted Hoffstatter, Joseph Dolan, Rich McArdle, Numerous Town Department Members and the Public

Call to Order:

Warren Serenbetz called the meeting to order at 7:30PM.

Review of the Board of Selectmen's FY 2010 budget

Mr. Brennan gave a presentation summarizing the major components FY10 BOS budget. The FY10 budget is -1.4% vs the FY09 budget.

Mr. Kelso asked which 3 positions were being eliminated and the impact that would have on Town services. Mr. Brennan responded that the work load of the positions of Facilities Manager, DPW Driver & Parks & Rec worker would be handled by existing personnel and believed the impact would be minimal.

Mr. Alper asked why the Teen Center budget was increasing by 10.5%. Mr. Dolan replied that the bulk of the increase was the result of adding health insurance coverage to the Teen Center Director's compensation. Discussion ensued regarding the viability of the Teen Center and how progress would be measured. There was general agreement that incremental progress must be demonstrated.

Mr. Serenbetz asked why the Georgetown Fire District budget increase was so high. Mr. Dolan replied that the Town of Wilton was obligated to whatever budget was presented and gets no say in the budget; only Georgetown residents can vote on the GFD budget. Mr. Dolan explained the reasons for the increase including the decision to start a capital reserve.

Mr. Kelso asked what the implications were of the Gilbert & Bennett (Wire Mill) property development moving forward. Mr. Brennan gave his perspective that this development would be good for Wilton.

Mr. Meinhold stated that according to the Parks & Rec Director, the July 4th celebration lost money in most years and only broke even occasionally. Mr. Meinhold expressed a POV that in a very hard budget year, he thought the celebration should be eliminated from the budget. Mr. Brennan stated he would report back on the celebration finances.

Mr. Pforzheimer asked for clarification on what he perceived as “actuarial” adjustments to the budget which Mr. Dolan provided. Mr. Pforzheimer questioned whether or not there were enough systematic budget changes as opposed to 1-time savings. Mr. Creeth replied that he believed it was time to reconvene the BOS/BOE/BOF Tri-Board to work harder to identify efficiencies. Mr. Brennan stated that the BOS was planning for the future and ready to make harder decisions if required.

Mr. Alper asked if there was a formal agreement between the Town and the Library with respect to the amount of the Library budget the Town was obligated to pay. A long discussion ensued with general agreement that no formal agreement existed.

Mr. Meinhold asked why there were many line items that were budgeted above both historical and current year spending. By way of example, he said electricity for Other Town Properties was budgeted at 4x historical spending. Mr. Dolan replied for that item the Town had to assume costs previously paid by a renter.

Mr. Pforzheimer asked what the reasons were for the variation in Police and Fire Departments OT budgets. The Police Dept. representative responded that the reason for the Police increase was a new provision in the contract allowing Sr. members to “bump” Jr. members when OT was offered. The Fire Dept. representative said the reason for the FD decrease was implementation of revised training procedures which required less OT.

Mr. Serenbetz asked what comprised the IT Computer Software Maintenance budget. Mr. Savarese replied that \$22K was allocated for the Fire Dept. Records Management system and also included money for a Reverse 911 system.

Mr. Alper asked why Comstock custodial costs were increasing so much. Mr. Dolan replied that custodial services were contracted out but the provider now provided their own supplies.

With no other questions, Mr. Serenbetz ended by thanking everyone for submitting very responsive budget requests.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Meinhold
Clerk