

Town of Seymour  
Board of Finance

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DATE: 2/28/13  
TIME: 5:10pm  
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Minutes

Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, February 26, 2013 at 7:00pm  
Norma Drummer Room, Seymour Town Hall

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

**Members Absent:** Michele Pavlik

**Others Present:** Gene Atkas, Tony Caserta, Frank Loda, Kurt Miller, Jim Smith, and Jean Sosnovich

**Item #1 – Call Meeting to order**

Chairman, Trisha Danka 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 – Seating of Alternates**

None

**Item #4 – Public Comment**

None

**Item #5 – Approval of Minutes—January 22, 2013 Regular Meeting**

Motion to approve Minutes from January 22, 2013 Regular Meeting.

Motion: Dave Bitso

Second: Bill Sawicki

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstain: 0

**Item #6 – Comments from the First Selectman**

See below (with Item #10)

**Item #7– Report from the Finance Director**

None

**Item #8 – Transfer Requests**

None

**Item #9 – Public Comment**

None

**Item #10 – Continue budget deliberations if needed**

All board members commended the First Selectman and departments in arriving at a budget very early on which made for a much smoother presentation and a positive difference to the process.

Comments were made by specific members as follows:

Ed Wasikowski: We should consider approving the \$8,500 request from the Economic Development Commission.

David Bitso: Asked First Selectman Miller how he arrived at the numbers in his budget. First Selectman Miller said that he had a bottom line figure in mind for each department which took into account the current needs and the amounts given to each department in previous years. He said that each department was welcome to come to the Board of Finance and present reasons for their request of additional money. Any stipends requested must be approved by the Board of Selectmen prior to approval by the Board of Finance. The fire department has met with First Selectman Miller and they have come to a mutual understanding.

Heather McDaniel: The liability report showed many areas for improvement needed in our parks. We are looking into possible grants to use for this need. The First Selectman responded he has had positive response back from the grant sources at which the town is looking.

Bill Sawicki: There was not a radical difference in the budget numbers from the First Selectman's budget to the departments' budget numbers. We should consider bringing the budget presented by the departments to the public as a "first attempt".

John Stelma: Ansonia has a similar Fire Marshal/Fire Department budget to ours, so this is important to note when looking at the Fire Marshal's request.

Trisha Danka: We need to have the Public Works department pull out some of the overtime money and put into a newly created line item for Heavy Equipment. Money for the revaluation will be put into the "Capital" section of the budget. Elderly Services requested that a line item be added for postage (\$600). We should start thinking about creating and setting aside money for a Sinking Fund. Although the budget is in good shape right now, we still should go over everything before sending to the voters.

First Selectman Comments (from Item #6)

- A school safety committee meeting was held. It was recommended the town create a separate section in the budget for a School Resource Officer in each school. The cost for this (yearly) would be \$377,000.
- We may need to request additional money for the purchase of some Capital Equipment
- Still working through all the changes in the WPCA
- Still finalizing the Capital figures with the Board of Selectman. For now there is a \$100,000 figure in place
- State Revenues: we will receive the same amount in 2014 and 2015 as we receive in 2013. However, the way we will receive the money is drastically different. We will receive it as an increase in LoCIP funds, which is limited in how money can be used. The State also created a "Hold Harmless" Grant of \$386,000.
- Car Tax: per the current budget, we have the option to remove this year but MUST remove by July 2014. First Selectman Miller will be sending out a letter tomorrow expressing Seymour's displeasure with the governor's current budget. The CCM has banded together with us to voice our disapproval and will go to present to the governor.
- State Revenues are uncertain at this point.

Bill Sawicki asked if many towns are slowing down their budget processes this year due to the unknown outcome of the State proposals. There is a proposal to have the budget approved by May 1<sup>st</sup>. Seymour is actually much further along in the approval process than many others.

Bill suggested that we finish our approval process with the budget we have but hold it until we have a better idea of what will happen at the State level. We should have some alternative numbers prepared in case we need to make cuts.

- The 10 Year Strategic Plan is in the process of being formulated. This will not be a plan to be filed in a book on a shelf. We will have a Quarterly Review of the plan to keep it current. This will address many important areas: prioritize capital expenditures needed; risk assessment; building update; "playbook" to plan for emergencies.

Trisha Danka suggested that we should pull out the School Resource Officer from the regular budget and send it to a separate referendum to vote so that everyone is aware of the expense and it doesn't get overlooked as part of the budget. Trisha has made several attempts at improving communication of the budget to the general

public. She has drafted an addendum explaining some of the financial terms in the budget; there will be a cover letter explaining how the mill rate was derived; and Doug is adding footnotes to each page in the budget for explanation.

- First Selectman Miller will make a presentation to the seniors explaining the budget and will also do whatever else he can to get the information to people who want it.
- Contract negotiations with the unions are still ongoing.

Trisha Danka asked when we will have an idea on the State Revenue numbers. First Selectman Miller said hopefully within the next few weeks.

- Dave Bitso asked about the outcome of the town buildings that were being look at by the Board of Selectmen . A Building Committee to decide what to do with our town buildings was organized and has met. They received the information from the study approved. But the Board of Selectmen voted not to move forward with anything for now. They did approve an appraisal of the LoPresti School which should be complete in the next few weeks. An estimate to demolish the Community Center showed the cost to be exorbitant. Also, we received money to improve that building from a Small Cities Grant that would most likely have to be paid back if we tear the building down. There is a lot of work needed in/on that building. Surprisingly, 98 Bank Street is not a big drain on town resources.

Trisha Danka was disappointed that the Board of Selectmen voted against using any of the suggestions given from the Building Study done. When this expense was proposed the Board of Finance asked and was led to believe that the Board of Selectmen would act on some of the suggestions that came out of this study. This appears not to be the case. This was a waste of money. First Selectman Miller said that we should put a plan in place now to start implementing some of these ideas.

- At this time, there are no changes in town positions; First Selectman Miller will discuss potential layoffs in executive session with the Board of Selectmen.
- We have met with FEMA regarding the most recent storm; they will reimburse for the first 48 hours. We should put a hold on dispensing the FEMA money recently received so that we can have cash available to use for the current storm. We do have a plan of action in place for the next storm. We were prepared, but not for the large amounts of snow that we received. Having an operations center to centralize calls would be a helpful improvement. First Selectman Miller will get together one figure to present for storm costs.
- Beacon Falls did send several trucks over to help us out during the storm.

A new alternate is needed as Kim Welch has vacated her position.

#### **Item #11 – Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn

Motion: Bill Sawicki

Second: John Stelma

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Meeting was adjourned at 8:14pm.

Submitted by:

**Monica Dimon**

**Recording Secretary**