

**BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING – APRIL 19, 2016
MEETING ROOM B TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: Jeff Rutishauser, Warren Serenbetz, Richard Creeth, Peter Balderston, John Kalamarides, Walter Kress

Others Present: Anne Kelly-Lenz, CFO; Phil Damato, Tax Collector, several members of the press and public

Call to Order

Chairman Jeff Rutishauser called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Regular Meeting March 15, 2016: John Kalamarides felt that the phrase “taxes are a turnoff” did not accurately reflect the comments from the realtors and made a motion to change it to “taxes are a consideration”. Motion made by Richard Creeth to approve minutes with this correction; seconded by Walter Kress and carried unanimously 6-0.

Special Meeting March 16, 2016: Richard Creeth moved to approve minutes as presented; seconded by Warren Serenbetz and carried unanimously 6-0.

Special Meeting March 28, 2016: Warren Serenbetz moved to approve; seconded by John Kalamarides and carried unanimously 6-0.

Special Meeting March 29, 2016: Richard Creeth moved to approve; seconded by Warren Serenbetz and carried unanimously 6-0.

Special Meeting April 6, 2016: Peter Balderston moved to approve; seconded by Richard Creeth and carried unanimously 6-0.

Special Meeting April 7, 2016: Richard Creeth moved to approve; seconded by Peter Balderston and carried unanimously 6-0.

FY16 Suspense List – Phil Damato, Tax Collector

Phil Damato presented the estimate of uncollectable taxes for transfer to the Town’s Suspense Tax Book. The total proposed 2016 transfer to suspense is \$10,221.17, compared to the higher amounts of 2015 and 2014. Phil stated they’ve had a very successful collection rate this year and, although it doesn’t sound like a lot, \$5,450 has been collected on taxes and \$9,980 in interest. Phil informed the Board that items transferred to the suspense list are still collectible. For the newer members of the Board, he explained the background of the list. The majority of the list is comprised of out of state motor vehicle taxes as motor vehicles are billed in arrears and most taxpayers don’t realize that. The other portion is made up of bankruptcies, deceased persons, people who cannot be located, or those going out of business. He informed the Board that if they accept this year’s list, he then sends it to a state collection agency and/or the state marshal for collection, even though the Tax Office still makes every effort to collect the funds.

After Phil answered questions from the Board, John Kalamarides made a motion to approve the transfer of \$10,221.17 to the Suspense List. Peter Balderston seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Richard Creeth, as Clerk of the BOF, signed off on the list so that Phil could take it to the Town Clerk to be stamped in/filed.

Amendment of FY17 Budget Resolution

There were two typos that needed to be corrected. Under Resolution #3 for the Board of Education, the amount to be appropriated was corrected. Walter Kress made the motion to approve as corrected; Jeff Rutishauser seconded and the motion carried 5-1, with Peter Balderston voting no.

Under Resolution #6 Charter Authority, the amount to be appropriated was corrected. John Kalamarides made the motion to approve as corrected; Warren Serenbetz seconded and the motion carried 5-1, with Peter Balderston voting no. (Corrected Resolutions are attached to these minutes.)

FY16 Status Report

Anne advised that there was not much change from March. She is still watching the collection rate level and going through to see where there are variances – especially on large items such as conveyance fees and legal fees. She answered questions from the Board, and advised she had reached out to Ken Post for an update on the BOE budget.

Reduced Bonding for Middlebrook Heating/AC

Two rebate checks for boilers at Middlebrook and Cider Mill were received. Anne feels it is more appropriate to put the checks against the \$500,000 proposed bonding and reduce it by \$202,000. The rebate checks are the result of switching to natural gas from oil. Anne said Comstock's rebate check is forthcoming and she had hoped to put that towards the bonding, but the check is not here yet. Richard Creeth gave background of the energy efficiency rebate program. No action was required by the Board.

Committee Reports

John Kalamarides - Miller Driscoll: Discussed the abatement to be carried out this summer with the reasoning behind it. The project budget will not be increased, as this will come out of contingency. As a result of moving the abatement to the summer, Turner was contacted about the impact of this schedule change. They came back to the Committee and said that the completion date will now be moved up from December 2017 to September 2017. There will be a lot of weekend work, but money is in the contingency for this. The committee also discussed vinyl flooring vs. Powerbond, deciding to go with Powerbond in the classrooms and hallways. John stated Glenn Hemmerle was measuring what reimbursement might come from the state and discussion ensued that centered on the understanding that the state reimbursement would probably be in the area of \$5-6 million range. Anne explained the process by which the state scrutinized this for any such reimbursement. John concluded by saying there would be a ceremony on April 20 at 11:30 a.m. to commemorate the laying of the white beam with the children's handprints and signatures affixed to it.

