

Board of Finance
Elmer Thienes/Mary Hall Elementary School - Cafeteria
April 25, 2016
Special Meeting ~ Following the Public Hearing

Call to Order

Chairman Knowlton called the special meeting to order at 8:50 p.m. Present and seated were Doug Knowlton, Cliff Denniss, Ken Hjulstrom, Susan Leser and Erik Young. Alternate Midge Denno was seated for the vacancy.

Public Comments

Amy Traversa, First Selectman, said that the Public Hearing PowerPoint presentation will be available on the town website beginning tomorrow.

Board of Finance Budget Discussion

Ms. Leser began the conversation by stating that she was not surprised by what was heard at the public hearing. It is difficult to try to balance all the special interests, the senior citizens, the kids, taxes, etc. Not everyone is going to get everything they want. Ms. Leser said the BOF came up with a fair budget but we will have to see what the state does. A lot of our town debt is for this elementary school that had to be fixed.

Mr. Knowlton said currently the proposed budget is a 3.84% tax increase. If the \$200,000 BOE cut was put back into the budget, we would be looking at a 5.55% increase. If the state cuts \$292,000, we are looking at a 7 or 7.5% increase. Mr. Knowlton does not believe the Governor's budget will pass, but it will be somewhere in between what it is now and what Governor Malloy is proposing.

Mr. Denniss said that many people do not like our proposed budget and therefore it must be a good budget. His understanding is that the reason the town began to get the sewer system was because of the school.

Mr. Hjulstrom said he had different opinions. He is not comfortable moving forward with this budget since we don't feel it is balanced due to what the state might do. Either more cuts in the local operations are needed, or remove \$100,000 from the water system, or do not fill the Public Works vacant position. We also have to remember that at the Town Meeting we can only reduce the budget; we cannot add money to Contingency.

Money was added to the Contingency fund to offset possible state budget cuts. If you are guessing on what the state is going to do, and none of us know what that is, and the Legislators do not like the proposed Governor's budget, then how do we make changes?

Mr. Young said he is fine with the proposed budget the way that it is now.

MOTION: Mr. Denniss made a motion, seconded by Ms. Leser, to move forward with this \$23,737,067 budget to the Town Meeting.

VOTE: In favor: Knowlton, Denniss, Denno, Leser, Young

Opposed: Hjulstrom

Motion passed.

Public Comments

Jean Wilson, South Buckboard Lane, asked if there is a suggestion box at town hall. Ms. Traversa said there is a public forum every month. Also an email can be sent to the First Selectman any time.

Wes Sikorski, 3 Holly Lane, said that he liked Mr. Hjulstrom's idea regarding the Contingency fund. He asked if the BOF had something magical up their sleeves.

Adjournment

Ms. Leser made a motion, seconded by Mr. Young, to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Debby Rim
Board Clerk