

**Town of Seymour
Board of Finance**

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Minutes

**Budget Deliberation Meeting
Wednesday, March 11, 2015 at 7:00pm
Norma Drummer Room, Seymour Town Hall**

Members Present: David Bitso, 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, Yashu Putorti, Christine Syriac and Doug Thomas

Item #1 – Call Meeting to order

Chairman Bill Sawicki 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 – Public Comment

Kristen Harmeling – 27 Patrick Drive – BOE has a new presentation this year “Three Myths about Seymour Schools that Deserve to be Debunked” which is attached. The BOE will again present to the PTA’s and parents as well as a webinar hosted by the Valley Indy and diligently do their best to inform the public. We need to change the opinion that we spend too much on schools.

Item #4 - Deliberation and Discussion of 2015/2016 Budget

The Board of Finance discussed the 2015/2016 Board of Education Budget:

- Bill Sawicki felt that if the BOF presents the budget as is that we haven’t done our job; \$1million is rather high – this is almost a 1 mill increase just for the Board of Education; one of the things previously discussed/suggested is that the number of students for additional tuition be used as the ACTUAL number vs. projected number. School Superintendent Christine Syriac said that the actual numbers are already being used in the current presented budget.
- Rich Grudzias questioned the level services salary number vs. the number including changes (retirements, elimination or reallocation of positions); Rick Belden went over the numbers with the group. Two positions have been eliminated – Library Media Specialist (Middle School) and Math Teacher (High School)
- John Stelma asked about the groundskeeping work that the Public Works department will take over responsibility for. Board of Education Chairman Yashu Putorti said that this has not been finalized and so the funds for this are still in the BOE budget.
- Beverly Kennedy asked how many people are currently out on Workers Comp claims. Rick Belden said that there are three people out and 7 or 8 cases currently open.
- David Bitso said that the Board of Education did a great job marketing their budget last year and hopes that will continue this year. Although the BOF will not make recommendations by line item, they will review everything.

- Heather McDaniel said that the public may not like the increase of almost a mill for schools.
- Christine Syriac said that with the contractual obligations and mandates, to keep the same level of services and not negatively impact the town, they cannot come forward with less than a \$1million increase.
- The Board of Education members present felt that if the Board of Finance were to present the budget as requested by the BOE to the town without cuts, it would send a message that the BOF supported the Board of Education's efforts. The Board of Finance members felt that they DO in fact support and applaud the efforts made by the Board of Education to cut costs wherever possible and present a responsible budget and the efforts made to market their budget. The opinion of the public and their perception of the Board of Education is what we ALL need to work to improve. We need to help people to understand that we DO have an excellent school system here in Seymour. The amount of increase is large but this is a large part of the total budget.
- March 30th has been set as the date for the Town Meeting
- Town Vote will be scheduled for May.
- We will meet on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday (if needed) next week (3/16-18) to deliberate recommended additions/deductions from the Town and BOE Budgets.

Item #5- Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm.

Submitted by:

Monica Dimon

Recording Secretary