Richard Creeth - Comstock Building Committee: Met yesterday and have just a few meetings to go before the Grand Re-Opening on 5/18. There is last minute outside work such as plantings being done. Final numbers are not in yet, but the contingency fund is in excess of \$600,000. They are still waiting for the Certificate of Occupancy.

Other Business

Jeff started the discussion about the Annual Town Meeting and the budget in light of the governor's proposed cuts. Warren agreed with Michael Kaelin's point that the people need to be aware of the impact of this, and how it will affect following years' budgets. Jeff agreed, saying the BOF would need to know at least an estimate of next year's mil rate. Walter Kress would like to see five years forward. Finance has a model that is 4 years out, so Anne will send to the BOF. Warren asked Jeff to send his presentation to all prior to the May 3rd meeting. Richard Creeth felt that the presentation should be just a summary of key items and as realistic as possible.

Next year's guidance for the Boards was also discussed, with at least 2- or 3-year plans felt to be required along with organization charts. John Kalamarides expressed hope that future meetings would be in the spirit of cooperation and openness.

Public Participation

None. Having no further business, Peter Balderston moved to adjourn; seconded by Warren Serenbetz and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kris Fager
(from video recording)

Board of Finance Vote on the FY 2017 Budget

Revised April 20, 2016

BOARD OF FINANCE MEMBERS PRESENT: Peter Balderston, Richard Creeth, John Kalamarides, Walter Kress, Jeffrey Rutishauser, Warren Serenbetz

ABSENT: None

1. **Estimated Revenues:** Warren Serenbetz moved and Richard Creeth seconded that estimated FY 2017 revenues, excluding current property taxes, be set at \$5,597,106 consisting of the revenue sources and amounts listed below:

Supplemental Auto Tax	\$650,000
Back Taxes	390,000
Tax Liens & Interest	265,000
Education Grants	1,211,734
Town Grants	914,962
Licenses, Permits, Fees & Other	1,630,805
Interest	180,000
Other Misc. Revenue	354,605

Motion carried 6 in favor, 0 opposed.



2. **Debt Service:** Richard Creeth moved and Walter Kress seconded that \$11,471,130 be appropriated for Debt Service.
Motion carried 6 in favor, 0 opposed.
3. **Board of Education:** Walter Kress moved and Jeffrey Rutishauser seconded that \$80,572,640 be appropriated for the Board of Education operating budget.
Motion carried 5 in favor, 1 opposed
4. **Board of Selectmen Operating:** Jeffrey Rutishauser moved and Peter Balderston seconded that \$31,015,191 be appropriated for the Board of Selectmen's operating budget.
Motion carried 6 in favor, 0 opposed.

5. **Board of Selectmen Capital:** Peter Balderston moved and John Kalamarides seconded that \$1,186,689 be appropriated for the Board of Selectmen's capital budget.
Motion carried 6 in favor, 0 opposed

6. **Charter Authority:** John Kalamarides moved and Warren Serenbetz seconded that \$1,242,457 be appropriated for the Charter Authority including \$310,614 under the jurisdiction of the Board of Selectmen, and \$931,843 under the jurisdiction of the Board of Finance for Charter Authority.
Motion carried 5 in favor, 1 opposed.

7. **General Fund Total Operating Budget:** Warren Serenbetz moved and Richard Creeth seconded a motion to recommend to the Annual Town Meeting a Fiscal 2017 General Fund Total Operating budget of \$125,488,107.
Motion carried 5 in favor, 1 opposed.

8. **Ending Fund Balance:** Richard Creeth moved and Walter Kress seconded that the June 30, 2017 estimated General Fund Balance be set at \$14,048,811 which is 11.2% of the FY17 Total Operating Funds Required. The June 30, 2016 estimated General Fund Balance be set at \$18,160,000 leaving \$4,111,189 to be used to finance the FY17 budget.
Motion carried 6 in favor, 0 opposed.

9. **Tax Relief:** Walter Kress moved and Jeffrey Rutishauser seconded that tax relief for the elderly or disabled be estimated at \$1,100,000 and WVAC/Georgetown at \$20,750.
Motion carried 6 in favor, 0 opposed.

10. **Grand List and Collection Rate:** Jeffrey Rutishauser moved and Peter Balderston seconded that the estimated rate of tax collections due on the October 1, 2015 Net Taxable Grand List of **\$4,302,070,950** be set at **99.4%**. Motion carried 6 in favor, 0 opposed.
11. **Mil Rate Levy:** Peter Balderston moved and John Kalamarides seconded a motion to levy a tax of **27.3371** mils on the Net Taxable Grand List of October 1, 2015 and that the tax be payable one-half on July 1, 2016 and one-half on January 1, 2017, except for bills of \$100 or less, and for personal property taxes on automobiles, which shall be payable in one installment on July 1, 2016 Motion carried 5 in favor, 1 opposed.