

MINUTES
BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING – OXFORD TOWN HALL
MARCH 26, 2014 – 6:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jack Kiley at 6:00 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The following members were present: Chairman Jack Kiley, Lila Ferrillo, Tom Kelly, Robert DeBisschop, Richard Burke, Nancy Schmitt. Also present: James Hliva, Finance Director, Tim Connellan, Superintendent, Rosemary Hanson, and Diane Sarracco.

Chairman Kiley indicated that the purpose of the meeting is for the Board of Finance to review the FY 2014-2015 Board of Education budget. The Board will not be voting on the budget during the meeting and there is no Audience of Citizens.

Diane Sarracco gave an overview of the proposed Board of Education budget. She told the Board that the budget includes maintenance of the schools and central office which is a total of 450,000 sq. ft., 250 employees and nearly 2,000 students. The proposed budget includes three additional requests to the current plan. The total proposed budget is \$28,548,584. This represents a 5.16% increase over the current budget. Salaries and employee benefits represent 78% of the budget (total of \$22,259,095). Other costs are \$100,000 which includes Special education tuition of \$82,723. She noted that it will cost the Board of Education an increase of \$970,652 to support the same buildings, staff and run the same educational programs for the new fiscal year which is an increase of 3.4% over the current fiscal year.

She reviewed the three additional items that have been requested in the new budget that include: new high school music teacher (.5 full time/20 hr. position \$48,992 which includes medical benefits). There is a high demand for electives in this area at the high school. She noted that the population in the high school is rising and will continue the same trend over the next few years. She noted that the population in the lower grades is decreased and a third grade teacher has been eliminated. Tom asked what the current population at the high school. He was told approximately 600 students. Social worker (full time position/\$76,066 which includes benefits) was added. She noted that currently there is a full time social worker for high school and one works three days at Great Oak Middle School and Quaker Farms School. The plan for the next year is to have one social worker at the high school, one at the middle school and the additional person will work between Center School and Quaker Farms School. Full day Kindergarten program at a cost of \$291,679 is proposed. She noted that it was the feeling of the entire Board of Education with a unanimous vote that the full day Kindergarten program should be implemented. It has been identified as being an educational need by the Ad Hoc Committee, the Board of Education and Superintendent to be a need for the Oxford School district. Nancy asked for information about paraprofessionals for the Kindergarten. Superintendent Connellan noted that there are currently three paraprofessionals for Kindergarten and there is no increase for the full day program. Nancy asked for a review of what will be displaced at Quaker Farms School to accommodate the full day kindergarten program. Rosemary reviewed the changes.

Jack asked for a review of employee benefits. He noted that there is a total of \$5,770,000 for employee benefits. Rosemary reviewed the breakdown of benefits. The anticipated increase of 8% for medical insurance was discussed. Dick spoke about stipends paid of \$2,500 to employees who opt out of taking health care insurance. It was noted that an increase in the stipend paid would give more incentive and would give better results. Rosemary responded and

indicated that there are employees who opt out because they don't want to pay 18% of the cost of the plan. Discussion continued on the topic.

Bob commented on the increase in cost for outside tuition and asked for a breakdown of the same. Superintendent Connellen noted that some of the cost is for Special Education. Rosemary reviewed this for the Board.

Jack commented that the school busses are not full on a regular basis. Rosemary commented that the Board of Education cannot ask parents to waive their child's right/need to ride the bus.

Rosemary spoke about the projected decrease in electricity cost. She noted this is due to solar panels at the middle school, retro fitting of some light fixtures, and capital improvements. Dick commented that the Town has incurred debt due to solar panels. Rosemary noted that she has reduced the cost for oil for next year. She noted that all leases are paid off and no lease purchases are requested for the next year.

Graduation accreditation (required next year) and costs associated were discussed. Meals and housing have to be paid by the Board of Education to accommodate the people who work with the Board of Education toward the accreditation of the High School.

Repairs and maintenance for facilities was discussed. Dick noted it is up over 10% and asked for information. She noted that the buildings are aging and repairs are needed. She noted that the high school has sophisticated systems and costs are high to keep them functioning properly.

Transportation – The Board has a five year contract with All Star Transportation and there is a 2.5% increase (next year is year three of the contract). There is a small increase in transportation cost for special services out placed students.

Property and liability insurance has an increase next year. The final renewal comes in June. The budget was underfunded in the current year.

Tuition increase is for out of district placement of Special Education.

Instructional supplies and the increase were discussed. Items that fall into this category were reviewed.

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Capital requests were reviewed. David Yish was involved in this discussions during this portion of the meeting.


Diane Sarracco concluded by reviewing a report of the district per pupil expenditures compared to the same for the State. She noted that we currently spend \$11,797 per pupil. The District Reference Group spends \$13,000 per pupil and the State is over \$14,000. She noted that she appreciates how difficult it is for the Board of Finance to balance all the requests and form them into a budget that the townspeople of Oxford can afford. She noted that the Board of Education Finance Committee has done their work in handling the requests that they received and putting together a reasonable budget. She reminded the Board of Finance that the Board of Education needs an additional \$970,652 to provide the same education as they have this year. She thanked the Board of Finance for their time. Chairman Kiley noted that they did a very good job on the budget report that was provided and thanked them for their time.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Tom Kelly at 7:40 p.m. This was seconded by Dick Burke.
Motion passes unanimously.

Respectfully submitted, subject to approval


Marni Soss, Clerk

14 APR -4 PM 3:38
TOWN OF OXFORD, CT

TOWN CLERK