MINUTES REGULAR MEETING - BOARD OF FINANCE OXFORD TOWN HALL MONDAY, APRIL 27, 2015, 7:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Jack Kiley, Robert DeBisschop Richard Burke, Tom Kelly;. Also present: James Hliva, Finance Director. Absent: Lila Ferrillo, Nancy Schmitt.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kiley at 7:00 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Only Minutes (a) through (i) were up for acceptance. Due to a recording difficulty the Minutes of April 7, 2015 and April 8, 2015 were not prepared. Mr. Hliva and the clerk, Lynnette Steeves, were working to recreate the Minutes. Mr. Kelly moved to accept Minutes (a) through (i); Mr. Kiley seconded. All in favor (3 ayes). Mr. DeBisschop abstained because he was not in attendance at the meetings of the approved Minutes.

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Mr. Kelly made a motion to move New Business (D) Discussion with Probate Judge from New Business. Mr. Kiley seconded the motion; all in favor. Motion passed.

Judge Dominic Calabrese, Probate Judge, submitted the 2015/2016 Budget for the Probate District which is made up of seven (7) towns. Each town pays a share; Oxford's share is 14.623%. Municipal budget for Probate Court does not include salary and benefits for staff that are paid by Probate Court administration. Expenses are film storage, fax line, website, digital support, office supplies, software support, office supplies, postage, copier expenses, heat/electricity (Town of Southbury, host town). Expenses total \$40,413.85 for upcoming fiscal year. A security assessment was performed by the Southbury Police Department. Several suggestions were made for improving security in the court situation. Judge Calabrese went on to explain the reasons why security improvement is important to the Probate Court.

Mr. Kiley told Judge Calabrese that he wanted to speak to him about the missing \$1.8MM which had been donated to the Town for the library, but because of the ongoing investigation, Judge Calabrese could not discuss that situation. Mr. Kiley acknowledged the \$6,500 budget that was submitted, but that had been cut to \$5,000.

Mr. Burke asked about the importance of the security improvement and Judge Calabrese elaborated. The security build-out is consistent with suggestions.

Mr. Kiley asked why does the State not pay for this security improvement. The courthouse is a state mandated office. Why doesn't Judge Calabrese speak to the State about a possible grant? Judge Calabrese said he has not spoken to people at the state level but the state is not making funds available at this time.

Judge Calabrese left the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

5) <u>AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS</u>

There was a very large group of people in attendance as an audience. Mr. Kiley asked how many people actually planned to speak; it appeared that approximately eight people planned to speak. Mr. Kiley asked that the speakers not be redundant.

Jennifer Mahmoud, 29 Larkey Road, Oxford. Ms. Mahmoud voiced her disappointment in the BOE budget cuts. The cuts do not fund the current education budget this year but she believes that it will be a step back with cuts to staff, services, current curriculum. Full day kindergarten will not happen with the cuts that have been made. She hopes that the money can be restored.

Mr. Kiley said there is an increase in the budget; there is a cut in the increase. Last year the BOF approved the \$1MM increase in the 2014/2015 with the hope that the full-day kindergarten would be voted in, but at the referendum last year full-day kindergarten was not approved. BOF went along with all hard cost increases (salary, union contracts, some utilities), and \$100,000 capital was put into General Maintenance. There was almost a \$600,000 increase which is \$400,000 short of budget request.

Steve Brown, 8 Bonnie Lane. Mr. Brown wanted to clarify that the \$100,000 of capital expenses is responsibility of the Town not technically part of BOE budget. Mr. Brown was present to ask the BOF to restore the \$500,000 and send the budget to the Town Meeting as it was. Last year the Town saw the actual cost and townspeople decided what to fund and not fund. Mr. Brown feels that the \$500,000 cut was excessive and is set to do damage to BOE operations. BOE fixed costs are \$900,000. Increase of \$467,000 is good but does not allow BOE to do what it needs to do. The cut results in cutbacks in significant services. Mr. Brown believes that Townspeople will get the wrong idea about what the real costs are to run the schools. Mr. Brown is also concerned about BOF reporting process, that the decision on BOE budget was not communicated. He said there are no Minutes, not filed in record office. Mr. Brown stated that BOE did not know about the \$500,000 cut until day before the Town hearing.

