

Town of Seymour
Board of Finance

COPY RECEIVED
DATE: 5/30/13
TIME: 2:40pm
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Minutes

Regular Meeting
Tuesday, May 28, 2013 at 7:00pm
Norma Drummer Room, Seymour Town Hall

Members Present: David Bitso, Trisha Danka, Beverly Kennedy, Heather McDaniel, Bill Sawicki, John Stelma and Ed Wasikowski

Members Absent: Michele Pavlik

Others Present: Per attached list

Item #1 – Call Meeting to order

Chairman, Trisha Danka called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

Item #2 – Pledge of Allegiance

Everyone saluted the Flag and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item #3 – Seating of Alternates

Motion to seat Beverly Kennedy as alternate.

Motion: Bill Sawicki Second: Ed Wasikowski

Yes: 6 No: 0 Abstain: 0

Item #4 – Public Comment

***Kristen Harmeling – 27 Patrick Drive – Requested that the Board keep cuts to a minimum. Quality of schools are a very important factor in whether people would buy a home here. Amount of tax dollars spent on schools have a direct correlation to the quality of our schools.

***Alex Danka – 203 Pearl Street – Requested that the Board of Finance come to a fair agreement. The Citizens Academy sponsored by the Board of Education was a wonderful program. Very Informative.

Item #5 – Approval of Minutes—April 23, 2013 Regular Meeting

Motion to approve Minutes from April 23, 2013 Regular Meeting.

Motion: David Bitso Second: Bill Sawicki

Yes: 7 No: 0 Abstain: 0

Item #6 – VEMS Presentation

Robert Petinella spoke for the VEMS - \$8,000 was cut from the Bundle Billing Budget – with bundle billing, one bill is sent to Medicare for VEMS and Seymour Ambulance. Medicare pays Seymour Ambulance and then Seymour Ambulance reimburses VEMS. VEMS receives only \$70.66 per call from Medicare. The difference between this and the actual bill is covered by a subsidy from the Town of Seymour. This is the money that was cut. They will continue to use the money that is there. Right now, there is enough in the budget to last about ¾ of the year. After that money is used up, they would have to bill the patient. Since many of the patients are elderly on a fixed income, they would not like to do this. But VEMS cannot continually operate with a loss.

Chairman Trisha Danka said that the cuts made were based on the fact that in previous years there was no increase and Seymour does not want to pay higher fees to make up for towns not paying or not paying their fair

share. Robert Petnella said this was not the cause of the increase, and it is investigating legal action against Derby for non-payment of their subsidy. He also agreed that VEMS would let the Board of Finance know when the money is running out and we will see if we can find the money somewhere within the existing budget.

Item #7 – Comments from the First Selectman

None

Item #8– Report from the Finance Director

Finance Director Doug Thomas reported that the review of the payroll accounts showed that we are right on budget.

The Health Insurance and Retirement accounts will need some transfers.

The Public Works Overtime account will need a transfer for next month.

Item #9 – Transfer Requests

Transfer #10 – Request from Fire Department to transfer \$327.11 from Travel to Board Secretary Fees (due to storms and FEMA issues an unexpected amount of special meetings took place) AND \$8,000.00 from Gasoline to Purchased Professional Services (for required department physicals for new members and policy change for insurance requiring drug testing for new members.)

Motion to approve Transfer #10.

Motion: Heather McDaniel Second: Bill Sawicki

Yes: 7 No: 0 Abstain: 0

Item #10 - New Business

None

Item #11 Correspondence – Response to Public Works letter was included with this month’s reports.

Item #12 – Public Comment

None.

Item #13 – Discuss and take action on 2013/2014 Budget if needed

Chairman Trisha Danka read a letter submitted by First Selectman Kurt Miller since he was not able to be in attendance. The letter detailed First Selectman Miller’s recommendations for a budget cut to the Board of Education Budget. He reminded us of the need to send out two tax bills this year should the next budget not pass and that we need to be sure that our Town will be able to continue to move forward. He suggested a cut of no more than \$50,000 but no less than \$25,000.

Superintendent Christine Syriac said that last year’s budget allowed us to keep the full-day kindergarten resulting in an increase in children at grade level reading from 60% to 85%. It also allowed many innovations to be added to the high school designed to keep students in Seymour for their high school years. Also, the Citizens Academy gives residents the opportunity to experience what our schools offer and how they work. The budget was reduced twice already from the original budget; it has been reduced by \$136,000 already. She requested modest reductions to the budget.

Vice Chairman of the Board of Education Fred Stanek also asked form modest cuts. In previous years, the budget was put forth with an increase between 5 and 6%. This year they began with only 2.4% increase. Also,

an administrative position was cut this year resulting in a large savings. However, since the budget was initially put forth, there have been increases in various line items of \$46,000. We may have to outplace Special Education students this year which would be costly. We have a very comprehensive program for Pre-K through 12.

Heather McDaniel commented that the Board of Education did a fantastic job with the budget this year and it will be a difficult decision to cut anything.

Trisha Danka stated that she disagrees with the strategy of over-inflating the budget because it will fail. Hopefully in time people will see that change has taken place – unfortunately that may take a few years. Just to clarify – if the budget does not pass at the next referendum, two tax bills will be sent out next year.

Board of Finance Members Discussion

- John Stelma – recommended to stay at the lower end of Kurt Miller’s suggestions
- Bill Sawicki – originally had higher number, but due to \$46,000 of already known budget increases, recommends \$35,000
- Beverly Kennedy – passed
- Heather McDaniel – also had higher number, but subtracted the \$46,000 to recommend \$29,000
- David Bitso – recommended \$30,000
- Ed Wasikowski – recommended \$35,000
- Trisha Danka – originally had a recommendation of \$50,000; struggle with how to sell the budget cut to the public. The public needs to know that there was an increase in cost of \$46,000 already so the cut previously made is actually much higher. More than \$75,000 was cut from original budget.

Motion to cut the Board of Education budget by \$35,000.

Motion: Bill Sawicki Second: David Bitso
Yes: 7 No: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion to take a 5 minute recess.

Motion: Ed Wasikowski Second: Heather McDaniel
Yes: 7 No: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion to reconvene.

Motion: Bill Sawicki Second: Ed Wasikowski
Yes: 7 No: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion to Move the Grand Total Budget Income be approved at \$53,988,899.

Motion: David Bitso Second: Ed Wasikowski
Yes: 7 No: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion to Move the Grand Total Budget Expenses be approved at \$53,988,899.

Motion: Heather McDaniel Second: Bill Sawicki
Yes: 7 No: 0 Abstain: 0

Motion that the document titled Town of Seymour, Fiscal Year 2013/2014 Budget, consisting of 52 (fifty-two) pages to be approved as the Town’s Budget document.

Motion: Ed Wasikowski Second: Heather McDaniel

Yes: 6 No: 0 Abstain: 1 (Bill Sawicki)

Motion to set the Mill Rate for the 2013/2014 Budget at 33.23.

Motion: David Bitso Second: John Stelma
Yes: 7 No: 0 Abstain: 0

Item #14 – Adjournment

Motion to adjourn
Motion: David Bitso Second: Heather McDaniel
Yes: 7 No: 0 Abstain: 0

Meeting was adjourned at 8:04pm.

Submitted by:
Monica Dimon
Recording Secretary