

*Special Board of Finance Meeting
Annual Budget Hearing
8:00 p.m., Monday, April 13, 2009
Julian B. Thayer Auditorium, Coginchaug Regional High School*

Minutes

Members present: Fran Korn, Loraine Coe, Rosemarie Naples, Elmer Clark, Rob DeSimone, Jay Berardino

Others present: Maryjane Malavasi, Laura Francis, Jim McLaughlin, John Szewczyk, and approximately 25 community members.

Fran Korn called the meeting to order. Elmer Clark led the meeting with the pledge of allegiance.

F. Korn opened the meeting by talking about the current state of the economy and the effects it had on the Board when making decisions. He also talked about the Board of Selectmen restraining spending where possible, budget reductions made by all departments, boards and commissions and the result being a cooperative effort.

He then introduced the Board of Finance members and Finance Director Maryjane Malavasi commenting that she has been a great addition to the Town. He continued with a PowerPoint presentation which outlined the financial position of the Town and also detailed the proposed budget for fiscal year 2009-2010. The meeting was then opened up for questions.

Harry Hall asked about the reduction in the Conservation budget. F. Korn stated the Board of Finance recommended the reduction for mowing expense from \$7,000 - \$3,000 based on prior history and the consultants line was reduced to \$3,000. H. Hall asked if improvements were going to be made at White's Farm commenting that the Fire Department used White's Farm as a training facility. F. Korn responded no improvements were budgeted, just regular maintenance. K. Bober commented that the road needed to be fixed. L. Francis stated she met with Casey Cordes who is the new Chair of the Conservation Commission and discussed this commenting they will do all they can maintenance wise but the watershed is another issue.

Scott Wright commented to the group assembled that they deserve a round of thanks for all their hard work stating they are a fine group that helped work everyone through the budget process. He thanked Maryjane Malavasi stating he appreciates all her help. He continued saying the residents need to know about the team work between the Office of the First Selectman, Public Works, Fire Department and Ambulance Corps which he feels speaks very highly of the Town; everyone works very well together. F. Korn said he appreciated the comments and stated the budget process left very little for the Board of Finance to do this year.

Hugh Curley questioned the \$132,000 in reserve for the Ambulance Corp wondering if other towns offset there reserve funds with their Ambulance Corp revenues. F. Korn stated this was not a discussion that the Board of Finance has had with the Board of Selectmen commenting the Ambulance Corp provides excellent service. Scott Wright stated a number of other towns monies raised through revenue recovery are put towards purchases. He said they have implemented a small stipend that has drastically changed services and some of the revenue recovery is put towards these stipends.

Rick Parmelee commended the Board of Finance on an excellent presentation and thanked the Board of Selectmen for addressing the current budget early. He stated the Town could not exist as a community without volunteer services and is very thankful.

Dave Montgomery congratulated the Board of Finance on their presentation saying it was very easy to understand. He asked F. Korn to explain Recreation wages and salaries. F. Korn explained that all salaries were moved into one budget line item #5501; staff and summer program salaries as well. The majority of #5505 expenses are revenue generated and referred to revenue line #805.

D. Montgomery asked if the Senior Center was a dead issue. F. Korn explained that monies were previously put aside for a Senior Center/Community Center and based on the facts that the referendum failed and there is no longer a committee it appears there is no need at this time and the Board decided to re-appropriated the funds. F. Korn did note that there would be seed money for appraisals and such if need be.

D. Montgomery asked what the Volunteer Fire Department did with the revenue they collected for parking cars at Durham Fair time and how it was recorded. F. Korn stated he did not know since the revenue does not go through the town. H. Hall stated that \$100,000 has been collected over the past seven years and is part of the Fire Co., Inc. Length of Service Program that the Town does not contribute to. He noted that some senior members have collected a small amount. D. Montgomery asked if he thought the Fire Department would be going in the direction of a paid department of the Town of Durham. H. Hall responded no and talked about the current budget situation in Middletown.

S. Wright stated the towns' people need to know that the Fire and EMS Departments are doing everything they can for recruitment at little or no cost to the Town but cautioned that this is a problem. He added that the Length of Service Program and Stipends instituted by the departments are helping in recruitment and added that it would be a huge expense to the Town to go to paid departments.

Hearing concluded at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Beth Moncata