Mr. Kiley proceeded to explain that a lot of the capital budget is general maintenance that is picked up in the BOE operating budget. Mr. Kiley continued to explain that there is a website problem. The Board of Selectmen formed a Website Committee and decided to develop a new website which has not taken off. There should be more communication in Town; "Voices" newspaper doesn't carry coverage for Oxford (tonight there was a reporter from "Voices").

Mr. Kiley pointed out the declining school enrollment.

To Mr. Kiley's point regarding declining school enrollment, Mr. Brown noted that over the last three or four years, staff has been reduced by at least eight positions. As the children move through the grades, teachers are reassigned.

Mr. Burke commented that when he started on the BOF, there were up 12%, 13%, 14% increases because the increases were considered necessary. But as cuts were made, education continued. Through many different cycles, education goes on, very often with surplus. Mr. Burke said he does not buy the "doom and gloom". If things got real serious, the BOE can come back to the BOF to discuss. This budget has no capital in it and budget went up, mill rate went up 1.6. There was no grand list growth to grant what the Town and BOE asked for. If there is a legitimate need to increase the BOE budget, BOE can come back to BOF to discuss.

Susan O'Brien, 8 Country Farm Road. There has been a 20% increase in kindergarten. People will look at the school system before they move to a town. Economic growth will come with an investment in education.

Dave Bacchiocchi, 40 MacIntosh Drive. Mr. Bacchiocchi is concerned about the quality of education.

Lauren Blair, 6 Little Valley Road. With proposed BOE budget cut, Town will not be able to cover fixed increases that are required for next year thus the BOE will have to cut items currently in place. Ms. Blair urges the BOF to return the \$500,000 to the budget.

Mr. Kiley reiterated that if the BOE cannot make expenses, if hard costs caused a shortfall, BOE can always return to the BOF. He also reiterated that there is no economic growth. There is an increase; it is not a cut. There is a lot of money supposed to come into Town; BOF cannot spend promises.

Michael Maunsell, 214 Maple Tree Hill Road. An investment in the educational system initiates economic growth. Don't balance the budget on the kids' backs.

Jennifer Florin, 3 Jem Woods Road. Ms. Florin commented on Mr. Kiley's remark about the BOF not being popular last year. She does not believe it's about a popularity contest; she believes it is about a proposed budget going through. Let the taxpayers decide and see the full budget. She would like to have seen the full-day kindergarten go through.

Mr. Kiley corrected her comment; he said it wasn't the BOF who wasn't popular. It was the increase that wasn't popular.

Megan Schrade, 10 Jem Woods Road. Most parents will be surprised by budget cut.

Mr. Kiley explained that by law the whole budget has to be published. It will be in "Voices" on April 29, 2015.

Ms. Schrade remarked that the budget has already been cut when it is budget and Mr. Kiley said that the budget has to be set before it can be published. Ms. Schrade believes the proposed budget should go forward.

Mrs. Jennifer Mahmoud spoke again, saying that she is definitely in support of the BOF putting forth the whole uncut BOE budget so the Townspeople can see it and decide for themselves.

Mr. Burke said using the thinking that the uncut BOE budget should be put forth so the Town can see it that means all the budgets, i.e. Public Works, Police, Fire, Ambulance, etc. There is a two-level script – first the Board of Selectmen then the Board of Finance.

Mrs. Mahmoud said questions were eliminated from the ballot that asked should more money be added, or less money. Mr. Kiley said this was done one year before the budget was split up, when it was just one number. Most popular question on the ballot is the roads.

Mr. Burke asked if those questions can be restored to the referendum. Mr. Kelly said he doesn't know if questions could be added to the referendum. This could be checked with the Town Clerk.

Mrs. Mahmoud said the public is garnering less information. Oxford is one of the final towns who do not have full-day kindergarten. Once the budget is cut money cannot be added.

Mrs. Jen Florian spoke again. She said although most departments are unhappy with the budget cuts it is people for BOE represented at the meeting. BOF should take into account BOE people in attendance.

Bill Gallasso, 107 Country Club Road. In defense of BOF, every budget in Town is getting money with no economic growth. BOF did excellent job keeping the mill rate down where there can still be growth.

