

**MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF FINANCE – 2016/2017 BUDGET REVIEW
OXFORD TOWN HALL
TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2016 – 7:00 P.M.**

Present: Chairman Jack Kiley; Tom Kelly; Lila Ferrillo; Sue Arpin; Dana Flach; Robert DeBisschop. Also present: James Hliva, Finance Director.

Selectman Kathy Johnson was Audience of Citizens.

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

Mr. Kiley began with the Capital Plan, specifically the Board of Education. There are four (4) plans regarding the schools: (1) Don't rebuild Center School. Renovate Great Oak and Quaker Farms to make them bigger and consolidate the two schools; (2) Build a new Center School; (3) Renovate existing Center School; (4) Build a new middle school and when the new school is completed, renovate Great Oak and turn it into an elementary school. Depending on what is happening with schools, the \$163,000 for temperature controls and new walkways would only be torn up in two years. \$1,430,677 was put into the budget. Perhaps \$163,000 (QF Temp Controls), \$155,000 (QF Repair Walkways), \$61,000 (QF AC Media Center), \$224,000 (GOMS Temp Controls), \$60,000 (GOMS Repair Rear Driveway) and \$48,000 (GOMS Asbestos Abatement) should be removed from the budget because quite possibly these items could be torn up in two years. Ms. Ferrillo pointed out that the asbestos abatement (\$48,000) needs to be left in because it is a safety issue and the café tables (\$32,000) need to be kept in to meet ADA requirements.

Mr. DeBisschop suggested also leaving the air conditioning in the Quaker Farms Media Center (\$61,000). The proposal for Quaker Farms is to add a wing onto the building and will have no effect on anything else inside Quaker Farms. Mr. Hliva said the Board of Education, Building Committee and Board of Selectmen are trying to set up a joint meeting including Board of Finance.

Mr. Kelly made Motion to remove four (4) items [\$163,000; \$155,000; \$224,000; \$60,000] from the previous budget for a new total of \$828,677. Motion seconded by Mr. DeBisschop. A vote was taken.

Aye

Jack Kiley
Dana Flach
Sue Arpin
Lila Ferrillo
Tom Kelly
Bob DeBisschop

Nay

Abstain

All in favor; Motion passes.

Mr. Kiley asked if anyone wanted to add anything to the budget.

Mr. Hliva said the community car needs to be replaced. It is in the Selectmen's budget but not included in Capital Budget. A number to be included is \$26,000. It is only a car needed, not a van.

Mr. Kelly made the Motion to add \$26,000 to the Capital Budget to purchase a community car; Mr. DeBisschop seconded the Motion. A vote was taken.

<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Jack Kiley		
Dana Flach		
Sue Arpin		
Lila Ferrillo		
Tom Kelly		
Bob DeBisschop		

All in favor; Motion passes.

The new Capital Budget amount is \$854,677.

Mr. Kelly made the Motion to reduce Fund Balance from \$1,430,677 to \$854,677. Mr. Kiley seconded the Motion. A vote was taken.

<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Jack Kiley		
Dana Flach		
Sue Arpin		
Lila Ferrillo		
Tom Kelly		
Bob DeBisschop		

All in favor; Motion passes.

Mr. Kiley said that the Economic Development Director position is in the Charter. Reduce the position to 19 hours, part-time. Mr. Ferrillo recommended 16 hours four days a week. Mr. Kiley seconded the Motion to open discussion. A discussion ensued regarding the resolution of this position. A Charter position cannot be eliminated but hours can be set. Sixteen hours has someone in the office for four hours a day, four days a week. Hours/position can be monitored monthly. Economic Development Commission will be increased by \$24,502, increasing that budget to \$42,002. A vote was taken

<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Jack Kiley	Tom Kelly	
Dana Flach		
Sue Arpin		
Lila Ferrillo		
Bob DeBisschop		

Motion passes.

