

**Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, July 14, 2015
MINUTES**

Present: Chairman Jim Fitzgerald, Members Reggie Smith, Steven Tuxbury;
Others Present: First Selectman Dan Jerram, New Hartford Ambulance Association
Treasurer Guy Hayes; Members of the Public Dan Eddy, John Burdick; Administrative Assistant
Christine (substitute Recording Secretary)

Chairman Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM and noted that there was not a quorum present and that no official business could be conducted. However, the Treasurer of the Ambulance Association had been asked to be present at this meeting to present information regarding financials to the Board of Finance. Mr. Fitzgerald asked Mr. Hayes if he would still present general information to those assembled. Mr. Hayes agreed to do that. Mr. Fitzgerald noted again that this would be considered as information only and that no formal action would be taken with respect to any of the information presented.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the Board of Finance was interested in knowing why there had been a substantial increase (33%) in funding request for the Ambulance.

Mr. Hayes presented the following:

The Ambulance Association had been drawing from their reserves/bank accounts in order to keep their requests for funding to a minimum level. Currently, there is a paid day program (a contracted provider) that provides drivers and an attendant during the week due to the fact that there are not enough volunteers to cover day shift seven days per week. It used to be that the paid program only had to cover Monday through Thursday, with volunteers picking up the shifts on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays and week day evenings and nights. That has changed where there are no longer volunteers available to cover the Friday shift. Mr. Hayes noted that volunteers are plentiful on the weekends and he did not see that changing anytime soon.

NOTE: at this point in the presentation, Board of Finance Member Ben Witte arrived (7:14).

Chairman Fitzgerald called the meeting to order as an official meeting at 7:14 PM.

Chairman Fitzgerald noted that there were no alternates to seat and no revisions to the agenda.

Mr. Hayes continued with his presentation. Mr. Hayes noted that in the past, the ambulance has used their bank accounts to help fund the costs of the ambulance association. However he stated that there are long term liabilities (such as annuities for long term employee) that need to be funded by the Association. The net worth of the Association has declined. In order to be

able to continue to operate, the Association has passed on a greater share of expenses to the member towns. Mr. Hayes also noted that as regulations change and the State requires a more advanced level of training in order to respond to calls, the costs increase.

Board of Finance member Smith questioned if insurance companies are billed for ambulance services. Mr. Hayes replied that they are; but noted that one never knows what the reimbursement rate will be. There are many factors and variables that come into play when dealing with insurance payments.

Mr. Smith also asked for clarification of Paramedic Intercept Expenses, stating that the town has a line item for these costs. Mr. Hayes explained that the ambulance bills patients for Paramedic Intercept services and then the proceeds of this billing is forwarded to the town to offset the total Paramedic Intercept expense.

Mr. Hayes stated that the Ambulance Association had reduced their funding request considerably a few years back, but now that the balance in the accounts for the Ambulance has decreased, they see a need to increase their requests. Mr. Hayes explained that charges for services are regulated by the Department of Emergency Medical Services. Hayes also noted that the Town of Winsted used to rely on New Hartford Ambulance for Mutual Aid more frequently than they do now. They recently acquired an additional crew and are not as dependent on New Hartford for assistance; thereby decreasing a revenue stream for New Hartford.

Chairman Fitzgerald asked for the balance in the Ambulance Bank Accounts as of this date. Mr. Hayes replied that there was \$134,000 in checking and savings. There was \$142,000 at the end of their most recent fiscal year (December 2014). It was noted that the Town and the ambulance have different fiscal years.

Member Smith commented that the Ambulance provides a vital service to the town and that it is important that they have the cash flow necessary to operate.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the Board would like to have information available to them during the budget process so that they can make sound decisions regarding appropriations. Mr. Hayes replied that he is more than willing to provide information, but he teaches a class on Tuesday nights and cannot attend meetings on that evening.

The Board thanked Mr. Hayes for being present and sharing this information.

Opportunity for Public Comment:

No comments.

Minutes:

MOTION: by Smith, second Tuxbury to approve the minutes dated June 9, 2015.

Tuxbury mentioned that there was an error on the 3rd page and made a motion to amend the minutes.

MOTION: by Smith, second Tuxbury to amend the minutes to change page 3, Bookkeeper Report, Line 8 from “Jerram said that past due taxes from prior years is up \$8,000 and we are having a tag sale tomorrow....” TO “Jerram said that past due taxes from prior years is up \$8,000 and we are having a TAX sale tomorrow....”

Chairman Fitzgerald called for a vote to accept the amendment.

Unanimous.

He then called for a vote to accept the minutes.

Unanimous.

Treasurers Report:

Town Treasurer Gordon Ross stated that he was unable to access historical data regarding account balances due to a temporary computer issue; however he stated that there was nothing to be concerned about –everything is looking good. Tax payments are being made and the general fund is healthy.

Reports:

Bookkeepers Report:

The Bookkeeper was not present due to the fact that there is nothing to report at this time. The formal closing of the fiscal year has not yet occurred; invoices for the 2014-2015 year continue to be processed.

First Selectman’s Report:

Mr. Jerram informed the Finance Board that revenues for the fiscal year 2014-2015 are OK; the expenses are tight. He acknowledged that having the additional appropriation granted for the highway department was instrumental in allowing them to continue to move forward with projects.

He stated that capital projects/expenditures for fiscal year 2015-2016 are in progress. The large dump truck has been ordered, the police car is in, quotes for body work on 2 of the older trucks are being sought, heat pumps for Town Hall have been ordered. Additionally, the pavilion is in progress; it will be presented at the Inland Wetlands the first week of August for approval. Sidewalk repairs have been put out to bid. A request for matching light posts has been sent to an electrical supplier so that 2 light posts can be replaced in the town hall parking lot. South Road will be rehabilitated in 2 locations. Crosspipe repairs are needed at Ramstein

Road and Lynette Court.

The First Selectman remarked that the crew will be busy this summer.

Opportunity for Public Comment:

no comments

Any Other Items to Come Before the Board:

Chairman Fitzgerald notified the Finance Board that he had received a notice from the fiscal office of the Board of Education that the New Hartford Board of Education has received notification from CREC that the Board of Ed owes \$100,000 for tuition expenses for local students attending magnet schools. The Board of Ed has directed the Superintendent not to respond to this notice.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that it is unknown as to what the course of action will be. Member Witte asked “Were they blindsighted?” “is this a liability?” No one knew the answers to those questions.

Member Smith requested that Chairman Fitzgerald send a letter to the Board of Education asking what they intend to do about this situation. Smith commented that he would like to know the status of this and further stated that he would like the BOE to know that this is their liability.

Chairman Fitzgerald also noted that the BOE had a surplus of \$80,000 + in the health care costs line item. He had asked the bookkeeper to explain why this was so high and she replied that there were savings in that line item due to personnel not taking health coverage when it had been anticipated that they would. The surplus was used to cover other expenses within their budget.

Chairman Fitzgerald announced that it was his intent to cancel the August meeting unless anyone objected. No objections.

MOTION: by Witte to adjourn at 8:01 PM; seconded by Tuxbury.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant to the First Selectman
substitute for Recording Secretary Penny Miller*