Budget Deliberation Meeting
Monday, March 17, 2015 at 7:00pm
Norma Drummer Room, Seymour Town Hall

Members Present: David Bitsu, Rich Grudzias, Beverly Kennedy, Heather McDaniel, Bill Sawicki, John Stelma, Ed Wasikowski; Jim Cretella and Jake Holly (alternates)

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Rick Belden, Kristen Harmeling, Jen Magri, Michael Metzler, Kurt Miller, Yashu Putorti, Dennis Rozum, and Doug Thomas

Item #1 – Call Meeting to order
Chairman Bill Sawicki called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Item #2 – Pledge of Allegiance
Everyone saluted the Flag and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item #3 – Public Comment
Yashu Putorti – 9 Greenwood Circle – Last year had requested 3.5% and was reduced to level services; then after the first vote reduced by $108,000 due to insurance monies realized; this year 34 of 73 line items are at 0% increase or a decrease; the salaries are set by union contracts
Kristen Harmeling – 27 Patrick Drive – Last year there were no large cuts from initial request; no initiatives were lost there – this year if there are cuts it will affect services. Last year 555 people voted YES on the first vote (5/1) and an additional 274 people voted YES on the second vote (5/15). In December 2014, the unemployment was 5.3% down from previous months. Also, the state average is 14.5% of senior citizens – Seymour is at 12.62%; also, 22.65% is under 18.

Item #4 – Deliberation and Discussion of 2015/2016 Budget
The Board of Finance discussed the 2015/2016 Budget:

- Police Department – Training – this will be used up by the end of the year – all of this is needed
- Police Department – Overtime – Budgeted last year $150,000; this year requested $175,000. 2010/2011 used $301,000; 2011/2012 used $341,000; 2012/2013 used $280,000; 2013/2014 used $297,000. We were thinking of cutting to $125,000. At least $150,000 is needed; that is VERY low compared to previous year’s usage and other towns. We will keep as is.
- Police Department – Dispatcher position – this was only an alternative possibility – maybe use down the road – not included in this budget.
- Public Works – F550 Truck Purchase – the $90,000 would allow us to get a new truck; there are 6 trucks – 2 have been on the road since 1998 (17 years old); this winter we couldn’t service one truck because it was needed on the road; one truck is 11 years old – has a drive train issue; one truck is 29 years old – barely hanging on; these trucks are used EVERY DAY in every season; would like to start a program where we can turn the trucks over sooner – if we do that, we may not need to spend as much per truck
because they won’t need to last as long. Maybe we could trade in (will reduce cost) every five years; cost for this is not in the PW budget, it is in Capital; currently with the old trucks it seems like they are constantly being maintained or repaired – can’t fix them fast enough; also there is the safety factor – people could get hurt if these trucks aren’t safe. Maintenance costs will go down if we get another truck. Beverly Kennedy asked if there is enough staff for repairs. Just had a second guy come back from workers comp injury.

- David Bitso – more money is needed for road repairs? First Selectman said that what is in there is a good start; total amount of money needed is in the millions. Road Repair Project includes: Road Maintenance, Preservation, Repair/Resurfacing, and Reconstruction. If more is needed, will get from Fund Balance. Maybe can ask for federal assistance. Rather not tax people on something that we may not get to this year.

- Future planning for Management of the Town – the charter has no set salary for the First Selectman (currently at $72,500) (Full time position); last increase was 10 years ago; it will be hard to get a professional to leave a job for an elected job @ $72,500. Rick Belden said that Shelton hires a consultant to analyze the salaries. Recommend that the Board of Selectmen form a subcommittee to work on and research. Bill Sawicki will attend the 4/7/15 Board of Selectmen meeting and explain the plan for this.

- We will leave the police department overtime number at $150,000

- Board of Education – asking for $1,000,016 which is $16,000 below level services; First Selectman recommended was only $475,000 over last year’s budget. First Selectman Millar again recommended that we send the BOE budget as requested. This way we can gauge the public opinion. No specific cuts will be made anyway, just an amount. Bill Sawicki said that if we present the BOE budget as is we as a Board of Finance would not be doing our job. All members of the Board of Finance felt that they would not like to present the BOE budget as is. Maybe we can go with just below $1 million. With the First Selectman’s budget increase to the mill rate is 0.27. With the BOE budget as presented it is an increase of 0.77. Rich Grudzias said that the number of foreclosures increased from 125 in 2013 to 140 in 2014 and increasing for 2015. These numbers are from the Town Clerk’s report.

- Recommendations for addition amount from last year’s budget for the Board of Education:
  - Bill Sawicki - $850,000
  - Ed Wasikowski - $925,000
  - Heather McDaniel - $952,000
  - David Bitso - $872,000
  - Beverly Kennedy - $945,000
  - Rich Grudzias - $945,000
  - John Stelma - $945,000

Motion to increase the Board of Education budget from last year by $945,000.
Motion: Ed Wasikowski  Second: Rich Grudzias
Motion was withdrawn by Ed and Rich.

Motion to increase the Board of Education budget from last year by $950,000
Motion: Ed Wasikowski  Second: Rich Grudzias
Yes: 7  No: 0  Abstain: 0

- Put back the $115,000 back into General Fund Surplus making the number $275,000 originally asked for
- If questions are asked of anyone on the Board of Finance please refer them to Chairman Bill Sawicki.
- New mill rate with the current adjustments is 34.67. This means a house valued at $200,000 (assessed at $140,000) would incur an $88/year increase.
Item #5– Adjournment
Meeting was adjourned at 8:08pm.

Submitted by:
Monica Dimon
Recording Secretary