Melissa Setara, 311 Riggs Street. Ms. Setara acknowledges that fire, police, ambulance, etc. affect everybody but its education that has the most effect.

Mr. Gallasso responded to Ms. Setara. There is another segment of the population that is concerned with other things going on in Town. The BOE will be funded; they take up the largest dollar portion of the budget.

Mr. Kelly said that \$677,000 was cut out of the municipal (\$15MM out of \$40MM). One half million dollars was cut out of the BOE \$25MM budget. Objective of BOE is to balance expenses necessary with revenue available, with little revenue available.

Mr. Kelly pointed out that last year about 1200 people showed up to vote on the budget out of approximately 8500 registered voters. If mill rate had gone up 3 mills, about 5000 people

probably would have shown up. If townspeople believe mill rate will stay the same, no one will show up.

Stacy Gendron, 27 Belinsky Circle. Education has changed in last five years and new things need to be funded in order to stay competitive. Budget needs to change as the educational system changes.

Mr. Kiley pointed out that every department has immediate needs.

Ms. Gendron said without full-time kindergarten, the Town is not keeping up in education.

Mr. Kelly commented that the Board hears the same type of information from every department. BOE budget is unique.

Ms. Gendron said the Education budget should go forward because the Superintendent says what the BOE needs.

Mr. Brown spoke again regarding the cost of increase to the Townspeople – property assessed at \$200,000 the increase would be \$97.46. He went on to give other examples. Mr. Brown is willing to pay a tax increase to fund the education budget.

Liz Alagro, 16 MacIntosh Drive. People want to put money into education. It is worth the increase. She believes that the BOF is making decisions about what people want to keep the mill rate down so personal BOF taxes do not go up.

Mr. Burke said in the 12 years he has been on the BOF, more often than not, BOE has had a surplus.

Christine Berg, 22 Jensen Farm Road. She works in Special Education. She believes that if full-day kindergarten was instituted, fewer children would enter higher grades with difficulty.

Janet Barnes, 22 Christian Street. Not putting forward a full-day kindergarten is a mistake. There is a high rate of retention. The Board needs to take a serious look at full-day kindergarten.

Mr. Burke spoke to Mr. Brown's earlier comment about lack of communication in the Town. Mr. Burke's advice for next year is to get all these people involved, emphasize importance of full-day kindergarten. Mr. Burke said everybody should put pressure on the office of Selectmen to boost economic development.

Mr. Brown said he believes the majority of voters in Town don't vote because they don't care whether mill rate goes up or down.

Mr. Kiley disputed Mr. Brown's comment. If the mill rate went to 4 mills, people would turn out. People do care.

Mr. Gallasso said everyone needs to be reminded that the State is cutting back funding to Town for roads, police, every department.

Reina Selby, 46 MacIntosh Drive. Town people need to know full budget to make decision. Keep money in education system.

Marcy Hernandez, Cortland Place. How much longer does Oxford have to wait for full-day kindergarten?

Mr. Kiley explained to Ms. Hernandez the process of budget passing. He told her that full-day kindergarten passed the Board last year but it didn't pass referendum.

Amy Motes, 22 Palmer Lane. How does Oxford plan to grow? People don't want to move to Oxford and others are moving out because of the education system and grow economic development.

Mr. Kiley pointed out that Mrs. Motes' remark is not unique to the Town of Oxford; it is the entire State of Connecticut.

Mr. Kelly said that Connecticut is spending more than it is taking in. That is having an impact on towns. Mr. Kelly continued to elaborate and explain how this is happening and how this is a basis for some financial decisions.

Mr. Kiley thanked the speakers and audience for coming. A last question was asked if the \$500,000 was going to be put back into the budget. Mr. Kiley responded that the budget is set, this is the budget going to the Town meeting.

Dan Mullen, 143 Hogsback Road. Why can't \$500,000 go back in?

Mr. Kiley responded that the budget is final; BOF voted at meeting. Budget will be published in the Voices on Wednesday. One of the speakers remarked that until Town meeting any changes can be made.

