

Board of Finance
Regular Meeting - March 20, 2012
Minutes

Attending:

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

Others: Sandy Dennies (CFO), Joan Lownds (Wilton Bulletin), David Lisowski (Assessor), Marilyn Gould and Alex Ruskewich (Wilton citizens).

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 February 21, 2012 regular meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Gail Lavielle and approved unanimously. Mr. Serenbetz abstained from the vote due to his absence from the February meeting.

Presentation of the Grand List:

Mr. David Lisowski, Wilton's tax assessor, presented the 2011 Grand List, which was \$5.1 billion, an increase of .61% from 2010. (This increase compares to an increase of .46% from 2009-10, and .73% from 2008-09.)

The Real Estate category, which consists of both commercial and residential, generated \$4.738 billion in tax revenues. The motor vehicles category actually increased 5.87% from last year and the overall personal property tax revenue is approx. \$405 million. The value of commercial land and apartments increased as there was a shift from vacant land to the now completed Avalon apartments. There was an increase of \$2.5 million in revenue from the apartments. Interestingly, Mr. Lisowski commented he checks the RE listings and compares with property descriptions on file. If a house is on the market and not up to date in town records they will pursue

collection of additional taxes. There was a 13.26% increase to \$4.6 million in penalties from not reported or underreported taxes. There were also 2 properties that successfully petitioned for the status of open space, which had originally accounted for \$2million in assessed value. These properties are committed maintaining open space for a minimum of 10 years.

2012 Budget Update:

Ms. Dennies clarified an earlier statement from the February meeting whereby permit revenue from generators purchased and installed was \$12,320, not \$200,000, which reflected the costs of the generators.

She presented the most recent financial information and the town is on target for being $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through the budget year. Tax collection is good, revenue is on track. Wilton Commons is the biggest source for the increase in building permits. Misc. Revenue reflects the revenue received by the State from the storms after the books had closed.

Expenditures are in line with budget and the departments have been made aware that over-budgeting is not an option and any expense overage requests must be made from the Charter Authority.

The BoS has authorized Charter Authority use for a roof study at Middlebrook and Comstock. A company will be hired to check the sub-structure of the 2 sites before installing any new roofs.

2013 Budget Update / Process

There will be a meeting tomorrow night (3/21/12) with the BoS to review their budget. The BoE has answered some of the BoF questions emailed to them.

Ms. Vanderslice presented her review of the budget and those of the upcoming 3 years as debt service has changed due to the BoS proposed bonding of road paving, rather than expensing the cost. She reviewed her other assumptions and concluded that if the bonding is approved, 2013 could see a mil rate increase of 1.6%, which is under the targeted 1.75%. Her projections for 2014-2016 kept a constant 1.75% mil rate increase and

Lynne noted that if all the projected capital over the next five years is bonded there will be a big increase in the debt service expense line which will significantly restrict operating budget increases.

Alex Ruskewich stated his concern with the upcoming Town employee contract negotiations and potential liabilities. Mr. Serenbetz said he has already talked with Bill Brennan about the need to manage these costs as well as the BoE did in their negotiations.

Committee Reports:

Mr. Serenbetz summarized the OPEB and Pension Committees met on March 14 with newly hired Fiduciary Investment Advisors and Wells Fargo who will act as custodian and manage the payments. This change results in a more professionally run portfolio. The advisors get no fees from others. This did require a change in the investment policy. Mr. Meinhold commented the Pension Retirement Trust voted on a new investment policy.

Other Business:

Mr. Meinhold stated 15 letters have been received since the January meeting and will be entered in the public record. Most recently there were 7 emails regarding the BoE budget.

Public Comment:

Marilyn Gould commented that while Avalon was touted as a “tax producer” that is not really the case. There are 39 students living in the apartments, at a cost of \$657,000 to educate compared to the \$355,174 received in taxes. The BoF members agreed and recalled that was one of the reasons it was a 10 -year fight for Wilton against building Avalon but eventually the State statutes prevailed.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Roberts