

1. Call Meeting to Order – The Special Meeting of the **Town of Plymouth Board of Finance** was called to order on **Thursday, May 13, 2010 at 7:08** in the Community Room, Plymouth Town Hall. Members in attendance: Pat Budnick, Peter Cook, Mike Drozdick, Dan Murray, Ralph Zovich. Also in attendance: Dave Bertnagel, Director of Finance; Robin Gudeczauskas, Recording Secretary. Excused absent: Vicky Carey.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Discuss & Take Action on Revisions (if any) to Proposed General Fund Budget for FY2010-11 – Chairman Zovich noted because referendum failed; Mayor Festa asked that he read notice put onto proposed budgets which is baseline working from, read into record. Options before the BOF reviewed noting that the Charter revisions passed last year stated we had 20 days to schedule a second referendum and in definition it was suppose to be 20 business days and that section did not pass and the Town Attorney interpreted it to 20 calendar days and May 24 is exactly 20 calendar days. Public hearing is for purpose of listening and soliciting public comment, answering questions, receive input to take under consideration.
  - a. Adjustments to Expenditures and/or Revenues - Need consensus from Board and get ideas for list of contingencies. Review of joint meeting discussed. Options: Charter makes no mention of required change between first and second referendum and we can resubmit as is, make reductions to reduce impact on mil rate or go back and have additions to the budget which would have increase to mil rate. Feedback from townspeople reviewed noting 2 former council members did not know there was a referendum and did not vote, some people did not vote because they thought it was a done deal and felt budget was a modest increase, voted yes because mil rate was modest increase. Had 8% voter turnout and out of those voted no a majority thought tax increase too high but some may have wanted to add money. Board member comments: Mike Drozdick, keep budget as is. Pat Budnick, many people did not know about vote. Dan Murray, turnout is poor for such a serious situation that will affect everybody in town, not strong indication of no and what it means. Ralph Zovich, margin of 50 some voted no because willing to pay more taxes. Peter Cook, if they don't like what they see come out, do not see anybody from school tonight and not too many parents tonight, understand difficulties and people talking tell us something specific and until people that aren't talking, do say something we will not know. Chairman Zovich stated you need \$1000 of assessed property to vote. Message board in park has referendum and public hearing dates listed. Would like to see 4'x4' sign and have one made up for dates. He read Vicky Carey's email to into record dated May 5<sup>th</sup>, take out \$100,000 from roads if necessary, BOE take out up to \$150,000. Peter Cook: \$100,000 from education; 100,000 from capitals; one furlough day per month for savings of \$75,000 or look at laying off 1-2 positions in town hall. To close transfer station there is no savings as would reallocate person due to contract and need renegotiation of contracts. Reduce or eliminate EDC consultant; discussion on incentives. Shift \$100,000 out of revenues to reduce general fund balance as we have additional costs. One tenth mil equals \$82,000. Pat Budnick, school roof will cost \$98,000. Dave Bertnagel, BOE has received firm price on roof \$650,000 of which 72% reimbursed by State of CT and that equals \$468,000 paid by the State and we owe \$182,000 which can be added in and paid over 3 years funded out of capital non-recurring. Peter: Push out fire truck which is \$50,000 but also sell old fire truck and change \$1,300,000 in capital non recurring and show salvage value

for engine 5. Pat Budnick stated her understanding is that there is \$45,000 increase next year if forego this year. Chairman Zovich stated if take \$100,000 out of roads that is a hit. Dave Bertnagel, fire department roofs of \$110,000 can be spread out over 3 years and shift funding source; discussion held. (Peter Cook excused at 7:53 p.m. for Planning & Zoning meeting agenda item; quorum present). Education budget: Chairman Zovich stated the BOE chairman will move to have \$206,000 restored and told as it stands with \$206,000 reduction looking at some program and personnel reductions. The BOF did recommend if trimmed some Special Ed costs and have focus on energy audit, they might get away with a few layoffs of part timers and meet \$206,000 cut. If we cut further they will look at staff reductions. Consensus for further reductions or additions. Savings in oil is real, eliminate open position, savings from removal of snow plowing. \$50,000 in public works is contingent on contract negotiations; \$15,000 contingency for economic development consultant. (Peter is back at 8:03 pm). Peter Cook, changes to BOE for additional \$100,000 cut. Chairman Zovich noted general fund budget was less than a 1% increase over last year. Due to loss of revenue, \$280,000 from fees and state grant, equates to 3/10 of a mil. Need list of foreclosures and tax sales from Tax Collector for the June meeting.

