

**Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, November 10, 2015**

Minutes

Present: Chairman Jim Fitzgerald, Ben Witte, Reggie Smith, Steve Tuxbury, Dan Charest; Steve Roth (Alternate), Bob Nilsson (Alternate- elect); Bookkeeper Annie Witte, Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward; First Selectman Dan Jerram (in at 7:10), Selectman Alesia Kennerson (in at 7:10), Selectman Jack Casey (in at 7:10), Selectman-elect Laura Garay (in at 7:10).

Chairman Jim Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

Seating of Alternates:

No alternates seated.

Chairman Fitzgerald noted that Member Moore and Alternate Coates were absent from the meeting.

Adoption/Revision of Agenda:

Agenda agreed to as presented, no revisions.

Approval of Minutes from October 13, 2015:

MOTION: by Tuxbury to approve the minutes dated October 13 as presented, seconded by Witte.

AYE: Fitzgerald, Witte, Smith, Tuxbury ABSTAIN: Charest Motion Passes, minutes accepted.

Update on BOF participation on the BOE Budget Collaboration; Sub-committee –Consolidation of Services, members Tuxbury &Fitzgerald:

Board of Finance member Tuxbury presented information related to the discussions held by the subcommittee that was formed to look at areas where possible consolidation of services could occur between the Board of Education and the Town that might result in cost savings. Technology services and snowplowing were reviewed because it was thought that these were areas where savings might be possible. The Board of Ed currently contracts privately for snow removal at the schools. However, if the Town were to pick up these areas, it would require the hiring of additional personnel and the purchase of additional equipment. Therefore, there would be little to no savings. IT Services was also reviewed and it was noted that services had been shared in the past, but it did not work out well due to demand for services during an emergency situation. Tuxbury noted that the group felt that “they were chasing nickels and dimes” and they were all in agreement that until there is a clearer understanding of what is going to happen with respect to school consolidation, it is premature to look at consolidation of services. The subcommittee felt that there may be other areas that need to be looked at (such as Shared Services), but the question of consolidation of schools needs to be answered first.

Member Witte commented that he agreed that the “elephant in the room” is the issue of school consolidation; adding that once that is determined that the administrative structure should be reviewed.

Mr. Tuxbury noted that the subcommittee has recessed and will reconvene again at a time to be determined.

Auditor:

Chairman Fitzgerald distributed an e-mail exchange he had with the Auditing Firm of King & King. He noted that the firm is seeking an increase in their fee structure – amounting to 5%. He asked the Board for feedback as to what direction to go in with respect to engaging an auditor for 2015-2016 audit. Mr. Witte noted that the Finance Board had engaged a different firm a few years back and that things didn't go too well. He noted that there is a "learning curve" when a change is made. Member Charest agreed that there were issues with the auditor that was engaged at that time. Chairman Fitzgerald asked the Finance Board members to think about what they would like to do and noted that they need to act by January regarding this issue.

Mr. Fitzgerald was questioned as to when the 2014-2015 audit would be presented and he remarked that he was not certain when the audit would be completed. First Selectman Jerram stated that he had not yet been asked to draft any transmittal letters or begin work on the MD&A, which is generally one of the last tasks to be completed for the audit.

Mr. Fitzgerald mentioned that he had discussed the issue of payroll accrual with Auditor Chris King and was informed by him that the Town should be doing "budget based" not "accrual" accounting. It was noted that the consultant had recommended that payroll be done by accrual method. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that at some point, the Board will need to address the 27th payroll issue (the lack of funding in the current budget to cover salary line items due an extra pay period caused by the way the pay periods fall). Mr. Tuxbury replied that the Board is aware of the issue and he felt that they can deal with it at a later date. Others agreed.

Line item transfers, if any, for consideration and approval by the BOF for FY 2015-2016 YTD:

First Selectman Jerram informed the members of the Finance Board that he is watching the drainage line item. It is not, as of the latest expenditure report, overspent; however, the expenses have been great. \$30,000 for one project and \$9,000 for a second puts that line item over the 50% mark for those projects alone and there is additional work that is currently being done. He noted that there will most likely have to be a transfer to that line.

Reports:

Bookkeepers Report – Annie Witte:

Mrs. Witte stated that she had very little to report. She noted that she had sent electronic copies of the Revenue and Expenditure Report to all Board members and asked if there were any questions. No questions were posed. Mrs. Witte informed the Board that Tax Collector Linda Sheffield had reported that the tax collection rate is at 55.35%, noting that it is equal to where things stood last year at this time.

First Selectman's Report – Dan Jerram:

The First Selectman reiterated that drainage projects have been the focus of the highway department for the past few weeks. He noted that the Board of Selectmen had met earlier that evening and they approved his request to sell some older vehicles and miscellaneous equipment. He indicated that he had originally intended to sell "the #22 truck" but will hold off on that and not take action with that particular truck until the consolidation of services discussion is completed.

He noted that the restoration of two trucks is complete and that the large plow truck that was ordered should be delivered within the next week or so. He stated that he has not been able to purchase a small plow truck yet due to not being able to find one that is within the budget allocation. He may purchase the truck without a sander as funds do allow for that.

The Selectmen have authorized that the Carpenter Road Bridge project move forward. The pavilion project will be bid out in phases; the initial phase will be pavers and patio.

He stated again that the drainage line will need a transfer as the highway crew will want to do additional drainage work in the spring.

Opportunity for Public Comment:

No comments.

Other Items to Come Before the Board:

Mr. Jerram noted that he neglected to inform the Finance Board that the BAN sale would be occurring on Thursday, November 12, 2015. Dennis Dix will be in house to handle the particulars.

Chairman Fitzgerald informed the Board that he had received an e-mail resignation from Finance Board Member Maria Moore. He read the note aloud to all and remarked that Ms. Moore had done a good job during her tenure on the Board. He stated that she was a "good component" on the Board and further stated that she will be missed. Mr. Fitzgerald said that he would notify the Democratic Town Committee Chair of the resignation.

MOTION: by Smith to thank Maria for her service and wish her the best; seconded by Witte.

Unanimous.

MOTION: by Smith to thank Steve Roth for his service as an alternate member on the Board and to welcome Bob Nilsson to the Board as an alternate member; seconded by Tuxbury.

Unanimous.

MOTION: by Witte to adjourn at 7:40 PM; seconded by Charest.

Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant
(substitute for recording secretary Penny Miller)