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Town of Seymour
Board of Finance

Minutes

Budget Deliberation Meeting
Monday, March 16, 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, Cindy Dion, Kristen Harmeling, Paul Roy, Mileno Seara and Doug Thomas

Item #1 – Call Meeting to order
Chairman Bill Sawicki called the meeting to order at 7:06pm.

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

Item #3 – Public Comment
Paul Roy – 80 Washington Avenue – asked for a copy of the agenda for this meeting
Cindy Dion – 18 Carriage Drive – asked the Board of Finance to forward the Board of Education as is to the Town for vote. Recommended that everyone take the Citizens Academy. Recommended that the Town issue more fines for things like not clearing sidewalks and texting while driving.
Kristen Harmeling – 27 Patrick Drive – Apologized for speaking out of order at March 11th meeting; the main point was that the Board of Education needs help and support from all elected officials, including the Board of Finance, to project the opinion that they have reviewed the Board of Education budget and found it to be a responsible budget as presented and to do this in a public forum.

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

- The Police Department budget has been changed: $3,000 less – line #535
- John Stelma – took the Citizens Academy and found it to be informative and interesting; we still need to consider both the Town budget and the Board of Education budget; we should try to get more revenue.
- Rich Grudzias – also took the Citizens Academy and agreed it was very good; please note that we do have quite a few foreclosures in town so we do want to keep the mill rate as low as possible.
- Bill Sawicki – we are not doing our job if we present the budget as is; mill rate is 34.04 as is; with 1.5% increase for both Town & Board of Education would be 34.77.
- David Bitso – Town Counsel has $200,000 – can we reduce this? No. The money is needed there for open cases. Can we reduce or delete the $90,000 for the F550 truck?
- Bill Sawicki – we can cut the $90,000 in half and put the money into the "Non-Recurring Capital" line; we should ask Dennis whether we need the truck this year or can wait until next year; also need to know about how much the maintenance costs will be; What and when was our last truck purchase? We will ask Dennis Rozum to attend tomorrow's meeting.

- David Bitso – if there is any extra monies found, we should put towards the road resurfacing; the labor under the Downtown Committee for hanging banners has been deleted
- Heather McDaniel – Line #635 Parks – the $5,600 under purchased services is for the flags (replaced twice yearly)
- Ed Wasikowski – Parks General Supplies is at $25,250; we should give them $30,000 because they are underfunded - ADDITIONAL $4,750.
- Ed Wasikowski – Library – we should keep the $35,000 that they requested - ADDITIONAL $2,000 – this is for the Bibliomation fees.
- Ed Wasikowski - Public Works – Snowplowing Materials – should we increase this? No. If needed we will fund the money from Contingency; rather not raise taxes on money we may not need.
- Ed Wasikowski – Seymour Ambulance Line #545 – money for the air conditioner will be coming out of Town Buildings (from sale of LoPresti School)
- John Stelma - #615 and #620 Elderly Services and Recreation – not yet combined – hasn't happened yet
- Rich Grudzias – Would like to reduce Police Overtime to $100,000; after discussion, the Board of Finance decided to REDUCE by $20,000 the Police Overtime line item; Fire Department truck request is in Capital
- Beverly Kennedy – Police Department Education line – is this much needed? We will ask Chief Metzler to come to tomorrow's meeting; breakdown of the expense is in the budget binder.
- Beverly Kennedy – Fire Marshal #560 – overtime line is union and includes retro pay; #585 Sanitation Department Transfer Station overtime – is needed starting in the spring
- David Bitso – HR Position is part time 30 hours/week
- Jake Holly – Police Department – is the new dispatcher position included? Can ask the Chief at tomorrow's meeting.
- Jim Cretella – is the Economic Development Director doing his job? Yes we are moving in a positive direction.
- Comments on Board of Education:
    - David Bitso – First Selectman's recommendation is too low
    - John Stelma – First Selectman asked the Board of Finance to approve the Board of Education budget as is, but his recommendation is only at $475,000 increase
    - Grounds maintenance number is the same because no decision has been made
    - Kristen Harmeling – a $1 million increase is the lowest we can put forth to keep the level of services; our economy is in no worse shape this year than last year; unemployment is actually lower; our situation really hasn't changed much. We won't be able to solve the mill rate problem by cutting BOE budget – we need to get more businesses paying taxes and better regulations at the state level
    - Rich Grudzias – not sure what we will be getting from the state
    - Bill Sawicki – possible legislation in Hartford for 2016 regarding "pooling" the personal property taxes – would definitely adversely affect the town
    - Rick Belden – special needs students can attend the magnet and other schools – costs may be less than private special schools but there is still cost associated

Item #5– Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:28pm.

Submitted by:
Monica Dimon
Recording Secretary