

BUDGET TOWN MEETING
May 6, 2013

The meeting was called to order by First Selectman George Temple (FSGT). Town Clerk Margaret A West read the call and return of posting. Vincent Palutis nominated August Palmer as moderator, seconded. Motion to close nominations made and was seconded.

Moderator Palmer read the eligibility to vote at a town meeting and then stated that Town Counsel Kevin Condon would be the parliamentary.

Shall the Town of Oxford approve the Town's Municipal Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2013-2014? **moved** by David Stocker, seconded.

Vincent Palutis **moved** to increase the General Fund surplus from 500,000 to 658,000 while still keeping the General Fund at the 10 percent Moody recommendation, seconded.

Discussion:

BOF Chairman Lila Ferillo explained that you could only cut line items not increase.

Moderator Palmer explained that you could do this then conferred with the Town Counsel. It is a lateral move not and increase. Town Counsel explained this was a good motion and could be voted on.

Jim Hilva, Financial Director explained it would reduce the mill rate by 1 tenth. Town Counsel read the 3.5 d of the charter explaining this was not an increase.

At this point discussion ensued and members of the Board of Finance disagreed.

Kathleen LaFrance asked if this could be explained because she is not sure what the motion means.

Jim Hilva, Finance Director explained that this is 10% of the last years approved budget, which is \$158,000. It is like taking money out of your savings account. Jim clarified that this figure is based on last years budget.

FSGT explained he supports this motion because taking money from surplus saves taxes, while still keeping us at the Moody's recommendation of 10%.

Lila Ferillo explained that she agrees with saving the taxpayer money, but doing it this way is taking a chance. This money is usually used for emergency purchases, through out the year. If an emergency comes up we have to pay for it.

Vincent Palutis explained that he agrees with the emergency purchase, but saving the taxpayer money is also an emergency.

Paula Gulitte asked for clarification on the issue of the increase for this year or next.

Lila Ferrillo (CHOF) commented that dipping into the savings account is not a good idea.

Jan Wise commented that this means we either have an increase this year or next?

Lila Ferillo commented that once the budget passes then the 10% is based on that figure. She further commented that she did not want the taxes to go up and we the BOF worked weeks on this budget, now it is up to the taxpayers.

Jack Kiley (BOF) explained that the surplus amount is a moving target and he believed Moody's uses 10 percent of the actual expenses. The surplus amount is a moving target.

Dick Burke (BOF) this is a savings account used for open space and control of residential development. Dipping into the town's savings is not going to impact your household. He further commented the First Selectman's office should be working on Economic Development.

Discussion ensued with comments regarding where this money would come from 2012 budget or the 2013 budget.

Moderator clarified that this is moving funds out of the surplus and into the budget. Keeping it consistent with the 10 %. It would 158,000, the moderator asked for any other comments and questions being none he called for a vote on the motion

Motion failed:

Yes-28

No -31

Jan Wise moved to remove 215,363 from capital projects for items relating to the fire department and direct the Board of Selectman to enter into a 5 year finance purchase agreement for these items and direct that part of the 440,000 expected from the oil remediation suit at Quaker Farms School be transferred to this account required for a lease purchase agreement for these items listed in this account for year one payments, seconded.

Lila Ferrillo (CHBOF) can't deal with funds unless we have it and we don't have that money yet. Leasing is up the BOF. We decided to pay for it up front and not borrow. This meeting can not decide how it is funded.

Dick Burke (BOF) commented that a few years back we got into leasing to reduce our discretionary, it just added another layer of debt.

Scott Pelleiter commented that he is all for leasing. All of the equipment is important and needed. Our air bottles are expiring, the hurst equipment is rescue equipment needed for car accidents. Also the radio has a dead spot on Route 67 and that needs to be fixed for fireman safety.

Nancy Schmitt (BOF) asked for a clarification of the motion: Jan Wise explained that this would cut 215,363 from the capital projects and then these projects would be funded by the 440,000 coming from the Oil Spill.

