

New Hartford Board of Finance
Special Meeting – June
June 16, 2016 @ 7 pm

PRESENT Chairman Jim Fitzgerald, Members Ben Witte, Dan Charest, Steve Tuxbury, Reggie Smith, Jr. (in at 7:10 pm), Alternate Bob Nilsson, Selectman Alesia Kennerson & Laura Garay, RTC Chairman Rob Jerram, members of the public including Dave Bombara, Tim Goff, Tom & Robyn Buzzi, Kerry Guilfoyle, Republican American reporter Kathryn Boughton, Kelly O'Dell Longhi, Kevin Longhi, Bob & Maria Moore and Recording Secretary Penny Miller.

Absent Bart Baxter

Chairman Fitzgerald opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Seating of Alternates Bob Nilsson seated for Reggie Smith, Jr.

Meet with, and discuss with potential candidates, their desire and qualifications to serve as an Alternate member on the Board of Finance to fill the vacancy of William M. Coates (R)

Chairman Fitzgerald said two people via email had expressed interest in the position which expires November 21, 2017. They are: Troy LaMere (not present) and Maria Moore (former member of the BOF). Asking if there were other candidates present, RTC Chairman Rob Jerram, said that the executive board of the RTC is strongly endorsing Kerry Guilfoyle, 251 Cedar Lane, to fill the vacant alternate position. Mr. Witte suggested that Ms. Guilfoyle present the BOF with her bio and answer questions. A copy of her bio is filed with these minutes. Ms. Guilfoyle said she and her husband have resided in town for 11 years. They have two daughters – one at Bakerville and the other at Regional #7. She was not previously involved with politics but became involved when the closing of Bakerville was proposed - not to the nature of the physical closing but the process and how it happened. She has had careers in both science and business. After attending one of the Saturday budget sessions she came out of it completely excited as she loves finance and numbers. With her scientific and business backgrounds she has the ability to quickly analyze and identify numbers with statistical significance. With 20 years of business background about 11 years ago she and Michael Mondavi started a business. With limited resources she started the company to current day where she directly administers 40 million annual revenue. She welcomes the opportunity to serve the town in what she feels is her expertise.

Member Tuxbury asked if she had any input on the recent budget. Ms. Guilfoyle thinks it was an interesting project and is happy there was a small increase. With the BOE there were some increases that had to be absorbed. Mr. Charest asked if she had served on any other boards in town. She replied not in a public capacity. Mr. Witte thinks it would be good to have more balance on the board with someone who has children both in the local and regional school. Keeping the school open could have saved \$90,000. How do you deal with that? Ms. Guilfoyle said if the town enrollment keeps declining we can't continue to support 3 schools and will need to make that tough decision.
(Mr. Smith in at 7:10 pm and Mr. Nilsson was unseated)

Mr. Fitzgerald said during this past year we went through a difficult time and a lot had to do with Bakerville. He asked Ms. Guilfoyle is it the Board of Finance or the Board of Education who makes the decision. Ms. Guilfoyle said it is part of this town and community. Bakerville brought me to this but there are other elements to the Board of Finance that also interest her.

As there were no further questions at the time, Mr. Fitzgerald introduced Maria Moore.

Ms. Moore didn't have a bio to hand out but one could be sent. Briefly she is 61 years old, a 30 year resident. Her son went through New Hartford Schools having attended Pine Meadow School (aka New Hartford Elementary). She has a Bachelor of Science degree and a teaching certification. Her past experience is as a journalist, public school teacher and financial advisor. Currently she is on sabbatical taking time to write and to view her options.

Mr. Tuxbury said you previously served on the Board of Finance and recently resigned. Is there a reason why you are interested in coming back now? Ms. Moore responded that she found herself at a point where personally she was in a time of transition. Her psyche with the BOF had been limited and after coming to a couple of meetings unprepared and her mind elsewhere she felt it was for the best to resign. There are a number of issues concerning the town and she wants to put her past experience to work on the issues. Mr. Charest asked about the budget process this year. Ms. Moore said the board members conducted themselves wonderfully. Everyone kept their eye to the goal and it was fantastic that people were able to incorporate new information and change their decision. Mr. Charest said you spoke about the First Selectman's car at the last meeting. You seemed troubled by what the board had done. Ms. Moore responded that she is a purist. When we have a budget and certain monies are allocated to each line item, having been approved by the town's taxpayers, I feel we should stick with that. This wasn't budgeted for the current year or next year. If we have extra money I strongly believe it should go back to the General Fund for us to use in the future. Mr. Witte said it is fair to say over the last couple of years you have challenged the leadership of this town in a negative way at almost every turn. Why should the Republicans support you given this is a Republican seat. Ms. Moore said now she is a Republican having changed her affiliation because that is how she feels. She is fiscally conservative. She challenges the actions the way the budget is conducted and implemented. She tries not to challenge the people themselves. She makes the difference between the volunteers and the paid officials. When we pay individuals for a job she expects a certain level of performance and when it isn't being doing she feels perfectly able to challenge them. Mr. Fitzgerald said you made a comment about other things that are rearing their head. Can you give us some more detail on this? Ms. Moore replied that we have a stagnant grand list. This state is in a terrible way financially and they are looking to cut every which way. The worst part is we don't know when or where they are going to cut. We need to support essential town services where the costs increase every year. To me those are all challenges. You want to please every taxpayer and to come up with a fair budget. We all put money into the pot and it is a difficult job.

Mr. Smith asked if anything was received from Troy Lamere in writing and are there any other candidates. Mr. Fitzgerald said he received a call from Mr. Lamere that he would like to be considered. Mr. Fitzgerald let him know that Ms. Moore was also interested. Mr. Lamere said he would prefer to see Ms. Moore appointed and if not, then he was interested in being appointed.

Mr. Charest asked Ms. Guilfoyle if she would commit to a fixed cap or increase in the budget. How do you feel about the BOE where you have children in the school? Ms. Guilfoyle responded when you look

at the budget and education is 75% of the budget it is a challenge to come in with a flat budget. You need to look at each line item.

MOTION by Tuxbury to nominate Maria Moore to fill the alternate seat on the Board of Finance until November 21, 2017; second Smith

MOTION by Witte to nominate Kerry Guilfoyle to fill the alternate seat on the Board of Finance until November 21, 2017; second Charest

Discussion followed. Mr. Tuxbury said that Ms. Moore has experience on the Board of Finance and to come directly into the Board of Finance is unusual. First you usually serve on other boards or commissions. Mr. Witte said we talked about Ms. Guilfoyle's involvement, personal experience with education, the involvement of her family and her management experience. In the past Ms. Moore was the lone vote against motions. The same issues come up over and over again. She has a viewpoint that is not shared with everyone else on the board. He fully respects everyone to have their own opinion but as some point we need to all come together. Mr. Tuxbury said it is healthy to have other opinions and other input.

Aye: Tuxbury, Smith, Fitzgerald; Opposed: Witte, Charest; Abstained: none

Motion passed

Mr. Fitzgerald congratulated Ms. Moore on her appointment and thanked Kerry Guilfoyle for applying.

MOTION by Witte to adjourn at 7:38 pm; second Smith

Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Penny Miller
Recording Secretary

Attachments:
Kerry Guilfoyle Bio