- b) Public Hearing preparation/affirmation of May 17, 2010 – will show slides of revenues/expenditures and capitals. Discussion of making slide of potential changes as discussed tonight. Discussion on taking highway department down one person. Number for BOE is still \$320,000 more than current year. Hearing will be held in the Community Room.
  - c) Publication of revised 1-page Budget Summary before 2<sup>nd</sup> Referendum – Charter states to be printed 5 days before referendum means this needs to be printed the morning after the public hearing; discussion held. On bottom of summary will be line stating referendum vote on May 24, 2010 at town hall.
4. Mayor's Report – Chairman Zovich stated the Mayor could not attend tonight and on his behalf gave update of application of land grant, supporting documentation that needed to be included with the application for water company property off of North Street and 75% grant under open space and watershed acquisition program. Letter of endorsement based on discussion last month read into record. No guarantee we will be awarded this grant. Pat Budnick asked about mention of 25% grant from federal government. Dave Bertnagel, correct, and several grants will be applied for; reviewed.
5. Finance Director's Report –distributed tax collections through April 30<sup>th</sup>, reviewed. \$24,335,230.94 or 97.3% above budget for collections or \$625,000 short to make budget. Chairman Zovich, if May and June are average we may be \$250,000 short. Ted Scheidel will be at June meeting with final update on collections. Dave Bertnagel

will have transfers at next meeting but at intergovernmental grants are \$50,000 short of budgeted as well as excess student costs short \$40,000; charges for services, \$50,000 short; investment earnings \$100,000 short. Other revenue above a few thousand. Expenditure side will have surplus in departments. Discussion on placing top 300 delinquents on website as well as those are ones we will take action on; list will be updated and brought to the next meeting.

## 6. Public Comment

- a. Rich Whitney, 183 Lake Plymouth Boulevard, (a) neighbors came to Ralph stating they thought given it would pass; did you ask how much those people make a year and if employed and a big factor. If making \$150,000 per year and he is unemployed for 1 year and longest ever gone without a job and get you are overqualified or not hiring and not getting better; getting worse, only one lead a week. Do not think factor if you don't know how much making or financial situation. They come and vote and that is the vote and reading into it is not a factor but this is the process. You have no idea what people are thinking and it should be on ballot. He spent a lot of time in library and people are living and do not believe in system any more; he tries to get people to participate; concern on putting food on table and gas in the car. Property tax is ridiculous and get nothing for it; don't get garbage, don't use school system and no confidence in school system. We do get fire department and police department but that is it. End of driveway destroyed five years ago and nobody fixed it. People do not know about vote but they don't care. Emergency fund, where BOE gets money cut and during year come in with big emergency and people have no say. Chairman Zovich noted change in last Charter and procedural Charter requires public hearing date moved up and date for referendum, also change in dollar authorization amount so the BOF has authority to transfer up to \$50,000 once per request and after that is a town meeting. Two years ago transferred \$89,000 to library fund for roof leak. (b) they come back and ask later just for the money and they do it on purpose. Chairman Zovich reviewed procedure for special appropriation. (c) grants are down and everyone out here lives within means and have nowhere to go for grants; the BOE needs to learn to live within means. In last 15 years middle class has gone nowhere and pay is not increased but every year the town wants more money. Do not have money for increase and the biggest enemy is the BOE and keep saying it is all contracts. Enemies to this town are teachers union who think they are above and always get more. Question on open space, for it and feel Economic Development Commission is missing point and he came here and we have a great community of outdoor people and we have woods, river, blue trails and what we should promote that you can do adventures here without building anything. Land talking about for open space, is it buildable; Chairman Zovich stated the Town has first right of refusal and if we are not awarded the grant or it fails at town meeting than a developer could buy the land. (d) think it is a good idea to reserve for open space and important. Marty Sandshaw, Councilman, this was going to be on last agenda and CWC

responsibility for parcel is to give the town first choice and if we decide we cannot take advantage than it goes to development.

- b. Gerard Bourbonniere, Fairmount Avenue, (a) clarification on cuts, how much cutting from public works. Chairman Zovich, have contingency list and things that can come up for discussion with BOE and Council. Purpose of public hearing is to listen to public and get feedback; did discuss option to take \$50,000 from public works, 12 furlough days for municipal side, cut \$100,000 from capitals, eliminate EDC consultant or reduce that contract, money allocated from fund balance. (b) concern is that you mentioned taking \$100,000 from paving as idea, that is infrastructure as well as capital improvement being another foundation of town but that starts eroding the foundation of the town. The other foundation is the BOE and if you take away infrastructure nobody will come. If education budget gets cut and have to cut teachers and or custodians or paras or secretaries so be it. We as a town are adding to the unemployment rate. In proposal to buy water property which is probably a good thing and believe this is a distressed community and when you say that it is degrading. If the town wants to go to zero we are looking at cut of \$480,000. If consensus of individuals are zero percent and that is way you look at it that cut across board. Why people voted no, he did because we are short selling the town and feel we are at point where have obligation to pay taxes. It will behoove the town to show people who is paying and who is not. In last three years have regressed because house taxes stayed the same and car taxes going down.
- c. Keith Golnik, 46 Orchard Street, (a) does the BOF have any control over sale of town owned property, leasing or renting of town owned buildings or property. Ralph, that is executive decision by the mayor. 224 Main Street, house next to the library purchase or expansion and falling into ruins. He mowed the grass, weeded flower beds; bulk head on rear is rotted, roof is falling; good opportunity and doubt if ever expand library and need to rent or do something. Dave Bertnagel, that building is under premise of public works and need to be addressed. Any sale of property is the authority of Council. (b) for BOF you have to get money and if keep it it needs to be maintained. He works part time for the town as sexton for two cemeteries, Allentown and gets \$1200 to maintain and would like to see some money put in so that he can purchase top soil, grass seed and future repairs of fence to maintain historic cemetery. Tried working with public works and Mayor and get run around and next will solicit donations and asking for a small increase to maintain it and provide upkeep for dignity of those buried there. Dave Bertnagel, if you propose something he can make recommendation to the BOF and we have some money in contingency account. For \$1000 could do a lot of work and get presentable. Keith Golnik stated he will prepare something for Dave. He also maintains East Plymouth cemetery that is owned by Episcopal diocese and allegedly give us \$2800 a year and out of that gets \$2400 a year. The diocese would like to dump cemetery to the town to buy and would like to ask them to contribute more money in order to do a better job maintaining and need for restoration of headstones.

