

1. The **Special Plymouth Town Council Joint Meeting with the Board of Finance and Board of Education** was called to order on **Monday, April 23, 2012 in the Terryville High School Cafeteria at 8:39 p.m.** by Mayor Vincent Festa. Members in attendance: Councilwoman DiAnna Schenkel; Councilwoman Sue Murawski; Councilman Tom Zagurski; Councilman Dick Foote; Councilman Remie Ferreira. Also Dave Bertnagel, Director of Finance; Ted Scheidel, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor. Chairman Pat Perugino, Board of Education stated a quorum of the Board is present. Chairman Ralph Zovich, Board of Finance, stated a quorum of the Board is present.

2. Fire Exit Explanation given per CT Gen. Statutes, Public Act 03-231, Sec. 29-381

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. To allow the Board of Finance to present the recommended Budget and by a majority vote of its members make, if necessary, changes to the Budget to be recommended to the Town Referendum, if necessary

Mayor Festa turned the meeting over to Chairman Zovich who noted discussion needs to be held between Council, Board of Education and his board based on what heard tonight and to answer comments or questions. Councilwoman Murawski – (a) looking over the budget ahead of meeting noticed a number of salaries that departments did not ask for increase but Board of Finance gave increase and do not remember which ones and what was the thinking or was it different for each case. Chairman Zovich - non union supervisory, for example in budget details there was a fairly reasonable increase on tax collector on page 7 from \$40,000-45,000 and seems like large increase but recall last year we started the new tax collector at 40,000 salary which was far below salary of previous with reasoning she is coming in new and facing reelection and need to go through certification training which Mrs. LeGassey did. \$3500 of that \$5000 raise consolidated payments from WPCA as normally the tax collector would get separate check from WPCA to send out sewer assessments. In town clerk's case she had requested 50,000 salary adjustment and cut back to 47,750 and had meeting with Mrs. Rockwell and some issues concerned about that took 2.5 years to get charter changes implemented and made it 1.5% salary increase; mayor's salary going up because feeling is the mayor, for the size of our town is underpaid, and goes back to the study that the Human Resource Director did several years ago; police chief given adjustment as two years without salary increase; no increase for public works director; Mr. Scheidel and all the work he is doing is in for more hours and at same price. Any others? (b) like said, should have circled and didn't and noticed you hit them. Chairman Zovich - others are contractual such town planner, highway superintendent, assessor whose increases are negotiated. Councilman Zagurski (a) legal attorneys, every year seem to underfund budget, looks like \$100,000 what we pay town attorney, labor and town, and any reason why we underfund. Chairman Zovich - legal fees got away from us last year and look on page 7 of the itemized details you can see what happened there; line 013 which is 1/3 way down and labor attorney and with all 7 of municipal employee contracts they went way over budget and can say on behalf of the Board of Finance they were not happy and not notified until legal bills came in at end of fiscal year. This year, labor attorney is at 65,000 and town attorney down to 46,000 and our best guess based on what needs to be

done and what lawsuits we may face. Did mention in presentation we still have police officers eligible for heart and hypertension and a chance we will get legal liability against the town and we need to defend. Talked about more foreclosures and some years ago the Board of Finance put \$10,000 in revolving legal fund under line 14. We don't need to keep funding and only 1,000 in this year as when we go to court, the court awards us legal fees and we recover. When we have Sal take homeowners to court for payment of non taxes we recover that. Mayor Festa, point of clarification on attorney fees, you are also leaving out fact that there were 4 investigations that had to be paid for. Chairman Zovich, are those are concluded. Mayor Festa, yes and that was change in that line item for labor fees. Pat Budnick, need to clarify the requested amount given to us is recommended to us as well as salary increases were recommendations but we base on recommend amounts. (b) seems in history attorney fees are always over run and line item. Pat Budnick, seemed for a while we were in sync and last year way off and upset it was that far off and explained for when bills came in. (c) Mayor, when doing an investigation it comes out of that line item? Mayor Festa, through attorney's office for handling investigation aspects. Dave Bertnagel, I want to let you know that everything is way under budget in this year's budget and will be surplus in them. Councilwoman Schenkel, liaison to the Board of Finance and have been for past 5 years and usually get up and tell the public what a phenomenal job this group of people does. What people do not see is hard efforts of every person in this room and at end of year we see success; but all year every day cost saving efforts, inch by inch, penny by penny. One thing noticed in past couple years as all being proactive, for example did look to see what it cost to replace highway garage and in past waited until collapsed; did not talk about this but Dan went out and inspected all town dams and we need to talk about costs for repairs and these people when out and did what they did for the public. This Board has been nothing but forthright communication, considerate about some of the strains on the town side; and a pleasure to work with you people on Council who have implemented cost savings with energy reduction and unspoken hero in my opinion is Marty Sandshaw and what he has done and will do on town side. Thank you to both groups and from herself as council person and as a citizen thank you. Pat Perugino, page 9, fire marshal secretary 102% raise. Chairman Zovich, we got appeal from Mr. Engle and deputy fire marshal and made reasonable argument. They said if we gave an extra 10 hours that secretary needed for paperwork they would not need any more money in their salary account to do field inspections. We weighed secretary wage vs. fire marshal wage and came to the conclusion it is better to have fire marshal out doing inspections instead of in office doing paperwork. Most of us have been in town for a while and previous fire marshal was cutting back on secretary and padding in this account. Looks like big increase in one shot and agreed but did turn him down for \$50,000 truck and cut budget. We did get analysis on actual wages hourly for last four years and basically restored cut hours over years. Anything anyone thinks we should take into consideration from public comment? Vicky Carey, for clarification I did not pull that out of a hat and liaison to Capital Improvement Committee and watch their budget and I have gone through all town buildings and checked out everything. Tony gave me a building assessment report which is on file with the town and had quotes from Tony and instead of taking 3 quotes and maybe hard for someone to believe that, and I have been in building construction years ago and knows estimates, and went up there for ball park figure to make sure that \$425,000 was not low end or high end and given range of prices and looked at Tony's prices and went the middle

