

Town of Plymouth

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Board of Finance

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1. Call Meeting to Order – The Regular Meeting of the Town of Plymouth Board of Finance was called to order on Monday, March 25, 2013 at 7:02 p.m. by Chairman Ralph Zovich in the Assembly Room, Plymouth Town Hall. Members in attendance: Pat Budnick, Vicky Carey, Peter Cook, Mike Drozdick, Dan Murray, Ralph Zovich. Also present: Mayor Vincent Festa; Dave Bertnagel, Director of Finance; Robin Gudeczauskas, Recording Secretary; Tony Lorenzetti, Director of Public Works.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Review and Discuss Proposed General Fund Budget for FY 2013-2014

Public Works

047, Maintenance Garage

Overtime, budget \$10,000 and have \$7100 not used and suggest decrease to \$5000

Education & training – nothing expended and up \$1000. Tony noted it is for Hybrid training

Office supplies, \$200 budget and used zero; specialized public works form; leave \$50

Repairs & Supplies – expended 75,000 with 18,000 encumbered; Tony noted this is equipment for 200 pieces of small equipment and vehicles that are maintained. Dan asked Tony to bring estimate of where this year vs. what he needs next year. Will revisit Monday, April 1st.

Tools allowance – Tony stated by contract the town does not buy tools to work on vehicles and by contract they get allowance to purchase new tools. Vicky noted the mechanic showed her all his tools, how purchased. Dan than you are short at \$625 to replace a mechanics tool set. Tony noted by contract each mechanic gets \$312 a year.

Heat and Electricity –in line

Telephone - \$2400 a year is \$200 a month for single site service and seems high. Tony noted two phones plus internet and third phone for parks and recreation. Dan noted as th town we need to look phone/internet service. Ralph stated he asked Rich to look at town wide reduction; Dave noted they have had two meetings with various vendors. Tony stated there is not a tv in the maintenance garage.

Remainder of line items are in line.

Environmental compliance - \$4000 increase; Tony stated annual storm water and double the amount of testing needs to be done and in that is sampling and lab cost; underground oil tanks. Lab, there is one lab that does this and did look at possibly training our own people. Tony noted storm water sample, when consultant needs to wait for storm events they do not theoretically get paid; if we have people on standby and does not work it is a proper sampling event we can have them there more than once. Consultant does all compliance paperwork. Will leave at 8,000.

051 – Building inspection

Code enforcement and blight official should be same and is that individual above Building Inspector. Tony noted Building Inspector does not work for him. Dave stated there is inspection piece here; contract services and showing as salary; reviewed ordinance approved last year. Currently Code Enforcement expenses; Dave stated revenue line item is in process. Process reviewed; rename: Code Enforcement Expense Overtime – over budget for year and is that related to blight; Ralph stated Building Inspector work should not be done on overtime so this would have to be in blight enforcement or attending meetings. Mayor Festa stated he has been attending meetings and now needs mayoral approval to attend meetings. Dave noted some boards are requiring his attendance. Discussion held.

Contract Services - \$2500 and used \$0. Lower to \$1000

Longevity – change to \$250

Reference Manuals, zero year to date and at \$1000; Dave stated between he and Fire Marshal hoping to share codes; updates come in spring and can cut back. Zero out. Dave will let Fire Marshal know he is sharing codes.

Office supplies had \$500 and has \$17 left. Leave as is.

Tony reviewed information on fuel and oil; contracts are Sept 1 thru Aug 31 for gas; heating oil and diesel they partner with BOE and set up July thru June; where we are now reviewed noting minimum bid of 34,000 gallons and need to be within 5% of gallons used. Prices go through consortium and join in with Board of Education. Diesel 3.40 and gas 3.25 per gallon estimated for next year; Dave noted other agencies who use the gas are not billed out and need to discuss that (WPCA, ambulance). Hybrids paperwork is in to the Attorney General and we are waiting for final grant approval; Tony reviewed process of state funding through DOT. Tony is hoping they will be available by first quarter.

Tony clarified noted there is one tv in public works; there for emergency situations, weather reports, floods, potential hurricanes and look at computer to model what is happening and trying to get best information and what tools are used for. Ralph stated no one would deny having that and the rest of time it is off.

Vacancies

Holding place where we are today to date from various departments reviewed draft; bottom line including BOE request is \$39,189,073; up on expenditures \$268,828. Took into account Public Works highway to reduce wages \$110,000 and additional increase is \$8000 in overtime and factored in number; raises were already factored in mayor's proposed. Reduced crew leader position to one crew leader position. Regular wages to 466,900 from 590,000 and factors in crew leader. Dave will update spread sheet. Overtime discussed noting go down with less positions and where 8000 came in; overall budget will find another 25,000 in revenue. Now at 39,189,073 equal mill increase of .37 in expenditure side; revenue are .33 mills with .70 mil increase now and less than 2% increase in taxes. Need to make decision on BOE and if want to grant entire increase. Dave is reviewing employee benefit section.

