

MINUTES
BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING – OXFORD TOWN HALL
APRIL 22, 2014 – 6:30 P.M.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jack Kiley at 6:30 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The following members were present: Chairman Jack Kiley, Lila Ferrillo, Tom Kelly, Richard Burke, Nancy Schmitt, Robert DeBisschop. Also present: James Hliva, Finance Director.

Chairman Kiley noted that the purpose of the meeting is to review the information gathered at the Public Hearing of 4/21/14 and to review and vote on the 2014/2015 budget requests.

Motion made by Lila Ferrillo to accept budget as voted on and pass on to Town Meeting. Second by Nancy Schmitt. Discussion: Dick commented that the Board of Education received an increase of \$600,546 last year. We just gave them an increase of \$1.1 million which is \$500,000 over last year's budget. He noted that they need \$300,000 to fund the full day Kindergarten program, social workers should not be needed in the school system and he is looking to trim the budget. He suggested that we add \$600,000 to \$300,000 and approve an increase of \$950,000.

Amended Motion made by Richard Burke to reduce the Board of Education budget by \$100,000. Second by Jack Kiley. Discussion: Jack noted that \$420,000 is needed for the full day Kindergarten program. Dick noted he challenges that figure. Vote: (4) Ayes (2) Nays by Nancy Schmitt and Robert DeBisschop. Motion passes.

Oxford Ambulance Association

Jack asked that Bob DeBisschop recuse himself. Bob agreed to not be involved in the conversation.

Amended Motion made by Richard Burke to restore \$50,000 to the Oxford Ambulance budget for Contracted Services Labor. Second by Lila Ferrillo. Discussion:

Dick reviewed a report provided by Jerry Schwab which shows the budget has remained flat over the last five years (not including VEMS and CMED). Considering population growth, tremendous increase in call volume, their percentage that they are asking for has gone down. It shows they have managed their spending. Jerry provided a list of job descriptions and salary comparisons with other towns and they are comparable. Call volume was reviewed and Dick noted that there has been a huge increase since 2003 and will continue to increase. Last year we approved funds for a trainer.

Jack commented that an investigation is being done of the department and said he and Tom Kelly will hold off on further investigation and leave the matter to the First Selectmen. From what he can see from the budget and the contract with OAA things got skewed. An example is that the vehicles that two of the OAA employees have were purchased by the Town and that is

against the contract. He spoke of the item in the contract that states the Town is supposed to give a pro rata share of their total budget which is undefined. He asked if anyone has looked at outside agencies or considered regionalizing to keep costs down. Dick commented that restoring funds to the budget for contracted services labor has nothing to do with the investigation that Jack feels is needed. Tom spoke about billing and collections and commented that the OAA should work harder on collections. He noted he sees a higher cost of labor within OAA compared to its competitors such as American Medical Response. The benefits and bonuses being provided are falling to the Town to be paid but a pro rata share should only give a base (as compared to other competitive companies). Dick noted that pro rata is not defined in the contract. Tom noted that training is a responsibility in Jerry's contract and that the town should not be paying an additional \$50,000 for a trainer. Dick noted that Jerry manages a department that provides a vital service to the town and spoke of the difficult nature of the type of work that is done by OAA employees and volunteers.

Nancy commented that when the volunteer position was put into place last year it was very necessary in order to have someone there during the week time hours when there weren't the volunteers available. The purchase of a new ambulance also causes a need for additional staff.

Dick noted that the investigation has been going on too long and he hasn't seen any results. Jack noted that he and Tom will stop the investigation and turn it over to the First Selectmen and Town Counsel. A resolution needs to be found and the animosity needs to be resolved also. He commented that it isn't wrong to investigate a department especially considering the issue we had in the Tax Collector's office.

Dick commented that this is a volunteer organization and feels we are sending a negative message if we cut this line item and that he endorses the investigation.

Vote: (3) Ayes (2) Nays – Tom Kelly and Jack Kiley (1) Abstention by Bob DeBisschop. Motion passes.

Nancy Schmitt excused herself at 7:05 p.m.

Fire Pumper

Dick asked for a status. The Board voted to hold off purchasing the pumper.

Jim was asked to review funds that were recently received and he noted that \$425,000 was received and deposited. An additional \$100,000 was received but he was told to hold the check until further notice. Dick spoke about closing projects such as the high school and Jim noted that will reduce the notes.

Town Hall vehicles were discussed. Lila had been asked by a resident about the town vehicles. Jim noted that vehicle maintenance line items are within the Town Hall, Inland Wetlands and Building Departments.

Jim indicated that considering the Motions made at this meeting the mill rate is currently 25.59 mills.

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Motion made by Lila Ferrillo to send the amended budget to Town Meeting. Second by Dick Burke. (4) Ayes (1) Nay by Tom Kelly. Motion passes.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Lila Ferrillo at 7:15 p.m. This was seconded by Bob Debisschop. Motion passes unanimously.

Respectfully submitted, subject to approval


Marni Soss, Board of Finance Clerk

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TOWN OF OXFORD, CT

TOWN CLERK