

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE

The Board of Finance held a regular on Thursday, March 2, 2017 in the Council Chambers at the Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT. Chairman John Godin called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Present: James Gaston, John Godin, Sandy Roussas, Aaron Carlson, Kelley Johnson, Mark Boland

Also Present: First Selectman Pat Llodra, Finance Director Robert Tait, BOE Chairman Keith Alexander, Director of Business Ron Bienkowski, Chief Viadero, BOE Director of Security Mark Pompano, Assistant Superintendent Jean Davila, 8 members of the public and 1 members of

VOTER COMMENT – Debbie Deblasi, Megans Circle - She is a parent of a Middle Gate student and the president of the PTA. The PTA purchases items for teachers because of the spending freeze. The rooms are so hot that it makes it an unhealthy learning environment. They wanted to purchase window air conditions but they couldn't because of the electrical service. They purchased picnic tables but they are limited as to what they can teach outside. They cannot afford to cut the budget, they should add to it to bring the buildings up to where they need to be. Please pass the budget as submitted.

COMMUNICATIONS – Mr. Godin presented one e-mail in support of the BOE budget (Attachment A)

MINUTES – Mr. Gaston moved to approve the 2/23/17 meeting minutes, Ms. Johnson seconded. Mr. Boland made the correction that Ms. Johnson seconded the approval of the minutes, not Mr. Boland. Motion approved with change, one abstained (Roussas).

EXECUTIVE SESSION; Security Matters/School Security – Mr. Gaston moved to go into executive session at 7:35pm regarding security matters and invited First Selectman Llodra, Finance Director Bob Tait, Chief Viadera, Assistant Superintendent Jean Davila, BOE Chairman Keith Alexander, Director of Business Ron Bienkowski and BOE Director of Security Mark Pampano. Ms. Johnson seconded, motion unanimously approved. Executive session ended at 7:58pm.

FIRST SELECTMAN REPORT – First Selectman Llodra wrote a letter to Ben Barns of OPM inviting him to the March 15 Legislative Council meeting and he has accepted the invitation. This will be a meeting that the Board of Finance, Board of Selectman and the Board of Education are also invited to.

FINANCE DIRECTORS REPORT – None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Board of Selectman and Board of Education 2017-2018 Budget - Mr. Gaston moved to approve the employment of the purchasing agent as presented. Mr. Godin seconded.

Mr. Boland is not in favor. It would be good to have a breakout of purchases by category. There also won't be much savings in commodity purchases.

Ms. Johnson would vote against it because they are lacking the data to back it up.

Mr. Gaston is in support of it. Every person they have spoken to is supportive of it. There is a high confidence in significant savings, at the least it will be a wash. There is a slight risk but a significant probability to save the town money.

Mr. Carlson is also in favor of it. He expressed concern that they are over playing the risk. There is upside and he would vote for it.

Ms. Roussas is still undecided. She recognizes there is a potential tangible benefit they will realize next budget. Is this the right year to be doing it, we are trying to cross off numbers and trying to add other positions beneficial to the town.

Mr. Godin explained that he worries about the issues regarding the revenues from the state. They can look at this role again 6 months from now when they know more. Motion fails 4 NO (Boland, Johnson, Roussas, Godin) to 2 YES (Gaston, Carlson).

First Selectman Llodra presented possible reductions (Attachment B). She explained that they wanted to bring a spending plan no more than a 1.9% increase. This was collaborative work between the town and the BOE. The total impact is \$579,546 reduction in originally proposed budgets. First Selectman Llodra also explained that they are spending a lot of time bringing forward reductions without doing harm. It is important for them to identify cuts rather than arbitrarily cut.

Mr. Boland questioned if this is the year to maintain fund balances since there is going to be a reduction in state aid, should they spend the fund balances within the line items, not the Town's fund balance.

Mr. Carlson articulated that they need to prepare and plan for state funding reductions. On the BOS side, he would like to be more aggressive on the medical fund. This year they are putting 2% into the fund planning for a 5.5% increase in claims but last year was a 2% increase. Mr. Carlson suggested maybe reducing by 1%. Mr. Tait explained that time matters. In two weeks they will have more claims experience and have a better idea of how it is trending. It could be possible to reduce the amount at the LC level.

Mr. Gaston moved to reduce the BOS line item Highway Gasoline by \$17,141. Ms. Johnson seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Mr. Gaston moved to reduce the Police Department line item in the amount of \$34,678. Ms. Johnson seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Mr. Gaston moved to reduce the Park & Recreation line item in the amount of \$4,560. Ms. Johnson seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Mr. Gaston moved to reduce the Park & Recreation Salary and Wages seasonal by \$30,000. Ms. Johnson seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Mr. Gaston moved to approve all the other line items in the BOS budget, Ms. Johnson motion unanimously approved.

Mr. Gaston moved to reduce the BOE budget by \$293,167. Ms. Johnson seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Mr. Gaston moved to increase the tax collection rate from 99 to 99.2. Ms. Johnson seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Mr. Gaston moved to decrease the state revenue amount by \$579,546. Ms. Johnson seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Mr. Gaston moved the total budget at \$115,992,078. Ms. Johnson seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Mr. Carlson suggested that there is a 5 year plan going into the budget season. This would help them as a town for a long term perspective. Mr. Tait has presented a 10 year plan in the past and will bring it to the March 23 meeting. It is a tool they use regularly.

Voter Comments – None

Announcements – None

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:02pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Arlene Miles, Clerk



Attachment A

Arlene Miles <arlene.miles@newtown-ct.gov>

Fwd: Board of Ed Budget

1 message

John Godin <jgodin1312@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 2, 2017 at 1:06 PM

To: Arlene Miles <arlene.miles@newtown-ct.gov>

Fyi

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Claudia Sieber <claudia.sieber@att.net>

Date: Thu, Mar 2, 2017 at 10:02 AM

Subject: Board of Ed Budget

To: <okjt@aol.com>

Good Morning,

I am writing in support of the Board of Education budget. I ask that you please vote in the budget as it stands, without any further cuts. I believe it is a very responsible budget and one that the town will be able to embrace.

Thank you very much,

Claudia Sieber
7 Pinnacle Drive

Attachment B

BOARD OF FINANCE - MARCH 2, 2017				
POSSIBLE REDUCTIONS				
	BOS	BOE	REVENUES	
Dalio Foundation Grant		145,000		
Energy savings from subsequent new contract	17,141	18,167		Highway: Energy - fuel oil acct
Police department	34,678			Police: 30,744 salaries & wages, 2,351 social security, 1,583 training
BOE 2016-17 surplus off set		130,000		Off set final sewer bill of \$103,000 & increase in building & sites maintenance projects for \$27,000
Teen center fund pay private duty (currently in P & R)	4,560			P & R: contractual services account
Teen ctr fund balance = \$46,000				
Eichler's Cove fund can cover some operating costs (currently in P & R). Fund balance = \$435,000. \$60,000 profit each year.	30,000			P & R: salaries & wages - seasonal
Use a tax collection rate of 99.2 (from 99.0)			200,000	Reduces tax levy
	86,379	293,167	200,000	
TOTAL		579,546		DECREASE STATE REVENUES BY THIS AMOUNT
				WE STAY AT 1.9%