Questions from BOE presentation

Contractual increases for certified and non certified and health increase with net increase of \$123,000. Dan is waiting for information requested on 5 year comparison; Mike Drozdick wanted test scores and graduation rate. Dan, why \$2000 printing expense in BOE budget when never one before; Ralph noted last year \$18 expense and now 2,000. Mark Berube stated this \$2000 he cannot remember but the BOE gets packet once a month and that has decrease in size and overall the BOE has done a good job of finding ways to cut money especially in areas of maintenance, switching to gas and cost difference is significant and those costs are realized in next few years. Ralph noted statement from first meeting of zero percent from the board; Mark Berube noted original budget meeting was zero budget and entire board talked and decided they did not want to go a third year with zero percent and as a Board said to spend money because we need to and directive given to Ellie Cruz who came back with 1.5% and Board said that will not happen and got down to .8 at one point and then the .5 came to where the town could work with; administrators sat with Ms. Cruz to hammer out best way to spend money. Pat Budnick, additional ECA money is already incorporated in budget and now getting 123,000 plus what came in after approved budget; Ralph noted 123,000 increase in this year's budget which was .6 increase after referendum. Pat stated money was given by the Governor, added to BOE but now has to be funded by town this year and now this will be \$200,000 for this year with the 123,000 requested (\$127,000 added after last referendum). Peter noted we need to retain and attract kids to keep in our district; Mark Berube noted program with Uconn and courses that are college level kids can take as juniors and seniors and can graduate with 20 credits and is tuition free; increase in students with AP chemistry/ science and math exams. Peter noted problem is kids are leaving far below junior year and losing before go into high school and middle school experience is horrible; no challenge, no homework. Mark Berube stated one thing is implementation for full time kindergarten and in next 2-3 years will see increase in CMT scores and supports in place in 1st grade and as parents put kids in full day kindergarten and they stay in system. Ralph noted all kids need to be challenged. Mark reviewed common core standards. Ralph noted 3 things BOE has to deal with in coming year: implementation of common core standards, SRBI, new evaluation system and fourth unknown is security issues.

4. Public Comment

a. Melanie Church, 328 Main Street, handed out under CT State Dept. of Ed and cost for each individual pupil and says we scored the lowest but paid the most money; took Thomaston, Wolcott and Plymouth ; Wolcott 11,213 per pupil; Plymouth spent 12,740 and Thomaston spent 12,473. You can't say because of population. Peter, they have average membership 1819 and that does not match our 1610. Mark Berube stated that includes kids who we are paying tuition for whether in district or not; Peter, anything else netted out. Melanie, total count includes transportation and everything to do with BOE. Ralph noted this is a snapshot showing 2011-2012 and in current budget we know enrollment is down and fixed cost base did not change. Mark noted our teacher count will go down; Peter, back to original question, what is our average daily enrollment going to be next year. Melanie, her kids went to private and included in number of population for this town even though she paid for St. Paul's and if kids home school they fill out form stating home school and part of district. Mark Berube, per pupil cost is calculated

on number of kids go to Plymouth/Terryville schools and any kids to Wamogo, Oliver Tech, magnet and does not include St. Paul's, Holy Cross or Sacred Heart. Ralph noted trend has been down and as numbers shrink denominator and fraction gets smaller and number gets bigger; 1590 for next year we are looking at \$15,000 per pupil expenditure. Peter, without more information this one snapshot distributed and does not match budget numbers. Melanie noted (a) that is in line of Dan had made statement of more money doesn't necessarily measure a higher test score and Wolcott had higher test score than Thomaston or Plymouth and less money was spent in Wolcott per pupil for a higher CAPT score and not necessarily you add more money to a budget doesn't mean test scores go up. Ralph note realignment of literacy and math coaches is to address CMT scores; there is not direct mathematic correlation between cost per pupil and test scores. (b) if decrease in students you bring down a budget in order to live within means. If pay goes down you bring down expenses. You can say for last 3 years had zero increase; we had Obama money and ended up with money left that returned to town; last year had money returned and took half and made reserve fund; it was said next year do not plan on that money in your budget and BOE said will not plan; look at increase in plan with that money in budget plus more as given 127 and now 123 and looking at 250,000 and there's an increase yet decrease in students and you need to cut back and look at whole picture. When things decrease so does the money; do what they need within decreased budget with decreased amount of money. (c) maintenance garage, thought it was being discussed to cut one position; her husband was a mechanic for 50 years and one person doing it and if need help a truck driver would come in. Need to cut the budget. (d) questions on asset management, imperative to have comprehensive list of assets and independent system in place to regularly document existence of each asset; if not our resources / assets are not important. We don't know if missing, being replaced, adding to or being stolen; we don't have any idea and put no value on it. Need to do immediately; (2) any town council policy dealing with corruption but think BOF needs to look at it and see if there have been or get some adopted to prevent corruption and what policies can be adopted to monitor town resources more effectively. Credit cards, everyone should look to make sure if are cards, policy in place; are changes independently verified to see if proper town expenses. Heard something at last meeting and encumber, not spent and then can keep buying things and place you can have someone spend and comes back with invoice number and do not know what was spent. Every single person should be done by purchase order and two signatures from two departments. Federal and state grants, who is monitoring for proper implementation as things can get lost in them. Cash collections monitoring, who monitors such funds i.e. petty cash, income/disbursement verify for properly done; bank statements reviewed monthly and who conducts review; petty cash fund who has control of each , amount and how funded. No bid contracts, being abused in this town; which contracts, construction, insurance, consultants etc have been awarded; who received such contracts, what town official is given responsibility to oversee properly completed or implementation of each contract and were town council or BOF polices followed. Benefits, do part time employees pay proportional share of benefits; retirees being paid medical insurance by town entitled to payments; correct number of people on there; are retirees listed who are deceased; list reviewed yearly. These are all important and everyone keeps track of our dollar. We have policies A copy of this will be submitted for the record. You worry about polices and monies and not about most

