

**Town of New Hartford
Board of Finance Budget Workshop
Town Hall 530 Main Street
Saturday, March 15, 2014 @ 8:30AM**

Present: Chairman Ben Witte, Reggie Smith, Jr., Bill Coates, Steve Tuxbury, Dan Charest, Maria Moore (in at 8:31), Steve Roth (in at 8:38), First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, Town Treasurer Gordon Ross, BOE Chairman Josh Adams, BOE members: Sue Lundin, Mike Linnetz, Kate Rieger, Martha Busemeyer, Pat Spaziani, Supt. of Schools Dr. Philip O'Reilly, Region 7 BOE member Noel Gauthier, Region 7 Finance Director Rich Carmelich, Region 7 Supt. of School Dr. Judith Palmer, Region 7 BOE Chair Molly Sexton Reed, Bob Moore, Joe Toro, Recording Secretary Penny Miller and other members of the public.

Absent: Jim Fitzgerald

Chairman Witte opened the meeting at 8:30.

Seating of Alternates: Bill Coates for Jim Fitzgerald

2014-15 Northwestern Region 7 Board of Education budget presentation:

Ms. Reed presented the 2014-2015 Region 7 budget. The *Regional School District No. 7 Working Budget 2014-2015* and *Budget Increase Summary* are included with these minutes. The budget presented showed an increase of 4.59%. Part of the increase is due to transportation costs for special education & technical schools. This cost was being shared with the Winsted schools but has stopped and they are now paying the full cost. Currently there are 10 students attending magnet schools. In order to bring this increase down several cuts were identified. They include library books, summer work for media, SPED assistive technology, a 1.0 FTE Math teaching position, reducing a Lab Technician to 0.5, and several others. The full list is part of these minutes. These reductions will bring the budget increase down to 3.82% which will reduce New Hartford's assessment of 4.33% down to 3.48%. Once all the member towns have given their input further cuts may be made to the budget.

New Hartford Board of Education budget presentation

Supt. Dr. Philip O'Reilly and BOE Chairman Josh Adams presented the New Hartford Board of Education 2014-2015 proposed budget (filed with these minutes) showing an increase of 1.45% over the current year. One significant increase in Special Education was for \$89,152.00. This was for 2 unbudgeted pre-school magnet students that we paid for. Member Moore asked how are the BOE was meeting the costs this year. Dr. O'Reilly said it would be discussed at the BOE meeting on March 18th.

The pre-school program includes both regular and special education children. The ratio is about 50/50. Of the 18 children currently enrolled, seven are special ed. students.

In Regular Education they are moving 4 sections down to 3 in Grade 1 resulting in the loss of one teacher.

In Special Education the reduction is ½ of a teacher. Pre-school population is the hardest to predict. In New Hartford there were 41 births in 2013.

Page 10, line 312 **Pupil Services-Therapies** is for Spec Ed. Services and not tuition but for Spec Ed. These students require 1-1 assistance. A discussion ensued regarding a recent article 'Prevalence Data for Students with Disabilities: The Number and Costs of Special Education in Our Communities', appearing

in *The Independent Community News*. Dr. O'Reilly asked that Member Moore retract her article because the dollar amounts were inaccurate. A full copy of Dr. O'Reilly's comments is filed with these minutes. Dr. O'Reilly went on to say that he would look at being part of Shared Services again if the BOE instructed him to.

Other areas touched on were:

Adult Education – we are required by law to offer Adult Education Programs.

Improvement of instruction – has been reduced to slow down work done with Common Core

Library – with technology we don't need that much library equipment.

Board of Education – increase in legal fees – collective bargaining agreements will be looked at next year. Member Tuxbury asked that when the contracts are reviewed in June that the Board of Finance be notified of any changes.

Plant Operations – ½ of a custodian has been cut due to one of the custodians at Antolini retiring. A part-time person will be hired instead of a full-time person.

There has been a small increase in health insurance. Last year the BOE negotiated with a new health care carrier and they are seeing the benefits this year.

Personal Day Teacher Payout - Page 27, Line 212 – two teachers retired after the budget was done last year so it was factored into this year's budget.

The Capital Expenditure Requests were presented previously. State guidelines will be looked at for the fencing at New Hartford Elementary.

Dr. O'Reilly does look at those students attending our schools that do not live here. Currently we have a paying student.

Member Tuxbury would like to see a decrease in cost per student from \$1100 down to \$900. He would also like to see a 0% increase for this year from the Board of Education.

Member Moore would like to see the increase in Special Education brought down to 5%.

Member Bill Coates left at 10:30 and Steve Roth was seated for Jim Fitzgerald.

2014-15 New Hartford Town budget presentation

First Selectman Jerram presented the Town of New Hartford 2014-15 budget which shows a 2% increase in the town budget. He went on to say that both of the town union contracts are up right now and an increase of 2.5% for all salaries was put in until such time as negotiations are complete. A cost savings was realized when insurance companies were changed. A 10% COLA was put in as a placeholder.

Mr. Jerram has two initiatives. One is moving a part-time constable to full-time. The cost would be \$72,000 in salary and \$29,000 for benefits. The cost difference between part-time to full-time is \$89,000. Going from 3.2 constables to 4 will cost us \$126,000 more. The resident state trooper went from 2 down to 1 and reduced \$105,000. This amount is an estimate. The \$162,000 in constables was for 2.2 constables last year. The 3rd one hired was when we lost the state trooper. We had 2 troopers and 2 constables. We now have 1 trooper and 4 constables. There is another new police vehicle in the capital. We replaced one vehicle last year.

The 2nd initiative is the Maple Hollow Bridge. All testing is complete. The expense is included in the capital. He has asked for an appropriation from the fund balance.

The other factors in the budget are the revaluation. The grand list fell 9%. A \$102,000 savings was realized with the final payment made on the Bakerville School Bond.

The town government increase is \$92,925 which is still under \$4.8 million.

Other priorities are the Registrar's budget of \$30,000. This is to cover the state-wide elections, a cost associated with primary's which may or may not happen, canvas of all registered voters prior to the presidential election in November. That canvas could cost \$10,000. Primary costs are generally from \$7,000 to \$8,000.

Highway – they have tried to keep the costs down. The actuals are shown. The chip seal line is weather dependent. They did fund more paving last year. No retracted power outages compared to last year.

Libraries – a little more money than in previous years but not the full request they had submitted. The Bakerville Library is looking to expand into the building next door.

Health, Sanitation, Welfare – the RRDD#1 has raised rates and implemented a new scale. There has been a slight increase to those that get curb service. Chairman Witte asked if we will get a rebate in the 3rd or 4th quarter. Mr. Jerram responded he wasn't sure. The haulers are no longer being subsidized.

Parks & Recreation – a cost and benefit savings would be realized if the position of the Recreation Program Director became part-time in the winter months and full-time in the summer. Many of the winter programs do not go off.

Capital Expenditures

Mini excavator – would like to trade for something larger

Antolini Sand Shed – there is about \$10,000 left in this year and the \$70,000 would complete the project.

Wood chipper – we have one now left from the Gresczyk era and would like to replace because of repairs & maintenance on it.

Technology – expenses have been combined and they are trying to be leaner.

Recreation Capital – there is a new recreation board. They are meeting on 3/19 to formulate a new plan. There is about \$10,000 left.

Downtown improvements – tried over the last few years to make improvements on the infrastructure. The sidewalks haven't been improved for many years.

MOTION: by Smith, second Moore to adjourn at 12:45 p.m.

Aye: All members present, no abstentions, no opposition.

Respectfully submitted,

Penny Miller
Recording Secretary