

Town of Seymour  
Board of Finance

Minutes

**COPY RECEIVED**  
DATE: 4/11/13  
TIME: 5:00pm  
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Public Hearing  
Wednesday, April 10, 2013 at 7:00pm  
Auditorium, Seymour Middle School

**Members Present:** David Bitso, Trisha Danka, Rich Grudzias, Heather McDaniel, Bill Sawicki, John Stelma and Ed Wasikowski

**Members Absent:** Michele Pavlik

**Others Present:** Tony Caserta, Frank Loda, Kurt Miller, Roberta Pratt, Jean Sosnovich, Doug Thomas, and all others (see attached attendance sheet)

**Item #1 – Call Meeting to order**

Chairman, Trisha Danka called the meeting to order at 7:10pm.

**Item #2 – Pledge of Allegiance**

Everyone saluted the Flag and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Item #3 – Presentation of 2013-2014 Budget – Comments by First Selectman**

First Selectman Kurt Miller spoke about the 2013-2014 Budget:

1. Budget Process used this year – departments were given an amount for this year's budget to work with; any overages needed to be justified
2. 10 Year Capital Plan – will be used and not just put in a book on a shelf
3. The value of proper budget planning
4. Creation of the First Selectman's Budget
  - a. Revenues – where they come from
  - b. Fund Balance – our town "savings account" – should not be used for day-to-day expenses
  - c. Debt Service
  - d. Capital Expenditures – need to have a funding source – our 3 year capital plan (\$100,000 each year for 3 years) will allow no impact on the mill rate when making capital purchases in the future
  - e. Departmental Detail – specific details were given for each department's reason for increase in budget amounts
  - f. Reviewed the new format of the budget package and commended the Board of Finance for their efforts in improving the communication of the budget and being transparent. Mentioned a new web page with all of the budget information in an easy format should be up on the town website as quickly as possible – probably in a couple of months.

Comments by Trisha Danka

5. Introduced all of the Board of Finance members
6. 2013-2014 Board of Finance Initial Budget

Board of Education has a 1.7% increase in the budget.

They had requested a 2.4% increase which includes the following additional expenses:

- 2 teachers at the Middle School to reduce class size
- 1 school bus for students staying after school for additional help

- 4 paraprofessionals for monitoring (currently instructional paraprofessionals are being pulled from classrooms for monitoring)

There was an administrator's position that was eliminated in July.

This year the First Selectman and the Board of Finance are supporting the current Board of Education budget

Board of Education Chairman, Yashu Putorti stated that at this time the Board of Education does not support the addition of 4 Student Resource Officers for \$377,000.

Trisha Danka reviewed Public Comment guidelines: 2 minutes per person so that everyone could have a chance to speak who so desires, may get up again once everyone has spoken, and requested everyone be respectful. Questions would be deferred to the most appropriate party.

#### Item #4 – Public Comment

- Walt Birdsell, 42 Jupiter Drive: The Board of Education could save money by having the kids from the Jupiter Drive area walk to the Chatfield LoPresti School since it is only 3/10 mile instead of having the bus pick them up
  - Yashu Putorti responded that the elimination of this bus route would NOT result in any cost savings; this bus is picking up children further away and is not full, so it is also picking up children closer to the school as the parents have expressed safety concerns.
- James Garofalo, 163 Bungay Road: Spoke about the quality of life that we have in Seymour and what we need to do to improve the quality of life for our children and grandchildren
- Steven Kulas, 31 Skokorat Street, Board of Library Directors: The library has had to delve into its savings to keep up with expenses. There is no line item for heating and a minimal amount requested for books. These are funded with private monies. There are 13,500 members using the library. Some of the technology money requested is for interlibrary loans. If we could have at least half of the money that was cut, we may be able to break even. Please consider restoring ½ the money that was cut, which is \$300.
- Richard Rossik, 34 Roberts Street: Is not in favor of monies spent on Board of Education administrators and teachers; feel they are not effective in their positions.
- Cindy Dion, 18 Carriage Drive: The same people come out for these public hearings. Asked First Selectman why a Code Red announcement was not used to remind residents about tonight's Public Hearing. Children today need to be driven to school with the many dangers out there. The presence of the police officer at the school makes the children feel safer. Her child feels supported and safe with the teachers and administrators.
  - First Selectman Kurt Miller responded that he has received many complaints from residents in the past when the Code Red system was used for announcing/reminding them about important Town Meetings/Hearings. He made the decision not to use the Code Red for tonight's hearing and is saving it for reminders before the referendum.
- Fred Dean, 15 Fox Drive: Commended the Board of Education for not supporting the Student Resource Officer's. Believes we would be saving \$94,000 per officer if we use the current police officers available instead of adding the Student Resource Officers for \$377,000. Cutting the library funds is a mistake.
- Robin Johnson, 25 Holbrook Road: Asked if the emptying of the Seymour High School pool was eliminated in the budget or omitted? She could not locate it.
  - Richard Belden responded that the emptying/cleaning of the Seymour High School pool is included in the Repairs & Maintenance line item in the budget and is still in current plans to take place this year.

- Mort Conlon, 73 Brookfield Drive: Praised the Seymour school system. Seymour is an excellent place to raise a family!
- Jim Rafferty, 54 Maple Street: Asked if since the Board of Education is not supporting the implementation of the Student Resource Officers in each school, will the Board of Finance remove this line item from the budget?
  - Board of Finance Chairman Trisha Danka said that since the Board of Education is not in favor of this expense, the Board of Finance will strongly consider removing this from the budget as the Board of Education is responsible for these buildings and those who are educated or teaching within them. The Board of Finance will meet Monday, 4/15/13 at 7:00pm to review the entire budget after the feedback from the public hearing.
- Ed Strumello, 188 Mountain Road, Board of Education: Asked if the Economic Development Officer is assessed and held accountable for results. Many other towns appear to be getting businesses moving in but Seymour does not.
  - First Selectman Kurt Miller responded that the Economic Development Officer, along with all Town of Seymour personnel, have job performance reviews twice a year (January and July). They have expectations for which they are held accountable. We need to remember that other towns have better opportunities and a better “product” to sell. We are working on making Seymour a better “product”. We have made progress in some smaller projects.

Trisha Danka thanked everyone for coming out.

**Item #5 – Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 8pm

Submitted by:

**Monica Dimon**

**Recording Secretary**