of the road. Between all came up with 425,000 and it is a safety concern and unfortunately we are lucky it has not fallen down. Councilman Foote, was going to say something at meeting but chose not to and estimate for garage, you don't need plan right off and was with Tony Lorenzetti Friday evening picking up post and rails and he showed me the building with cracks, and I am the older one in room and my dad was a police officer and remember 49 Plymouth cruiser being at that garage in 1950; building is from 1942 and it is actual cinder blocks and not the strongest thing and quite pleased to hear from Tony and said they do need male/female bathroom; all for it and commend them for putting it forth. Vicky Carey, 1942 building that was to be a temporary building. Pat Budnick, came to meeting to give details behind it and they have been working on it and into capital improvement that was shut down. Chairman Zovich, one point to bring up and not pessimist, but we should have a contingency plan should it fail on May 3rd we will have to reconvene and have 20 days to do so and schedule another referendum. If consensus of bodies and public comment for and against we can take money out of this budget and as pointed out only financing 150,000 and on effective mil rate reduction where budget raises mil rate .7 we have effective increase of .4 and people will not see that as lost in calculation of their own assessment. Everyone needs to get their own tax assessment and do it to determine. Some people will see tax decreases because their properties decreased. Knowing tax reduction at 35 mils and speak against is amazing. Mayor Festa, anyone else from Council, Board of Education? Patrick Perugino, a comment, don't let that 425 go. You let Eli Terry go for 5 years and it cost over 700,000 and best thing is that it collapses as long as nobody is in it. Put in budget and leave it there. Gerry Bourbonniere, you talk about Eli Terry and what about the library. Chairman Zovich, \$90,000 special appropriation 4-5 years ago and vowed never to let it happen again and allowed 5,000 holes in roof to grow to \$90,000 repair. Do not know how many years ago trusses in highway garage were cut to make room for trucks and allows bulging and do not need to wait for roof to collapse; if members of committee believe this is of urgent necessity we will keep this \$425,000 in capitals and Dave can use creative financing and stretch for 3 years and get low interest rates. Most people agree. Marty Wetzel, Board of Education, starting to get program of fixing before collapse, can you take 100,000 and put in an account just for buildings, for serious things and not saying to spend every year but for first few years spend and once buildings updated you will not have to do that. Chairman Zovich, good segway and Dave has information to share. Dave Bertnagel, statue that if we establish 1% of budget and sinking fund for Board of Education on recommendation of Board of Education to Board of Finance, specifically for Board of Education only, and would like to create. Chairman Zovich, you guys did a fabulous job controlling expenditures last year and returned \$197,000 to the town but under government accounting that 197,000 got absorbed and offset deficit to taxes and could not do anything with that money; in a good year 197,000 would go back to general fund and appropriation all over. To set up a sinking fund for schools facilities and education system you can take surpluses at end of year and get accolades of having surplus and that would go in special fund designated for capital improvements. Marty Wetzel, fine for school buildings but what about town buildings. Can we take money off top and put in fund for library, fire houses, town hall and put into an account. Chairman Zovich, it has to come from somewhere. Peter Cook, that is what level debt service will do for us and next year if not town garage it will be something else and can take money and do something. Pat Budnick, it has to go through budgeting process, capitals, and have money for maintenance for

dam and thought down road will need to fund something. When Dan walked there is a dam that needs major improvements and part of money will go to correct dam and money set aside and thought is to set up as a trust and if people want to request money upon death it is more money going in there. We have 2 reservoirs, Lake Winfield and dams we need to take care. You have people looking at budget and 100,000 not being used and do not want reserve. Marty Wetzel, makes common sense and if you had money in account and only need to come up with 200,000 if had money in that account. Pat Budnick, you put money aside. Pat Perugino, hose program started many years ago and if you cut out you should be thrown out of office and when started with the fire department the best hose was 1948 and not up to date. Started by Charlie Freimuth and many years ago when Dave Barbieri was chairman. Question on sinking fund is there a time limit to spend. Dave Bertnagel, it is limited to 1% of total budget per year and 22 million and limited once max out at 229,000 that is what you would have, can spend 100,000 one year and can then replenish. Chairman Zovich, Dave was creative in way financed roof and long after he is gone or Dave, this town will have capital needs, repairs, maintenance and facility work that needs to be done and have mechanism in Charter that helps us and it is one thing you heard those taxpayers rally against, they hate idea that we are maintaining level debt service because we can fund reconstruction. They want to cut debt service for tax rebate and once disburse that money you have no working capital. If we can hold that line at 9% of budget and one reason sticks in craw is they can reject budget twice and they can cut all departments 3% and cannot touch debt service legally because we set payments. I urge you not to go back on that regardless of what people are on at this stage and we continue to maintain 9% and only thing we can save for the future. If bonding referendum fails and we don't fix roads we will pay debt off faster and free up money in future.

MOTION: To present the budget to the Council as published by Peter Cook; second Mike Drozdick and the vote unanimous.

5. To move to schedule May 3, 2012 as the date for the Annual Budget Referendum for the purpose of adopting a budget.

MOTION: To schedule May 3, 2012 as the date for the Annual Budget Referendum by Councilwoman Murawski; second Councilman Ferreira. Discussion: Councilwoman Schenkel, what are the times? Mayor Festa, not to speak for the registrars, but they usually have all day on budget. Vote: unanimous.

6. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn by Councilwoman Schenkel; second Councilman Ferreira and the vote unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Gudeczauskas
Council Clerk