Mr. Hliva told the audience that by Town Charter the budget has to be published as a legal notice five (5) days before the Town meeting. Audience member said that the since the meeting is May 4, it is within the time frame. Mr. Hliva continued that the legal notice needs to be published on Wednesday. In order to meet the newspaper publication of legal notices the budget had to be delivered to Voices by Friday, April 24. Budget was sent to Voices on Friday, April 24, but Wednesday, April 29, publication. The audience member then asked if the newspaper deadline drives the Town budget. Mr. Kiley told the audience that the BOF had met with Board of Education and Superintendent and gone over the BOE budget. The budget was finalized at the Public Hearing so it could be published. Mr. Burke interjected that at that time it was public; everyone here could have attended the Public Hearing.

BOF meeting resumes:

6) **OLD BUSINESS**:

- (A) Stipend for Web Site Coordinator: Mr. Kelly said since no information has been received from the committee, he makes a motion that this item remained tabled. Mr. Kiley seconded the motion. Mr. Kiley asked Mr. Kelly if there was anything to be done to get this item moving. Mr. Kiley said if the Web Site Coordinator he wants the website operating. Mr. Kelly said no one needs to be paid. Mr. Kelly said information is needed from the Website Committee as to what their plans are. Because of discrepancies, the public is not able to get information from the "new" website. Until the Committee provides information, there is nothing BOF can do. Item remains tabled.
- (B) Part-Time Wages for Tax Collectors Office (\$4,850.00): Tax Collector, Sharon Scinto, incorrectly calculated wages for part-time position. Mr. Hliva suggested that since Ms. Scinto is not at this meeting, the item remain tabled.

7) <u>NEW BUSINESS</u>

(A) Transfer approved by Board of Selectman (Items 16 and 17 tabled). These items were tabled because Selectman Haney was not at the meeting and Selectman McKane abstained because his wife works in the Town Clerk's office and abstained from Public Works because he is an employee.

See attached Requests for Transfer from Board of Selectmen to Board of Finance.

<u>Transfer #14</u>: Mr. Kiley asks is the wages that came through (\$18,176) for non-union people. Mr. Hliva said Transfer Requests #14 through #17 are four (4) different wage items. First one (#14) is for supervisor union; #15 is the clerical union.

- (B) Appropriation for Snow Removal \$117,710.04: Mr. Kelly asks if there is enough money to cover this. Mr. Hliva said there is not enough money from Finance Contingency. Mr. Kelly made a motion to approve \$117,710.04 from the General Fund Balance through Town meeting.
- (C) Appointment of auditor for FYE June 30, 2015, June 30, 2016 and June 30, 2017: Mr. Kiley made a motion to appoint Sandra E. Welwood, LLC as the Town auditors for the three (3) years. Mr. Hliva noted that the appointment can be approved for one year. The bid was for three years but it can be reduced to one year. Mr. Kelly asked what are implications if Town doesn't change. No implications. Mr. Kiley expressed his satisfaction with this company, Sandra E.

Welwood LLC, as the auditor. They are familiar with the Town and are very thorough.

Mr. Kelly seconded Mr. Kiley's motion to appoint Sandra E. Welwood, LLC as Town auditors.

All in favor; motion passed. Mr. Hliva will send Sandra E. Welwood, LLC a letter informing them of the BOF decision.

8) MONTHLY REPORTS

- a) Report on Tax Collections: Need to collect another \$400,000 by the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Kelly asked how likely is this to happen. Mr. Hliva said in the month of April \$180,000 was collected so there will be a surplus. The budget amount shown is everything together. Mr. Hliva said the saving point this year is the back taxes. Percent of budget collected is 98.7%. Percentage of actual bills collected is 97.77%. The difference is \$340,000 so if the \$400,000 is collected the percentage will be 99%. Mr. Kiley suggested inviting Ms. Scinto attend the next meeting.
- b) Board of Finance Contingency Activity report: Contingency Fund is at \$94,742.14. Mr. Hliva said in the union contracts he was able to find money in a lot of individual accounts. In the Library he found money for Director and Clerks because the Childrens' Librarian quit in December and no one was hired until April. In Finance Department, he found money in financing costs; Building Department had money in Assistant Building Inspector that wasn't hired; P&Z had too much money so there was money for two clerks. Forecast for year end is zero. Slight surplus.

