

**Town of New Hartford**  
**Board of Finance Meeting – Special Meeting**  
**Ann Antolini Elementary Multi Purpose Room**  
**Tuesday, March 22, 2011 @ 7:00PM**

**Present:** Board of Finance Chairman Ben Witte, Members: Alesia Kennerson, Jim Fitzgerald, Reggie Smith, Jr., Dan Charest, Laura Sundquist, Alternate: Bill Rieger, First Selectman Dan Jerram, Supt. of Schools Dr. Philip O'Reilly, Recording Secretary Penny Miller and members of the public.

Board of Finance Chairman Witte opened the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

As all committee members were present, the seating of alternates was not necessary.

The agenda was adopted as presented.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**MOTION:** by Charest, second Fitzgerald to approve the minutes of the Special Budget Meeting on March 12, 2011 as presented. The following changes were made to those minutes: In the section Budget Presentation by the New Hartford Board of Education – replace ERRA with ARRA. The sentence will then read: “The energy grant through ARRA money has been accepted and can be used toward the window/door project.”

It was also asked that in the motions where there is not a unanimous vote that the records show how the BOF member voted.

In the Special Budget Meeting – those that voted for the motions were BOF members Smith, Kennerson & Fitzgerald. Those opposed BOF members Charest & Sundquist.

**MOTION:** by Charest to approved the amended minutes as so stated, second by Kennerson.

*Aye as amended: All approved*

**Public comments:**

Kathy Noble-Kline of Steele Rd - Library Media Specialist at the Antolini School – the 0% increase for the education budget to be totally unacceptable. There have been so many cuts here at the school. More teaching staff cuts will result if the 0% budget is accepted. Many people have moved into town because of our high test scores.

Kathy Fisk-Natale – Board of Education member – realizes the pressures that the Board of Finance is under. She spoke on the cuts that had been proposed including the elimination of the curriculum specialist. She asked that the Board of Finance reconsider the cuts

Maria Moore – thinks we can come in with a lower budget if we don't treat the two groups of children as two separate entities – here in New Hartford and the Region #7 school. Why does each group have their own health insurance budgets? Do we need 3 buildings for 592 students? We are getting lots of special education students because we have a Cadillac program. Every time we have a zero (0?) budget it comes in on the shoulders of the town hall employees and their positions are cut. Do we need all the plantings & playscape at Brown's Corner? We should be investing in our employees at town hall.

Ann Bailey – Retired Special Education Coordinator at Region 10. She is surprised that in Region 7 they all work separately instead of together. At Region 10 they all worked together. She doesn't know why we need a Superintendent of Schools at the elementary level.

Linda Goff of Maple Hollow Road – There is more to town besides education. Not fair to town employees to not get an increase when the Board of Education teachers get them. Not as many offices are open because we can't afford to pay them. We can't afford to keep going on this path. When we go to town meeting can't we break the budget down into 3 parts – Town of New Hartford – Board of Education – Region #7?

Denton Butler of Town Hill Road – an analysis was performed by Board of Finance if budget remained at current level then someone with a \$300,000 assessment they would pay \$450 more in taxes. That is not the only place tax increases are taking place. The taxpayer will be paying \$1800-2200 more with Gov. Malloy's new increases. 2<sup>nd</sup> observation – the Board of Education needs to give the appearance to changing the model – he is not arguing against the replacement of Kate Rieger but why didn't Board of Education tell the town about making a search or executive staffing about replacing Kate Rieger with a part-time person. Mr. Butler asked Dr. O'Reilly about the new special ed. student that is moving into town - what will be given to this student for this amount of money - \$125,000 - \$130,000.

Dr. O'Reilly response to Mr. Butler: this student is moving from Torrington to New Hartford. It is our sole responsibility to educate this child because of his severe needs. It entails taking him to a specialized school as we cannot accommodate him. He needs one to one help with specialized transportation because of his severe needs.

Chairman Witte read a letter from Dawn Whalen. He also mentioned 30 additional emails that he has received regarding the budget. These are made part of these minutes. The majority of these emails asked for a 0% increase.

