

Town of Seymour
Board of Finance

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Minutes

Budget Deliberations
Thursday, March 3, 2016 at 7:00pm
Norma Drummer Room, Seymour Town Hall

Members Present: Aileen Baldwin, Jim Cretella, Zani Imetovski, Beverly Kennedy, Heather McDaniel, Bill Sawicki, John Stelma; Richard Demko (alternate)

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Stephen Behuniak, Kristen Harmeling, Kurt Miller, Ehlaina Napolitano, and Doug Thomas

Item #1 – Call to order

Chairman Bill Sawicki called the deliberations to order at 7:03pm.

Item #2 – Pledge of Allegiance

Everyone saluted the Flag and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item #3 – Deliberation and Discussion of 2016/2017 Budget

The Board of Finance discussed the following department's budget:

❖ First Selectman's Office – presented by Kurt Miller

- The First Selectman began by thanking the members of the Board of Finance and expressing appreciation for the dedication and sacrifices made by the volunteer members that help to make this town a better place to live. When he began his term of office in 2011 it was apparent that changes were needed in the way things were done; we can't just budget one year ahead, we need to implement some long term planning. In 2013 we began a five year plan that would help us improve our financial position. This was to be done by:
 - 1. Determining weaknesses and issues with handling our Town Buildings, Roads, Technology, Communications, and Employee Benefits
 - 2. Improve short term financial goals allowing us financial flexibility

In the last four years we have initiated an action plan that has included re-negotiating our municipal contracts, improving technology, moved our town employees to one of two improved health insurance plans, implementing some shared services, and increasing scrutiny of our day-to-day operations. These have improved our financial position. Since 2011 we have increased our fund balance by \$1.7 million and increased our bond rating by two levels which has resulted in over \$1 million in savings on debt.

- FUND BALANCE – In 2011 we saw that we needed to improve our cash position; in 2011 our fund balance was \$3,059,212; currently our fund balance is \$4,774,011 – which is an increase of \$1,714,799. Currently we are at 8.38%; and we will try for 10%. There is an additional \$400,000 not included in this number that is in the Bristol Reserve Resource Recovery Fund. Early in 2016 there was a BOE expense related to Workers Comp for about \$350,000 that used fund balance.

- DEBT SERVICE - For FY 2018 we will have an \$800,000 reduction in debt and in FY 2021 we will have a decrease of \$1.2 million; in FY 2019 there will be an increase of about \$500,000. There is a new line item this year to plan for this additional cost called the "Mill Rate Stabilization Fund". Our debt ratio is currently at 8.7% and Standard & Poors would like it to be 6 – 8% ideally. We should be at 5.6% by 2021.

- CAPITAL PLAN – Board of Selectmen has not yet approved the capital plan; will do so in April; there is an additional line item for "Building Repair Fund" for repairs needed at Library, Police Station to start with and then the Town Hall and Community Center and Citizens Engine. There is also an appropriation for Technology and Public Works Equipment. Last year, money was set up to be included in the next 5 or 6 years for the Multicast (Communications) System at \$75,000/year. Due to the re-financing of debt, this money will no longer be needed. Our town is now fiber-connected – will re-do the phone system along with the BOE which will save thousands. Many other technological improvements are scheduled which will improve communications between town departments and improve safety & security in town buildings. There is a need for a public works auxiliary building (cold storage) to house the public works equipment (plows, etc.)

- DEPARTMENTAL BUDGETS – Keep in mind this is a "Revaluation Year"
 - Revenues – Grand List last year was \$1,234,045,890 and this year was \$1,195,957,150. This was a decrease of \$38,088,000; resulted in a \$1.3 million loss of revenues. There was a set rate of 32 mills for autos by the state resulting in a \$268,516 loss. 3.5% decrease in valuation. The First Selectman's budget is a 0.54% mill rate increase, or \$303,000 more than last year. Net tax revenues are \$41,525,330.
 - Selectman's Office – New employee (floater between Assessor's Office, Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Finance Department, and First Selectman's office – as receptionist) is listed here as she will report to the First Selectman.
 - Finance Department – Additional charges are for new ADP vendor – used same as BOE
 - Downtown Committee – was disbanded – the First Selectman suggested that the money be transferred over to the Economic Development Department (\$11,000). There was a study done regarding possible development areas in Seymour.
 - Town Counsel – General services needed more money in that due to more lawsuits; union contracts have been re-negotiated; total department is down 12%.
 - Inland/Wetlands – the additional person is needed for extra coverage in other areas and can do other duties; not hourly position. \$10,000/year but need to submit time sheets.
 - Town Computers – \$27,500 increase – annual support for I.T. Director – very much needed; we have seen significant improvements already since implementation over the past two years.
 - Town Operations – overtime is needed when snow events happen; water usage increased due to irrigation systems
 - Town Engineer – several projects in progress: Rimmon Street, Holbrook Street, Greenway Trail, other road projects
 - Town Contributions – Founders Day – money never included for police duty; Recreation – new addition of funds needed for Seymour Soccer, \$3,500 and Boys & Girls Club, \$5,000 (they serve about 100 kids/day)
 - Police – no increase for Chief, still negotiating salary; uniformed officers – First Selectman requested \$50,000 decrease; no request for cars this year

Emergency Management – increase for Code Red line item – increase to unlimited usage

Seymour Ambulance – contractual increase

Building Compliance – additional funds requested for specialists needed to be brought in due to additional large projects in town

Highway Wages & Maintenance – directors salary down to \$82,000 due to new hire; regular employees reduced by \$65,000 – would rather not increase taxes unnecessarily; if money is needed we can always transfer later.

Public Works – snow removal – again, would rather transfer the money if actually needed, and not increase the budget unnecessarily at this point; catch basins – did not purchase the truck with other towns as anticipated due to maintenance costs expected; will put out to bid again this year.

Highway Materials – added a line for “Pothole Repair”

Street Lighting – large increase is needed for usage; currently working on plan to convert to LED.

Waste Collection – large increase in commercial – will look at this number; also need to look more closely at revenues.

Dog Warden – currently in discussions to merge with Ansonia.

Services for the Elderly and Recreation – will be merged to form “Community Services” Department

Board of Education – First Selectman’s recommended budget is \$32,599,415; there was an increase of \$60,000 for special education costs from their original budget. Reduction of \$314,990 from their request due to insurance contract.

Item #4– Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:44pm.

Submitted by:

Monica Dimon

Recording Secretary