important thing of assets in this town, money, who is watching, how being done. Still believe 3 bids before anything put on capitals. Ralph stated we will try to address those items after review of the copy. Melanie, believe check register should be put on line so if there are questions; important to have transparency. Ralph, asset management, we are conducting physical inventor of all capital equipment and in this next fiscal year; accusation of corruption –if there is any evidence of any violation of purchasing policies, misappropriation of funds or misuse of taxpayer money, put in writing and submit to Mayor's office; cash collections and expenditures all goes through Dave's office and audited; check register need FOI request.

b. Pattie DeHuff – 20 Lynn Avenue – a few months ago requested management letter from auditor be put on line and told would be and is still not on line and you can see when ask for something and say no problem and bring up again and now another meeting and still not online and gives negative appearance; Ralph stated this board has no objection to putting online and Cathy has it and needs to do it and do not make decision at board level for clerical level; Dave will talk to Cathy. (b) check register, at last meeting it was brought to put on line and take into consideration and have not heard anything or this board vote and only heard edict from chair it would not be; Ralph stated it is not up to Board and Mayor Festa stated proper protocol is for FOI into Mayor's office. The Mayor has assured his office will follow FOI laws to the letter in terms of response, pages to pay for and need to specify start to end dates; it is internal financial document avail through FOI. (b) whole purpose is that the public be able to see where our money is going and how spent, do not have to bother anyone at town hall if check register is online and then have more eyes watching what is going on with budget, it is our money; the public has the right to look at the check register at any point in time. BOE budget, questions that can be asked of them and one should be asked has to do with insurance, when they are calculating medical is it based on assumption that all staff are married and have “x” number of children or looking at single person who is teaching so one rate and one is teacher nearing retirement and her and spouse or is it teacher with husband, 3 or 4 kids; not sure BOEs do that kind of thing. Astounding comment by Mr. Berube that superintendent came in with zero budget and the BOE, who she is sure, how many students in town are getting free lunch and if we have kids getting free lunch it is telling you their parents do not make a lot of money and you are going to ask them to raise taxes even more; when superintendent went to the BOE with zero and you are asking parents to pay more in taxes and they can't afford to pay for lunches.

c. Mike Kennedy – 11 Overlook Terrace – Dept 047, line 044, gasoline – gas and oil; is that motor oil or diesel fuel. Tony Lorenzetti stated it is both diesel fuel and motor oil. (b) how many town vehicles do we own; Tony asked equipment as a whole; Vicky stated she will have in capitals. (c) cost effective to town if we installed GPS in all vehicles to monitor activities and keep eye on fuel consumption maybe if vehicle idling too long we can do something and save in that area. Ralph stated that may be cost effective.

d. Mark Berube, 48 Ronald Road – agree to look at whole picture.

5. Board Comments

a. Vicky Carey stated she and Dave are going to have someone do asset management along with BOE and have talked about 6 months prior and plan to get done. Credit cards, before this commission we instituted no credit cards in town hall, verbal policy way back and if anyone has credit cards than it behooves them to turn in and hopefully Dave and Mayor can get a hold of them as the BOF took everyone's credit cards away from them. Dave Bertnagel stated when he first came there were 30 out and about and edict of Board a year before and no one followed that; now there are 3 store credit cards locked in his office with policy and purchase order that lines up and receipt comes back to it. Ralph noted when Dave came on board he and the Mayor instituted strict purchase order policy and no verbal purchase orders.

b. Pat Budnick – where was pickup truck during year from small equipment that was last year. Dave stated in capitals.

c. Mike Drozdick thanked Melanie for this information and looking at Avon who spends the same. Does not know if BOE looks at other communities and attends meetings to see how they run. Mark Berube stated they also look at what other towns are submitting for their budgets and seeing 4.5 and 5 and looks at ours and not exorbitant; we are now reassigning people to make better use, looking at weaknesses and putting specialists in there.

d. Ralph Zovich – Monday, April 1st we will start Public Health and Library. Schedule April 4th finish outstanding Land Use and Parks/Rec; April 4th, Capitals. April 8th will be second pass through and firm up revenues. Budget hearing 23rd need 5 day legal notice and last date to release budget is Monday, April 15th.

6. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn by Dan Murray; second Pat Budnick and the vote unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 9 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Gudeczauskas
Recording Secretary