

Board of Finance
Regular Meeting -November 15, 2011
Minutes

Attending:

Board of Finance Members: Jim Meinhold, Lynne Vanderslice, Warren Serenbetz, Al Alper, and Gail Lavielle. (Andy Pforzheimer was an excused absence).

Others: Sandy Dennies (CFO), Steve Schole (Health Dept.), Tom Thurkettle (DPW), Bruce Hampson (Energy Commission), Steve Pierce (Parks and Rec), John Savarese (Info Systems), Lt. Stephen Brennan (Police Dept.), Alissa Smith (Daily Wilton) and Joan Lownds (Wilton Bulletin).

Call to Order:

Chairman Warren Serenbetz called the meeting to order at 7:30pm

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Al Alper to approve the October 18th, 2011 regular meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Lynne Vanderslice and approved unanimously.

DUI Enforcement Grant:

Lt. Brennan presented the CT Dept. of Transportation's DUI Enforcement Grant. It is 75% federally funded at \$30,750 with the remaining 25% or \$10,250, funded locally and already budgeted. This grant will facilitate the targeting of DUI violations. The town of Wilton has had great success with specific DUI roadblocks / checkpoints. Ms. Vanderslice asked if these roadblocks were announced to the public prior to the dates. Lt. Brennan responded there are heightened awareness and roadblock announcements made in advance.

Ms. Vanderslice made a motion to approve acceptance of the grant. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lavielle and approved unanimously.

Cablevision Government Access Fund Grant:

John Savarese, Information Systems Director, introduced two grants from Cablevision for use with local government television. The first grant, of \$5,272.95 is for a pan/ tilt/ zoom camera and remote controller to equip the Brubeck Room of the Wilton Public Library for broadcasting public meetings. This type of equipment is currently brought in as needed for recording.

Ms. Vanderslice was concerned that having this free equipment would result in related operating costs, which the library, and ultimately the town would need to fund. Mr. Savarese explained for any daytime meetings AV people were already working in the library so there would be no additional costs in that scenario. Mr. Alper pointed out if costs became an issue then a decision could be made to not show particular meetings. (The second grant, described below recognizes some operating costs.). A motion was made by Mr. Alper to approve the \$5,272.92 Grant for the camera equipment. The motion was seconded by Gail Lavielle and approved 4-1 with Ms. Vanderslice voting no due to concern of additional, ongoing operating costs.

The second grant from Cablevision, of \$1,500, is for production services for public meetings. These funds would help reimburse filming due to increased programming. Mr. Meinhold made a motion to approve accepting the \$1,500 Grant. The motion was seconded by Gail Lavielle and approved unanimously.

Medication Safety Program:

Steve Schole, Health Director, introduced the \$2,269 Grant, which covers the hiring of a Visiting Nurse Association nurse as a subcontractor to the Wilton Health Dept. This nurse holds group sessions, targeting primarily seniors on the increased risk of falling when more than 3 medications are taken at a time. This grant fully funds the contract and there are no ongoing costs to the town. This is the 3rd year Wilton has applied for the Grant due to the success of the program.

Mr. Meinhold made a motion to approve accepting the grant. The motion was seconded by Ms. Vanderslice and approved unanimously.

Public Health Emergency Preparedness:

Mr. Schole continued by presenting a \$98,490, 3 year, fully funded federal government grant, which serves as a catch-all for all hazards and the related help with emergency procedures. Mr. Schole gave the example of the recent snowstorm and the cooperation between communities such as Wilton, Weston and Westport. The grant, which Wilton has received for several years, helped form the cooperative relationships between the towns through CERT communication and volunteers for shelters.

Mr. Meinhold asked if there was a plan in place if the grant is received. The reply was there are 14 communities in the regions, which work together in coordinating plans for various scenarios. Ms. Lavielle inquired if this grant would result in pulling current employees from their jobs to do other work and the answer was no. This grant funds personnel already in place for the preparedness coordinator. Should the grant not come through the BoS has already budgeted funding.

Ms. Vanderslice made a motion to approve the grant. The motion was seconded by Mr. Meinhold and approved unanimously.

Application for Underground Storage Tank Petroleum Clean-up Program:

Tom Thurkettle, Director of Public Works, presented the application for \$137,043.68 for the bus barn oil tank removal and remediation. The town has already removed the old tank and replaced it with a new one for a total cost of \$148,667. The grant application amount covers all but about \$11,000 of the cost, which were not eligible for coverage. If the Grant funding is received the proceeds would be counted as general revenue to the town.

