

Meeting Town of New Hartford
Board of Finance –Regular Meeting
New Hartford Town Hall
Tuesday, October 14, 2014 @ 7:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Ben Witte, Members: Jim Fitzgerald, Reggie Smith, Jr., Steve Tuxbury, Maria Moore, Alternate Bill Coates, Bookkeeper Annie Witte, First Selectman Dan Jerram, Kathryn Boughton (Republican American reporter) and Recording Secretary Penny Miller.

Absent: Dan Charest, Steve Roth

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

Seating of Alternates: None were seated.

Adoption / Revision of Agenda: No changes.

Opportunity for Public to Speak: None

Member Moore said that she was recording the meeting for the *New Hartford Independent Newspaper* as the reporter (Bob Moore) could not attend.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: by Smith, second Tuxbury to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2014 meeting.

Discussion followed and Member Moore felt that under the First Selectman's report on the salt shed (page 5, 2nd paragraph) additional information should be included.

MOTION: by Moore, second Coates to include the following in the minutes

After the first sentence re: work is continuing at the salt shed at Antolini. Chairman Witte asked if the project had been put out to bid and the answer was no. Member Moore said it is very important to put these projects out to bid. First Selectman Jerram said it is hard to find contractors to bid on a job like this and member Moore said she would like to see future projects advertised in a trade paper in order to get bids.

First Selectman Jerram added for the record that Hemlock Corporation is a valued contractor for the town. Another job was put out to bid for Davis Road and the only ones to respond were Hemlock Construction and M.E. Carroll. It is valuable to have such contractors in our town that support our town.

On the amendment:

Aye: Tuxbury, Smith, Moore, Abstentions: Fitzgerald, Opposed: none

Motion carries.

MOTION: by Moore, Second: none
Motion Fails.

On the minutes as amended:
Aye: Smith, Tuxbury, Abstained: Fitzgerald, Moore, Opposed: None

Motion carries.

Bookkeeper's report:

Bookkeeper Witte reported that we finished the first quarter. The collection rate as reported by Tax Collector Linda Sheffield is at 54.7%. The auditors were here on September 22nd for a week. Member Fitzgerald asked what is encumbered and what is not. Ms. Witte reported that encumbrances are the salaries for full-time and union people. Part time people are not included. On the assessor's salary member Fitzgerald said that Beth Paul is here 10-12 hours a week. Is that line item accurate where it shows \$31,655? Because Ms. Paul is part-time will it encumber out. Member Fitzgerald asked First Selectman Jerram if they will be getting someone full-time. Mr. Jerram responded that by law you need a full time assessor to train someone new. The new person has taken all the tests done but needs to take the classes. Ms. Paul has agreed to tutor her as a trainee. The new assessor, Cory Iacino, needs to pass the test in one year. Member Moore was approached by someone who was a qualified assessor and was interested in the position and never saw it advertised. Mr. Jerram said that everyone is happy with Ms. Iacino and Ms. Paul is happy also.

Member Fitzgerald said we are in a good opportunity to purchase oil as the price of oil is low. The current balance is \$16,000. Mr. Jerram responded that the Interim School Superintendent is looking into insurance for the school oil tanks. The town will try to dovetail onto the contracts.

Treasurers report:

Treasurer Gordon Ross was not present at this meeting. Member Fitzgerald said that monthly we get a hand keyed report on what we are sitting on for balances. It goes up and down. We have a number of bank accounts that exist so what he would be interested in seeing is the actual monthly bank statement. It is important to see all of the balances on all of our accounts. It is good to have that visibility to see what comes from the banks. He doesn't know what the cut-off date is but Bookkeeper Witte or Treasurer Ross should have access to go in and print out these reports. Member Fitzgerald said that he hasn't asked for them in the past but he is now asking for them. He feels we should have a full accountability of these accounts. It is proper procedure to have that type of visibility.

Chairman Witte said before we do anything we should talk to the treasurer and maybe we can get a summary and that might be what we are looking for.

Member Smith thinks it would be a good idea to see where Treasurer Ross gets his numbers from on the statements.

Chairman Witte asked how the rest of the members feel. Member Smith thinks we should talk to Mr. Ross. Chairman Witte will talk to Mr. Ross and ask him to speak about this at our next meeting.

