

**Town of New Hartford
Board of Finance Meeting
Town Hall – 530 Main Street
Tuesday, November 13, 2012 – 7:00 PM**

Present: Chairman Ben Witte, Members Kate Rieger, Dan Charest, Maria Moore, Reggie Smith, Jr., Jim Fitzgerald, Alternates William Coates, Joe Gareis, First Selectman Dan Jerram, Bookkeeper Annie Witte, Board of Education Chairman Bryan Kielty, Economic Development Commission Representatives David Krimmel & David Childs, New Hartford Plus videographer Bob Moore and Recording Secretary Penny Miller.

Chairman Witte called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

All regular members were present; therefore no seating of alternates was required.

The agenda was revised to move the Bookkeeper's report to the beginning of the meeting.

MOTION: by Fitzgerald, second Rieger to add BOE Chairman Bryan Kielty to the agenda.

Unanimous

Bookkeeper Report:

Bookkeeper Witte reported that because we are early into the year there is not too much to report. She met with Tax Collector Linda Sheffield and compared to last year the collections are running the same. Sheffield will know in January if she is going to have any problems. Under *Expenditures* the snow removal during the winter months really drives the town budget. There are no concerns budgetary wise. The Capital sheets are pretty self-explanatory. Chairman Witte asked what is left. Bookkeeper Witte said that any balances from 2011/2012 were transferred over to 2012/2013. In 2011/2012 fiscal year we spent ½ of the capital -- \$156,010.62 against \$315,994.32 leaving a balance of \$159,983.70.

First Selectman Jerram went through the items on the Fiscal year 2012/13 Capital Reserve Account. The report is filed with these minutes. The Town Hill Cemetery balance from FY 2010/11 is for the bell repair on Town Hill Road.

The Brown's Corner balance is for the ADA work. The Industrial Park washout is for the collapse near the old Hitchcock Building. All the rewrites are done for P&Z.

The RRDD #1 was requested to refund the money. It was voted by the RRDD #1 to refund the money through our assessment for the 3rd & 4th quarter which is about \$120,000. This refund will allow us to fund the new truck in cash. This would mean that the money would be transferred from operating to capital.

Mr. Jerram stated that the RRDD#1 met on October 22nd and voted to return the capital funds in a reduction of our 3rd & 4th quarter assessment. Member Fitzgerald asked for a copy of this report for these minutes.

The line item transfer for the truck would be done in the December meeting. The auditors will tell us if we can move this money as proposed.

Member Fitzgerald wants to make sure that the RRDD#1 will not ask for the money back.

A copy of the letter will be sent to all BOF members for approval.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: by Charest, second Rieger to approve the minutes of October 9, 2012.

MOTION: by member Smith, second Moore that on page 6 change the \$400,000 to \$750,000 in the sentence "...using surplus funds if the project cost estimate was in the \$400,000 range."

Aye: All members present as amended, no abstentions, no opposition

Aye: All members present on the minutes, no abstentions, no opposition

Opportunity for the Public to Speak:

David Krimmel, representative from the Economic Development Commission, presented a plan to expand and grow the Town of New Hartford. We have much to offer – skiing, biking, fishing and walking. We have cabinet makers, pottery makers & artists that all live in town. If we could have a nucleus of attractions more people would come into town to see them and take part.

The theme of the town is *New Hartford - A town For All Seasons*. We need a place where people and outside investors would come in and establish a location. A possible location would be where the town garage is now.

We need to solicit an inventory of what might draw people into town. Once we get an inventory – we could create a calendar of events.

Mr. Krimmel plans to attend all boards & commissions to give his presentation. He was asked have you considered a website for this. He said yes. That the town is creating a new website and the EDC will have their own page.

He thinks on this webpage there should be a listing of all available commercial & industrial property for interested parties.

One member of the EDC is exploring 'rails to trails'. A copy of his one page handout is filed with these minutes.

School Consolidation Committee Update:

Member Rieger reported there are two issues to come before the Board of Finance. One is: what is the percentage increase for next year. The 2nd is BOE Chairman Kielty said he might propose two budgets- one with the school and one without. Member Rieger said that the 1st meeting was very productive.

Chairman Witte said he would be hesitant to offer two budgets to the public.

If the school was turned over to the town then the town needs to come up with a different budget to absorb it. Mr. Jerram said the savings involved would be the utilities & snowplowing. These could be asterisked on the town budget.

Chairman Witte asked what the advantage of having two budgets is. Mr. Kielty responded if you go ahead without the school then you are assuming it is a done deal. There are some issues with space – there are a lot of contingencies.

Mr. Kielty said that they are going to start on the budget in January. Over recent years the BOE has had to reduce their budgets by consolidating classes, bus runs, eliminating some programs. If this is going to continue then the need to consolidate is greater. If not – then the need is not so great.

The big question is ‘What do we do with this vacant building’? Do we keep it but not use it. Do we turn it over to the town or sell it.

Mr. Kielty understands that once we decide it is not a school – then it becomes a town building. The initial cost projections were very preliminary in doing this. They are putting their budget together going off of this year’s projections. The real question to this board – can we afford to keep 3 schools open in town. This change impacts 5% of their budget. The next committee meeting of this consolidation committee is 11/28 at Bakerville at 6 p.m.

We need to know by January 31, 2013 if we are going to include this building in the town budget or let it go for another year.

Board of Education Report:

Dr. O’Reilly was not able to attend this meeting but his report is as follows. A special education cost grant for \$26,400 had been asked for but as they were able to meet the needs of the grant and they didn’t need the money. This grant is not guaranteed. It must be done as a pass-through grant.

The town uses Ann Antolini Elementary School as a designated shelter during storms but there is no way to fund it as a shelter. Last year the school budget paid for it. Mr. Kielty asked that the town pay for the cost associated with using the school as a shelter. BOE member Fitzgerald thought we had already discussed this and that it was decided that they should come to the town and ask for the reimbursement. You send a bill for the additional checks you had to write above your normal expenses. FEMA may reimburse but only 75% of the cost and it takes a long time.

This year they are \$56,000 in the red due to retirements they had after the budget was done.

Our CMA numbers are improving. There are areas that need to be worked on. The building committee with Melissa Giaconia – is going well. A contractor has been at Antolini to look at the windows and address those that do not open properly. We do not have the ability to tap into this year’s state reimbursement but it can be done next year. They would like to start in the spring to get their projects done.

Mr. Kielty reported that we won the magnet school decision and we are no longer responsible for pre-school magnet schools. The cost was approximately \$3700/child.

The playground committee has raised \$53,000 over the past year. They are looking for grants before coming back to the BOE for additional help. The new playground cost is \$80,000.

Treasurer's Report:

Filed with these minutes

First Selectman's Report:

Mr. Jerram reported the topic of the day is the big storm. Compared to last year's storm there was not as much damage. At the peak 2100 homes were without power.

Asplundh Tree Service has been doing the tree trimming in town.

The MDC seminar focused as to what happens if the dam breaks. It would take an hour and ten minutes for the wall of water to hit the center of the town. It would be a seismic event that might cause this type of a break.

Mr. Jerram met with Judy Palmer of Regional #7 and the pro-ratio will stay at a similar level for this year. The student population from Colebrook & Norfolk is dropping.

There was a public hearing with the WPCA about connecting the current abutting people (38 of them) to the line. No decision was made.

Other Items to Come Before the Board:

None

MOTION: by Fitzgerald, second Rieger to adjourn at 9:22 p.m.

Unanimous

Respectfully submitted:

Penny Miller
Recording Secretary