Ms. Lavielle made a motion to approve the \$137,043.68 Clean up Program grant application. The motion was seconded by Ms. Vanderslice and approved unanimously.

DEEP Urban Forestry Funds Program Grant :

Pat Sesto, Director of Environmental Affairs, introduced the fully funded, \$4,850 Grant, which would cover maintenance needs of older trees in town. The Grant is a long shot but if received and trees in public places, even if privately owned, could be maintained with no cash outlay by the town

Mr. Meinhold made a motion to approve the \$4,850 Grant request. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alper and approved unanimously.

Dial-A-Ride Grant:

Steve Pierce, Director of Parks & Rec, explained the 5 year, \$140,000 grant award given to enhance the existing services of the Dial-a-Ride program. This CT State grant will allow the service to handle more people, and anything else that falls under the maintain and enhance category. This grant was previously awarded on an annual basis for \$25,000. This new award level represents a \$3,000 increase per year.

Mr. Meinhold made a motion to approve the 5 year, \$140,000 Grant. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alper and approved unanimously.

Clean Energy Program / Comstock :

Ms. Dennies opened the discussion stating according to the Charter, the BoS needs to notify the BoF within 14 days of payments made from the Charter Authority. The Clean Energy Program Grant has a locally funded component, which is \$31,291 and part of the overall program. This funding will come from the Charter Authority.

Bruce Hamson, chair of the Wilton Energy Commission, explained in an effort to find energy cost savings, there had been an energy audit of Comstock completed by the firm SBS. After the study was completed, CL&P also came to Comstock looking for cost savings and came back in agreement with the SBS suggestions. They are extending a grant of \$20,079, in addition to a 3 year, \$100,000 interest free loan, which will be primarily offset by energy savings. A letter of agreement has been signed by the BoS to move ahead with SBS on the program. The total cost of the project is approx. \$151,000. In the end, after all the other financing is in place, only about \$4,600 of cost will not be made up by the estimated savings for the first 3 years. The town's share of the annual difference is already built into Comstock's budget.

Mr. Meinhold pointed out that by agreeing to this program it means Comstock will be around for a longer time. This comment was acknowledged and agreed with by the others. The hope is that some of the work will be completed by Feb. 28, 2012, which means some of the savings will be realized this fiscal year.

Mr. Meinhold made a motion to approve the \$20,078 CL&P Grant. The motion was seconded by Ms. Vanderslice and approved 4-1. Mr. Alper was the dissenting vote stating he hasn't seen the agreement between all parties involved.

FY 13 Budget Planning:

Ms. Vanderslice discussed the two recent public informational meetings held at the library. She said the turnout was disappointing but the core group of people who are often vocal were there which was good. The audience for both sessions was surprised with the average earnings number for Wilton, as it is much lower than presumed. Additional information will be posted on the BoF website as requested by people attending the sessions. Ms. Vanderslice was surprised there was no PTA representation at either meeting despite the publicity in the school announcements.

The BoS requested all budgets be in before Thanksgiving so BoF has its budget due. The filming of the meetings is in the Part Time Salaries line and the auditor fee is in the Contractual Obligation line item. Mr. Serenbetz commented in the past, other audits have been budgeted and he asked if any are needed this year? Mr. Meinhold suggested asking both the BoE and BoS if they would need an audit should money be available. Mr. Serenbetz will follow up with both boards on the subject. In the meantime the BoF budget will be submitted as presented.

Committee Reports:

Mr. Meinhold said the Pension Committee had met and with no surprise the quarter was down. Mr. Serenbetz reported the Investment Committee is looking at hiring an outside advisor to assist in getting better returns on certain assets within the portfolio.

Other Business:

Ms. Dennies reviewed the financial results as of 11/15/11. Revenues were solid at 67% of budget and there was nothing significant about expenditures. The BoS operating and capital expenditures are on target. All associated expenditures from the two storms (Hurricane Irene and the Halloween snowstorm) are grouped together and the approx. \$250,000 cost is the FEMA Grant application amount. Building permit fees are better than half way to budget due to many minor permits coming in.

Ms. Dennies commented Moody's is putting towns on notice they are looking for how towns handled the unexpected costs from the recent storms as a potential cause for a downgrade. This news is not expected to have any impact on Wilton's rating.

Other Business:

Ms. Vanderslice received a letter from a taxpayer asking the BoF to post BoE contracts on the BoF website. Mr. Alper stated that was a BoE issue so they should be consulted, not the BoF. Mr. Serenbetz agreed.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Roberts
Recording Secretary