Pete Anderheggen of Litchfield Turnpike - we want our town to have the best education system but we don't want to pay for it. He has spoken to Dr. O'Reilly and we don't know how many home-schooled children we have in town.

BOF Member Fitzgerald has also received numerous emails with 99% of them requesting no increase and 1% did. Our teachers are getting 6% as part of their current 4-year contract.

BOF Witte said that the Barkhamsted teachers gave up their increase for this coming year within their current contract.

Dr. O'Reilly commented on the cost sharing the state reimburses for a certain percentage of high cost pupils. We will get back approximately \$59,000 for the special education student that is coming. That is pending legislation and future funding.

Point of clarification by First Selectman Dan Jerram – regarding regionalization the Board of Selectman did send a letter to Region 7 requesting that a K-12 study be completed. A study group is in place and it is a year-long analysis. There are no plans in place for a playscape at Brown's Corner.

Al Brunoli of West Hill Lake – with the reevaluation his property taxes went up 100% last year. Why did the Board of Education go up 71%? Dr. O'Reilly responded additional money has been allocated for legal services in anticipation of difficult negotiation for the teacher's contract.

Pete Anderhaggen – suggested privatizing the schools. Regarding the dirt at Brown's Corner - every kid that goes there - have them bring a bucket and take some home.

Linda Goff – is there going to be an increase because of the anticipated legal fees for the teachers to get more money. They don't need the 6% every year.

Denton Butler – why are they using professional services for the legal contract – Board of Education Bryan Keilty responded: they are hoping not to use the money but if needed they need this money to go to the next level for arbitration.

BOF Member Charest – if we can't come to an agreement we will go to binding arbitration.

Letters given to the town are part of the minutes.

BOF Chairman Witte said this is not the budget hearing – this is just public comment – the hearing is April 5<sup>th</sup>.

The next regular BOF meeting is April 12<sup>th</sup>. The town budget referendum is May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### **End of public comment**

The budget was passed out.

The Board of Education has been asked to change to a 0% increase outside of the new Special Ed. Child. On page 6 of the budget summary the increase of \$129,000 is the new student.

Member Kennerson asked how confident are we that we will be getting the FEMA money. Mr. Jerram answered that we asked for 83K. He thinks they may trim it a little bit and it might be closer to \$65,000. He is not sure how soon we will get it.

On the spending side – 0% in for the local board of education plus \$129,000 for the special education costs. Region 7 could go down \$100,000.

Our assessment from Region 7 is \$7,830,914. A reduction of \$70,000.

The town is already at zero (0).

On the Capital sheet it details \$375,000 requests from the board of education. If we cut the doors/windows in half – doing only the old – what about the air handlers. Steve Tuxbury feels they should be done at the same time. We may want to look at a bond project.

When will the 2 school bonds retire? – Bakerville's final payment is due September 2013. The one for New Hartford Elementary was for 20 years and is still out there. It may be worthwhile to look at a bond and roll the new Hartford Elementary bond into that. The windows/doors are 45% reimbursable.

**MOTION:** by Smith, second by Kennerson to remove the \$25,000 from the proposed capital expenditure budget for the septic system at Brodie Park.

*Aye: All in favor – No abstentions. Motion carries.*

Member Charest asked on the Board of Education budget – what do you really need to get through the next year?

Answer: the top 4 are listed – (1) Roof at Bakerville, (2) Replacement of Piping Pump & Supply/Return Fuel Lines – Antolini School, (3) Window & Doors - Antolini and (4) Air Handlers - Antolini.

**MOTION:** by Smith, second by Witte that we approve the entire New Hartford budget excluding the Region 7 budget in the amount of \$13,889,751.

*Aye: Kennerson, Fitzgerald, Charest. Opposed: Smith, Sundquist. Motion carries.*

**MOTION:** by Fitzgerald, second by Kennerson that we instruct Region 7 to come back with 0% assessment to the towns in total.

*Aye: Smith, Kennerson, Fitzgerald. Opposed: Charest, Sundquist. Motion carries.*

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Smith and seconded by Kennerson at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Penny Miller  
Recording Secretary