Mr. Kiley commented that a base is being set with the Police Department. Budget has increased from \$1,261,392 to \$1,741,394. Within two years budget will be \$2,000,000. It is worth having the State Troopers run the department. Ms. Arpin asked if police officers could be cut. Cuts cannot be made. The cost of overtime and events coverage is causing the increase. Mr. Kiley made the suggestion to cut trooper overtime to \$50,000 from the \$100,000 budgeted. Mr. Kelly and Mr. Kiley went on with a lengthy explanation with regard to the trooper overtime.

Mr. Kiley made a Motion to reduce troopers' overtime from \$100,000 to \$50,000. Mr. Kelly seconded the Motion. A vote was taken.

<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Jack Kiley		
Dana Flach		
Sue Arpin		
Lila Ferrillo		
Tom Kelly		
Bob DeBisschop		

All in favor; Motion passes.

Mr. Kelly requested that Mr. Kiley send a letter to Sergeant Dan Semosky asking him to cut back on coverage at events because overtime costs are out of control and the Town needs better control.

Mr. DeBisschop made a Motion to reduce regular police overtime from \$60,000 to \$50,000. Mr. Kelly seconded the Motion. Mr. DeBisschop believed the overtime should be offered to local police instead of State Troopers. A vote was taken.

<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Jack Kiley		
Dana Flach		
Sue Arpin		
Lila Ferrillo		
Tom Kelly		
Bob DeBisschop		

All in favor; Motion passes. The total police department budget has been reduced to \$1,681,394.

Mr. Kiley asked the Board if there should be any changes to Board of Education budget; was everyone happy with the final number. A lengthy discussion ensued among the Board of Finance members with regard to General Fund and expected revenues. Ms. Flach asked if money should come out of General Fund to reduce taxes. Mr. Kelly and Ms. Ferrillo explained to Ms. Flach and the rest of the Board why it's not a good idea to take the money out of General Fund.

A discussion began regarding what more possible budget cuts could be made (i.e. Board of Education) if the question of budget cuts arises at the Public Hearing.

Mr. DeBisschop would like to see money put back into Emergency Medical Services for a trainer. The Selectmen proposed \$8,000 for the trainer. Mr. DeBisschop would like to see \$25,000 put into the budget. Mr. Kiley asked if the services provided to VEMS could be used for training. Mr. DeBisschop said not really, training hours are two classifications. During the winter season, classes are in the evening. Volunteers significantly increase in summer. Training is needed at these times. By contract, reports are supposed to be provided to the Board of Selectmen and this has not happened for a long time. Board of Finance has no access to reports unless members go to EMS website.

Monthly reports should be provided to the Board of Finance. Mr. Kelly said there needs to be more communication. Mr. Kelly believes salaries and benefits are too high. Mr. DeBisschop then contributed the facts about the ambulance service, benefits, insurance, etc.

Mr. DeBisschop made the Motion to increase Training amount to \$25,000 from \$8,000. Ms. Arpin seconded the Motion. A vote was taken.

<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Jack Kiley		
Dana Flach		
Sue Arpin		
Lila Ferrillo		
Tom Kelly		
Bob DeBisschop		

All in favor; Motion passes.

Mr. Hliva made note after this vote that, at the beginning of this meeting, the mill rate was 24.26; it is now 24.25 because the Board added back to Economic Development, added back to Ambulance and backed out from Police.

Mr. Kiley thanked the members of the Board, Mr. Hliva and the BOF Clerk, for the hard work and he believes this is a good budget.

Mr. Hliva was very impressed with the way this Board worked together and thoroughly discussed the items to bring in the budget.

As Audience of Citizens, Ms. Johnson complimented the Board of Finance for their hard work on this budget.

There being no further business, Mr. Kelly made the Motion to adjourn; Mr. Kiley seconded the Motion. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Public Hearing will be held on Monday, April 18, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

X *Lynnette Steeves*

Lynnette Steeves
Clerk

16 APR -7 PM 3:04
TOWN OF OXFORD, CT
Margaret A. West
TOWN CLERK