c. Pattie Dehuff, 20 Lynn Avenue, (a) interesting listening. Mike made comment to keep budget as is. Mike Drozdick, is new on board and still learning and if sees something worthless going either way but here with open mind. (b) past 2 years budget passed, this year a small increase by your definition and people said no and confused as to why you would keep as is. Pat said her daughter reminded her to vote and aware that schools make it known to students; parents are usually aware. Fact had previous public hearing not attended and parents did not come out speaks volumes. When parents are interested they come out when they want something; it could be fear of speaking; expression by Ralph “these are tough times” and argue spending in DC is criminal; we are “distressed community” by OPM and that label is descriptive word of truth; need to consider people who have been out of work; she has had no raise in 4 years but cost of living has gone up; property for open space is up to 75% and need to be careful; to Dan “you don’t think no means no” the people voted no because of the economy and are out of work but it is higher than being quoted. Dan Murray, you voted no he is assuming because increase and Gerry voted no because it was not enough and who is right or wrong and we have to make decision based on what people say and at this point no one can reflect what that no vote means and you can interpret it your way and there is opposition that voted no is not enough. (c) years ago her husband ran for state rep and was told if you write a letter to the editor that is perceived by politicians one letter is equal to 100 who think the same way you do. We have to listen to people coming out and expressing opinion and majority in this room said this budget is too high and cannot afford it. Comment from Rich is that people do not believe in system and why don’t they participate; 3-4 years ago this room was packed and majority of the people said no we don’t want budget and the BOF sat and said we didn’t hear anything and are not going to change it. If we voted for school referendum it would take care of all the problems with the school and now talk of a roof and lack of credibility by those who promote such things. Ralph Zovich stated the SBC project was short 1%. (d) we were told costs would go down because of fewer and new building. The town chose to sue Melanie instead of listening to bond counsel and decisions made by politicians. They bought property they did not need to buy. Every year the BOE has budget and every year ask for x amount more and you cut them down but they still have an increase. Their budget needs to come down and where cuts should be. She does not want to cut roads. The BOE budget has to be looked at severely and cut that line. They need to know everybody is of value. Peter Cook, if we cut that budget from where it is we lose money from the state. Discussion on freezing BOE budget to where it is now \$38,155,000; they have \$380,000 of contractual increases. (e) layoffs. Question on annual report on pensions, page 73, deficit of \$73 million. Dave Bertnagel stated schedule of debt limitation and what the town can borrow up to. Discussion on pensions which is an unfunded liability. (f) would like the board to adopt “owe no man anything” and where our mentality should be. Chairman Zovich stated not prudent to forgo financing when rates are low.

- d. Melanie Church, 328 Main Street, went through budget and look outside the box and look back Lake Winfield is closed and used to have 2 custodians and a few high school kids and do not have that; we have school fields but when winter comes what does park and recreation do. They are not up keeping Veterans or fields and time the seasonal person be cut; statement made on public works has no money and doing busy work and look at average place anyone else works and they cut back and what this town needs to do with departments; yes there are contracts and if working pay and go down to 8 people instead of 15 and how much is that 2.5 overtime for other 7; this has gone from 200 to 52 and people are doing 2 and 3 peoples jobs and there was a union. Need to look and cut back; most roads paved are contracted out; need accountability and there are places to cut. Three years ago read in paper that ETJMS went from 25 students to 22 in classroom so that they didn't have to lay off and now bring back up to 25. Next year get breakdown of class sizes. Look at for rent signs in town and houses for sale; people do not have the money. Town hall was cut but not public works. All curbing on roads was by Tilcon, contracted out and we did not do it; need to get down to basics. Parks and recreation in winter, what are two people doing; we need to combine services.
- e. Gerry Bourbonniere, last night at BOE meeting got synopsis of roof at Eli Terry and approx 49,000 sq ft to be fixed, reviewed age of sections and not done during renovation was from gap of 18 months with increase in construction costs, litigation costs, asbestos.

#### 7. Board Member's Comments

- a. Ralph Zovich if large turnout may limit comments.
- b. Pat Budnick, in original budget tried to balance all perspectives and maintain increase to reasonable level. You can't let infrastructure go and we are trying to maintain.

#### 8. Adjournment

**MOTION:** To adjourn by Dan Murray; second by Pat Budnick and the vote unanimous.  
Meeting adjourned at 10:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Gudeczauskas, Recording Secretary