First Selectman's Report:

Mr. Jerram said the big thing they are working on is the two capital projects. A mailing was done for the roof at Antolini School and Carpenter Road Bridge projects. Two public FOI sessions will be held. Dave Battista (Lenard Engineering) will speak on the bridge and School Building Committee members Denton (Bud) Butler & Roy Litchfield will speak on the roof. Treasurer Ross will help out with the bonding issues. After the two FOI sessions it will eventually go to a town meeting.

At five million dollars this is the biggest issued that the town has seen for a long time. Capital projects still in process are the Maple Hollow Bridge repair, salt shed, the police car is in and getting fitted, Steele Road paving almost done – October 20th.

Chairman Witte asked how the cost or payback of the Capital Project is to be presented. Mr. Jerram will draft 2 slides and one will be pure cost if we added the debt service and the other would be analysis of debt service – an excel graph. It will show how over the next 5 years it will affect the townspeople.

Other Items to Come Before the Board:

Member Moore has a special education cost summary reporting suggestion. She passed out a sheet for BOE special education costs. These worksheets are used in smaller districts. This sheet gives a quick overview of the costs associated with Special Ed. Teachers, Insurance, Transportation, tuition, etc. for the current year and the proposed following year, the \$ difference & %difference. This way you see what Spec Ed. costs and compare this to Regular Ed. Costs. We have X # of children and how much are we spending on them. We have Shared Services and we can see what other districts are spending. We don't have an idea on what we spend on a student with Special Ed. needs.

Chairman Witte said we still don't know how much we are spending on each Spec Ed. student. Member Fitzgerald asked what is the objective for the Board of Finance. Member Moore responded what she would like to suggest is to ask for this as part of their budget process. It would inform us on next year's budget if we had last year's figures. This will provide us a snapshot of their Spec Ed. costs. Member Moore said we don't have a way of saying what exactly we spend on Spec Ed. children as compared to other neighboring districts. She would like us to consider and then ask the BOE to do this. Chairman Witte would ask the BOE to come to the November meeting to give the BOF an overview of how they are doing.

Chairman Witte asked does this board feel we need to pursue this form to this extent. This form would cover over the children in town and not regional children. Member Tuxbury asked what we are comparing this information to. Member Moore responded how much are we spending on special education. Member Tuxbury asked what we will do with the information. Member Moore said this is a way for us to get a real handle on their savings. Look at what it costs using Shared Services and what it costs without.

Chairman Witte said we never saw the cost of using Shared Services vs not using them. Member Moore said this opens up the door for us to have these discussions of Shared Services vs Non-Shared Services. It will give us a cost per student. Chairman Witte has no objection to give this proposed format to the BOE and Interim Superintendent Smotas and ask them to comment on it and get their input on it.

Homebound and Special Ed. Administrator costs is not on the list submitted by Member Moore. Chairman Witte would invite the BOE come to the meeting if there are more BOF members leaning

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toward having them fill in the form. Member Tuxbury said all you are asking for is a couple of things. Chairman Witte has no objection to this and will ask the BOE to comment on doing this. Member Moore will add in Homebound & Special Ed. Administrator.

Region #7 BOE member Gauthier was to pass on information from the Region 7 board. The BOF is invited to attend next week's meeting at Region 7 to listed to their 5 year plan.

Chairman Witte read a letter from Planning & Zoning. They are looking for input on how the town will grow in the next 5 years. He doesn't know if they participated in this in the past. He asked if someone wants to look into this and present it at the November meeting then it will be sent to P&Z by November 24th. If not, then the BOF will not have any input.

Member Smith thinks we should individually look into this and send their comments to Chairman Witte as an individual. It will then be presented to P&A as a sole unit.

A copy of the Planning & Zoning letter was scanned and sent to all BOF members.

MOTION: by Smith, second Fitzgerald to adjourn at 8:11 p.m.

Aye: all members present, no abstentions, no objections.

Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,

Penny Miller
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

1. Expenditure Report
2. Revenue Report
3. Capital Projects Presentation Mailing
4. Board of Education Special Education Costs
5. Planning & Zoning Letter