Mr. Kelly asked what is information on Masonicare. Ms. Hliva said he didn't know anything. Mr. Kiley said the \$300,000 check has not been received. Mr. Hliva said this is holding up the lease documents. He needs to get those to the BOS before June. Mr. Kelly said if this check doesn't happen, an email needs to go out to BOF.

- c) General Fund Surplus:
- d) Trial balances and Balance Sheets:
- e) Cash Position Statement: Mr. Hliva responded cash is \$600,000 higher this year. Surplus will cover \$700,000.
- f) Reports presented by Board of Education: Mr. Hliva will contact BOE for reports.

Mr. Hliva presented a Budget Reconciliation which is still at 12.53%. It went down a little from last month. Last month there was \$100,000 for Public Works for snow removal; this month it's at \$117,710.04.

g) Grant overview of Grant Writer: Mr. Burke asked if there had been any fall out since the hours were cut. Mr. Hliva said grant writer has not been in.

Mr. Burke thinks the questions on the ballot should be looked into. Mr. Kiley said it was done one year. Questions were posed too high or too low.

Mr. Kelly said he enjoyed what happened at the meeting tonight (the audience). Mr. DeBisschop said it would have been nice had it happened two months ago.

<u>ADJOURNMENT</u>

Mr. Kelly made a motion to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Mr. DeBisschop. All in favor; motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Synutle Stewn Lynnette Steeves, Clerk

To: Board of Selectmen

April 15, 2015

From: Finance Director

Re:2014-2015 Transfer requests

tem	#	Department	Account	Account Number	Amount
1	A SECOND OF SECOND SECOND	Bd of Assessment Appeals Bd of Assessment Appeals accept by Tom Kelly	Legal Notice Clerk	5212-670 5212-571-91	\$ 62.40 \$ 62.40
		by Bob DeBisschop favor; Motion passed.			
2	TO: FROM:	Building Building	Vehicle Maintenance Asst Bldg Official	5230-811 5230-38	\$ 500.00 \$ 500.00
	Seconded	accept by Tom Kelly by Bob DeBisschop in favor; Motion passed.			
3	TO: FROM:	Police Police	Uniforms Wages Police Officers	5433-785 5433-515	\$ 5,000.00 \$ 5,000.00
	Seconded Vote	accept by Tom Kelly by Bob DeBisschop All in favor; Motion passed. Mr. Hliva said Officer Semosky	bought new bullet-proof vest an	d purchase of uniforr	m for new officer.
4,	TO: FROM:	Dog warden Dog warden	Heating Equipment	5285-625 5285-604	\$ 800.00 \$ 800.00
	Seconded b	accept by Tom Kelly by Bob DeBisschop in favor; Motion passed			
5	TO: TO: FROM:	Conservation IWWC Conservation IWWC Finance Contingency	Engineer Office Supplies Finance Contingency	5265-570-111 5265-770 5320-560-5320	\$ 750.00 \$ 750.00 \$ 1,500.00

Motion to table this item made by Bob DeBisschop

Seconded by Dick Burke

Vote All in favor; Motion passed

Comments There is no reason given for this request.

To: Board of Selectmen

April 15, 2015

BOF Contingency

From: Finance Director

Re: 2014-2015 Transfer requests

tem	*	Department	Account	Account Number	Am	ount
6	TO: FROM:	Elderly Elderly	Photo Supplies Office Supplies	5295-707 5295-770	\$ \$	1.05 1.05
	Seconded	accept by Tom Kelly by Bob DeBisschop I in favor; Motion passed.				
7	TO: FROM:	Assessor Finance Contingency	Overtime Finance Contingency	5215-521-1000 5320-560-5320	\$ \$	100.00 100.00
	Seconded Vote All	amend by Tom Kelly to take mo by Dick Burke in favor; Motion passed Mr. Burke asked why does \$100	•			b
8	TO: TO: FROM:	Planning and Zoning Planning and Zoning Finance Contingency	Engineer Legal Services Finance Contingency	5430-598 5430-672 5320-560-5320	\$ \$ \$	5,000.00 5,000.00 10,000.00
	Motion to approve by Tom Kelly for \$5000 for engineering only from General Fund Seconded by Jack Kiley Vote All in favor; Motion passed Comments Mr. Kelly asked who is Legal Services. Mr. Hliva said it's either Atty. Condon, Atty. Meachem or Atty. Olson. Mr. Kiley wants to see bills for legal services.					
9	TO: FROM:	Library Library	Magazines Facility Maintenance	5390-680 5390-613	\$	240.00 240.00
	Seconded b	pprove by Tom Kelly by Dick Burke n favor; Motion passed				
	TO: FROM:		Vehicle Maintenance Finance Contingency	5295-811 5320-560-5320	\$ \$	1,000.00 1,000.00

