

**Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, February 10, 2015
Minutes**

PRESENT: Chairman Jim Fitzgerald, Members Reggie Smith, Steve Tuxbury, Ben Witte, Maria Moore, Alternate Bill Coates, First Selectman Dan Jerram, Bookkeeper Annie Witte, Town Treasurer Gordon Ross, Member of the Public Alesia Kennerson, Member of the Press Katherine Boughton; Recording Secretary Penny Miller

ABSENT: Dan Charest, Steve Roth

Seating of Alternates: None to seat

Revision to Agenda: None

Opportunity for the Public to Speak: No comments.

MOTION: by Smith to approve the minutes of January 13, 2015, seconded Witte

Aye: Witte, Smith & Tuxbury, Abstained: Moore, Opposed: none

Member Moore brought up that in a recent newspaper article she was mentioned as a Democrat. She is no longer a Democrat but a member of the Justice Party of Connecticut. It was recommended that she take this up with Town Clerk Donna LaPlante.

Bookkeeper's Report:

Bookkeeper Witte reported that Tax Collector Sheffield gave her \$5.2 million for the General Fund. The collection rate is 92.5%. The LOSIP money has come in and the WPCA is up to speed with their split. Their \$130,000 payments are according to schedule. Expenditures – the winter drives the budget. Something to note is the overtime in the last two weeks was \$17,000. A salt bill will be coming in for \$25,000. Mr. Jerram will check to see if they can overspend on the salt budget according to state statute.

Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer Ross distributed a screen print of the Account Summary and Statement Summary taken from that afternoon. On the Account Summary, General Fund the available balance is \$6,166,520.08. The Sweep Account is the general fund plus the amount sent out. This summary shows all the accounts on the website at Northwest Community Bank.

The statement summary is as of 1/30/15 of the general fund. At the end of every day the Sweep Account sweeps out the money from the general fund leaving \$300,000 in the general fund.

The tax collector balance – is money she hasn't turned over to the bookkeeper. She only moves it every couple of weeks. She has a balance in that account for tax refunds & reimbursements.

MOTION: by Smith requested that the Town Treasurer provide the Board of Finance the Account Summary Report quarterly. Second by Tuxbury.

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

First Selectman's Report:

The town uses private contractors in the village square and schools. They have bills of approximately \$4,000 - \$5,000 that will be added onto the cost of this winter.

Pat Berardinelli, recently retired from the Torrington Police Department, has started working for the town as the newest constable. He will be trained by the State Police and our constables.

Mr. Jerram has spoken to Debbie Franklin, auditor at King & King, about the Calculation of Surplus. Mr. Fitzgerald questioned the \$90,000 for the Board of Education. He feels there are errors on both sheets (attached to these minutes). Mr. Jerram will ask Ms. Franklin to recheck it again and resubmit it.

The bridge & school projects are coming along. The DEEP representatives were in for the Carpenter Road Bridge. They are gaining consensus on what type of bridge will be put in.

The police contract is going into final draft for the Selectmen to vote on and then the police union.

The email addresses for the Board of Finance are all set. They will be set-up for Outlook and can be used on Android or iPhones. The following list will be provided to Christine Hayward.

Bcoates
Bwitte
Mmoore
Gordonross
Rsmith
Stuxbury
Jfitzgerald
Pmiller
Dcharest
Sroth

Member Moore asked when this was decided as she remembers it being discussed. At the request of the Board of Finance, Mr. Jerram was asked to check into the feasibility of doing this last year. Currently the personal email addresses of the members are being used.

BOF Line Item Transfer:

There have been questions and discussion on line item transfers and the timing of when they are done. It was suggested to return to a policy to not overspend any line item except where by state statue they can. By doing this they can keep a better control on the expenses. Mr. Jerram will check with the town's attorney for his input on this and report on it at the March meeting. A letter from Attorney Charles Roraback, dated September 10, 2012, re: Budget Line Item Transfers, was read by Mr. Jerram. (Copy attached).

Budget Cycle Timeline – 2015

The calendar for the New Hartford 2015/16 Budget Timeline was distributed (copy attached). After review it was decided to move the presentation of the Capital Expenditures from Saturday March 14th to the March 10th regular meeting.

Chairman Fitzgerald was at Region #7 today for a meeting with other First Selectmen and Board of Finance chairs. They spoke about an increase in special education and the cost associated with these students. They are talking about hiring 4 paras, 1 social worker, etc.

CAPEX:

Chairman Fitzgerald met last week with Supt. of Schools Brian Murphy, BOE Chair Josh Adams, First Selectman Dan Jerram and others on the Capital Expenditure Budget. The big discussion was the asphalt proposed for Antolini School. People even on social media are saying they don't want the asphalt at the upper playground.

Technology – the BOE comment was they are putting in some Mac air labs and chrome. This will be flushed out at the meeting next month. Is the van being replaced because it has 128,000 miles on it or is there another reason? Chairman Fitzgerald will extend the invitation to Supt. Murphy & BOE Chair Josh Adams to attend the March meeting to discuss their capital budget.

Mr. Jerram presented where we are today and where we are going. For 2015/16 the Capital Project List includes a plow truck, technology & town hall equipment.

TEC was in today and the town hall is being wired for heat sensor alarms. The three heat pumps are also being replaced. The Recreation Department is now being separated from the town projects. The EDC pavilion is a town improvement project requested by the town selectmen.

Member Moore asked for a list that shows the town vehicles along with their age and when they might be replaced. Member Witte would like an update on where we are on spending and capital reserve spending at the March meeting.

A STEAP grant has been submitted for the EDC pavilion. The Selectmen are in favor of the revitalization of the downtown area.

Capex Chair Assignment – Chairman Fitzgerald said that Mr. Coates was interested in taking over as the chair.

MOTION: by Smith to appoint Bill Coates as the CAPEX Chairman. Second Moore.

Aye: Unanimous

Other Items to Come Before the Board:

Chairman Fitzgerald presented into these minutes a letter from *Greenwoods Counseling Referrals, Inc., Litchfield, CT*. They offer mental health assessments and provide support for referral to social services for other needs. They are looking for donations. The letter is included with these minutes.

Chairman Fitzgerald will send out to the BOF what was presented at the meeting today at Region #7. Region #7 is looking for money for special education – a social worker & paras. They are done with their contracts. Chairman Fitzgerald asked them to send him the information on their budget so everyone has it before the March BOF meeting. They said as soon as they present it to their BOE they will send it to Chairman Fitzgerald. Discussion followed on Region #7 bringing an approved BOE budget. In previous years they have not. Chairman Fitzgerald will advise them of this request.

Grand list

There is a minimal increase – relatively flat. We started off with a deficit when we lost Ovation. The Board of Assessment appeals may change these numbers. Mr. Jerram commented on possible planning and zoning changes on the Hurley property. There has been interest in converting the upper floors into apartments with businesses on the first floor. For the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance to remain silent on this would present a vacuum. Mr. Jerram will notify the board when a public hearing will be held on the Hurley property.

MOTION: by Witte to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. Second Smith.

Aye: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Penny Miller
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

Revenue Report
Expenditures Report
Northwest Community Bank Account Summary
Northwest Community Bank Statement Summary
Budgetary Use of Fund Balance
Ltr from Attorney Charles Roraback dated 9/10/12 re: Budget Line Item Transfers
2015/16 Budget Timeline Draft
Capital List Projects
Capital Expenditure Budget – BOE
Letter from Supt. Judith Palmer
Top 5 Budget Increases from Region #7
Letter from Greenwoods Counseling Referrals, Inc.
Grand List Changes
2014 Grand List of Taxable Property