Stephen Brown 8 Bonnie Lane commented that we should pay for it now, not later. This could get us in trouble.

Reina Selby 46 Macintosh Dr asked if this was a valid motion.

Town Counsel commented that the motion is a motion and it can be voted down.

Joesph Dempsey: commented that after all these years we must have been doing it wrong. We have only reduced the budget not any of this.

There being no other comments the moderator moved the question to a voice vote:

Motion failed.

David Stocker moved to remove \$50,000 from the Emergency Medical Services Contracted – Labor \$50,000, seconded.

Kathleen LaFrance asked what this was used for.

Jack Kiley (BOF) explained it was for an additional employee for a training position.

Robert DeBisshop (BOF) explained he is the liaison for the Ambulance Corp, and further commented that this position would be used for training and to assist with calls. The call volume has significantly increased.

FSGT explained that the process of an audit is to find out how much Oxford Ambulance makes, how much they don't make and what their needs are, I will

revisit this once an audit is done. It is prudent upon the town to know this is justified. We have know idea what they are doing. We need to see the audit and revisit the contract.

Robert DeBisshop (BOF) explained that the volume has risen greatly. There are 3 ambulances during the day. Staffing is a serious issue. An audit has been provided and done at the end of every fiscal year. The books are open.

There being no other discussion on the motion the moderator called for a vote to reduce the line item from \$50,000 to \$30,000. **Motion Failed**

Moderator then called for a vote to move Item 1 to referendum:

Motion carried: Unanimous

Shall the Town of Oxford approve the Town's Board of Education Annual Budget for Fiscal year 2013-2014? moved by Susan O'Brien 8 Country Farm Rd, seconded.

There being no questions or comments the moderator called for a vote on the motion to **move** Item 2 to Referendum:

Motion carried: Unanimous

Shall the Town of Oxford approve a levy for road projects for the benefit of the Reserve Fund for Capital and Nonrecurring Expenditures for the Fiscal Year 2013-2014? Moved by Gerard Carbonaro 14 Country Farm Rd, seconded.

Joseph Dempsey **moved** the question, seconded.

Motion carried: Unanimous

The moderator then called for a vote to move Item 3 to referendum:

Motion carried: Unanimous

Shall the Town of Oxford approve the purchase of one (1) Ambulance and two (2) vehicles for the Public Works Department for the benefit of the Reserve Fund for Capital and Nonrecurring Expenditures for the Fiscal Year 2013-2014? **Moved** by Gerard Carabonaro, seconded.

Discussion: Mr Carbonaro moved to amend the item to take the \$440,000 oil tank settlement and earmark it to a restricted account, use it to pay for these items which would leave around \$284,000 which could be spent on lowering the mil rate, seconded by lila Ferrillo, commenting that we can not earmark funds. She further commented that after the budget passes then the BOS and BOF can then purchase the items.

FSGT agreed with Lila on this and futher commented that he is not happy with a tax increase. He further stated that he and Lila agree that the BOS and BOF will work together on this.

Tracy Yish asked if the settlement was free and clear or was this before Attorney fees?

FSGT explained the settlement was for \$500,000 after fees and other payment the town will get \$440,000

Lila Ferrillo explained the ground will need to be tested for years to come and that will cost money. Discussion continued on soil liability.

FSGT explained that he was very optimistic, explaining, all we need are 4 straight tests that are perfect and we have 3 already.

Ann Crane **moved** the question, seconded.

Motion carried: Unanimous

Point of order: clarify the motion please. Carbonaro withdrew his motion and Ferrillo withdrew her second.

Carbonaro **moved** to remove 284,772 from Capital & Nonrecurring Vehicles, seconded:

Motion carried: some nays


Motion to recess to Referendum Ed Roman, seconded,

Motion carried: Unanimous

Meeting Recessed at 8:35

Respectfully Submitted,


Margaret A West, CCTC
Town Clerk

13 MAY -9 PM 4:28
TOWN OF OXFORD, CT

TOWN CLERK