Vote All in favor; Motion passed **Comments**

Seconded by Bob DeBisschop

2

Motion to approve by Tom Kelly that money comes from Sidewalk Snow Removal if money is there; if not it comes from

To: Board of Selectmen April 15, 2015

Account

Account Number

From: Finance Director

tem #

Re: 2014-2015 Transfer requests

Department

country or to dear		make a sesse	Account	Account Number		Amount	
11	TO: FROM:	Ambulance Ambulance	Facility Maintenance Facility Supplies	5210-613 5210-614	\$ \$	1,200.00 1,200.00	
	Seconded	to approve by Tom Kelly by Dick Burke All in favor; Motion passed					
12	TO: FROM:	IWWC Conservation Finance	Asst Enforcment fill in Finance Contingency	5390-680 5320-560-5320	\$	500.00 500.00	

Motion by Tom Kelly to take money from Retention Bond Funding instead of Finance Contingency

Seconded by Dick Burke

Vote All in favor; Motion passed

Comments Mr. Hliva explained this is fill-in for Andy Ferrillo when he is away.

13	TO:	Town Counsel	Leg Serv Additional Counsel	5535-672-203	\$	33,360.27
	FROM:	Town Counsel	Legal Service land Use	5535-672-205	ě	
			- OSC. OCIVICO IGIA OSC	000001Z-Z00	3	33.360.27

Motion to approve by Tom Kelly

Seconded by Dick Burke

Vote All in favor; Motion passed

Comments Mr Hliva said this is 100% to Durant Nichols for all contract negotiations and defense in Gary Soules case. Mr.

Kiley asked in what department does Legal Service Land Use belong. Mr. Hliva responded it belongs to Town

14 TO: Wages Supervisors Union Var Various Various 19,147.00 FROM: Finance **Finance Contingency** 5320-560-5320 18,176.00 \$ FROM: Library Childrens Librarian 5390-515-81 971.00

Motion to approve by Tom Kelly

Seconded by Dick Burke

Vote All in favor; Motion passed.

Comments Mr. Hliva explained this is retro pay and current wage increases for supervisors for contract settled in October.

Transfer #14: Mr. Kiley asks is the wages that came through (\$18,176) for non-union people. Mr. Hliva said Transfer Requests #14 through #17 are four (4) different wage items. First one (#14) is for supervisor union; #15 is the clerical union. To: Board of Selectmen

April 15, 2015

From: Finance Director

Re: 2014-2015 Transfer requests

tem 15		Department Wages Clerical Union Various Finance Library Building Planning and Zoning Finance	Account Various Finance Contingency Childrens Librarian Asst Building Official part time clerk Financing Costs	Account Number Various 5320-560-5320 5390-515-81 5230-513-35 5430-517-92 5315-608	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$	Amount 12,968.00 8,261.00 1,934.00 682.00 967.00 1,124.00
	Seconded b	oprove by Tom Kelly y Dick Burke n favor; Motion passed. EEE ABOVE #14.				
16	TO: FROM: FROM: FROM:	Wages Non Union Finance Building Finance	Various Finance Contingency Asst Building Official Financing Costs	Various 5320-560-5320 5230-513-35 5315-608	\$ \$ \$	22,971.00 18,882.00 1,718.00 2,371.00
	Motion Seconded Vote Comments	TABLED BY BOARD OF SELI	ECTMEN			

17 TO:

Wages Public works

Various

13,616.00

FROM:

Finance

Finance Contingency

5320-560-5320

Various

13,616.00

Motion Seconded

Vote

Comments TABLED BY BOARD OF SELECTMEN