

**BOARD OF FINANCE**

Telephone (203) 563-0114  
Fax (203) 563-0299



**TOWN HALL**  
238 Danbury Road  
Wilton, Connecticut 06897

Warren Serenbetz, *Chairman*  
Lynne Vanderslice, *Vice Chairman*  
James Meinhold, *Clerk*  
Al Alper  
Jeffrey Rutishauser  
Richard Creeth

BOARD OF FINANCE  
SPECIAL MEETING  
WILTON TOWN HALL  
MEETING ROOM B  
7:30 PM  
NOVEMBER 20, 2013

**PRESENT:** Warren Serenbetz, Lynne Vanderslice, Al Alper, Jim Meinhold, Jeffrey Rutishauser, Richard Creeth

**OTHERS:** Sandy Dennies, Ken Post, Rich McArdle, Tom Therkettle, Steve Pierce, Jennifer Facitelli, Robert Daniele, O'Connor Davies, one member of the Press

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Serenbetz called the Meeting to order at 7:30 PM. He said that before he started the meeting he wanted to clarify an answer he gave at the Special Town Meeting regarding the Kaiser property. He was asked if the tax increase of \$20 per household was the correct number for the purchase of the property. He had replied that it was \$20 or possibly more, but upon checking with Phoenix Advisors (bond counsel), he was told the total cost with principle and interest would be \$147,538, which amounts to a tax increase of \$18.60 per household per year, (for twenty years).

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Vanderslice requested the following amendments to the Minutes:

- In paragraph 4, under "**Conservation Easement**" change the word "approve" to "recommend".
- In paragraph 1 under "**Town Fiscal Report**" Change the sentence, beginning with, "The State has provided the Town with a bonded distribution..." to read, "The State has provided the Town with a bonded distribution grant of \$288,788 (i.e. the State borrowed the money), as a different type of revenue source."
- Under the same heading in the next paragraph change the first sentence to read, "A discussion ensued regarding the funds having been borrowed."

A Motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the Minutes to the October 17, 2013 meeting as amended.

## **REQUEST FOR \$94,468 FOR TWO SMALL DUMP TRUCKS FROM THE CAPITAL NON-RECURRING FUND**

Mr. Thurkettle made a presentation to the Board requesting that \$94,468 be used from the Capital Non-recurring Fund for the purchase of two small dump trucks, one for the Department of Public Works and one for the Park and Recreation Department.

He described the dangerous conditions of both vehicles and both he and Mr. Pierce elaborated on the reasons for replacing them as soon as possible. Mr. Pierce explained why one truck couldn't be shared by both departments.

Ms. Dennies said that only \$62,885.00 had been spent out of the Capital Non-recurring Fund. She believes that \$160,000 will be available in that fund (from reimbursements from Federal programs for the storms) to support the cost of the trucks.

A brief discussion ensued regarding leasing the vehicles and Mr. Thurkettle explained why that option would be too costly.

A Motion was made by Mr. Alper to approve the purchase of two dump trucks [for DPW and the Park and Recreation Departments] to be paid from the Capital Non-recurring Fund, seconded by Mr. Rutishauser and carried with Ms. Vanderslice and Mr. Meinhold abstaining because they didn't approve of the costs being funded by the Capital Non-recurring Fund.

## **REVIEW OF FEMA RECEIVABLES FY13 AND STORM ALFRED FY12**

Jennifer Fascitelli from the Department of Public Works, said that she was there to request the approval from the Board of Finance for additional funds from the Federal Government, resulting from Storm Alfred in 2012 in the amount of \$74,318.44 (which she explained is actually from the Federal Highway Department) and from FEMA for the February 8, 2013 Storm Nemo, in the amount of \$94,748.42. She explained in detail how these costs represent 11% of the total for Storm Alfred and 75% from Storm Nemo. She further described how these funds were granted.

Mr. Meinhold moved to accept the receivables as presented. The motion was seconded and carried.

## **DRAFT AUDIT REVIEW**

Mr. Rob Daniele of O'Connor Davies presented the draft audit review. He gave a summary of the general fund, revenues and expenses. He said that for 2013 property taxes were budgeted for \$106.4 million and they collected \$106.8 million so the Town did \$339,000 better than budgeted. The 2013 budget for interest and lien fees was \$348,000 and they budgeted \$230,000, so there was a favorable variance of \$118,000.

Under *Intergovernmental Grants Federal and State*, the Board of Education grants were budgeted for \$2.3 million and the actual was \$1.8 million.

He said that other Town revenues were comparable to the previous year. Municipal revenue sharing (State allocation) came in at \$356,000 compared to the budgeted amount of \$240,000 showing a positive variance of \$116,000.

Charges for service fees were similar to last year but there were increases, showing an increase of \$490,000 over budget.

With expenditures, he said that it was a well managed budget. Most departments came in on or under budget with the exception of Public Works, Fire, and Emergency – which he attributed to the storms.

Because the Town received over \$500,000 in Federal aid, Mr. Daniele said they are required to do a single, (compliance), audit to see that the funds are spent for the right purpose.

## **BOARD OF EDUCATION STATUS REPORT**

Mr. Post reported on the Board of Ed 1<sup>st</sup> quarter financial report. He said that they are projecting a deficit of \$344,025 due to special education outplacement and mediation settlements. The increase in legal settlements is a continuation of a trend they saw the end of last year. He added that he does expect savings in other areas and funding from grants. A brief discussion ensued.

## **TOWN STATUS REPORT**

Ms. Dennies reported that they are where they should be mid-year with 50% of the taxes collected. Revenues are spot on and expenses are where they should be. A discussion ensued about the lack of detail in the monthly budget report and it was suggested that a commentary page be added.

## **BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Mr. Serenbetz was reminded by Ms. Dennies, that the Board of Finance budget was due to her before Thanksgiving. They will be going out for an RFP for auditing services, this is an added expense to their budget.

On January 15<sup>th</sup> the Board of Finance will hold a presentation to the public regarding the budget - at the Library.

Mr. Alper said that during his tenure on the board we've talked about shared services and other ways to bend the cost curve but that the board's efforts to bring financial pressure to bear on the operating budgets hasn't led to the benefits he had hoped. He suggested we go a different route to approach the problem by looking at the salary line. Management of the BoS budget is controlled by the First Selectman and of the BoE budget by the Superintendant so why not use free market principles to drive innovation. He cited as an example setting a base line salary and paying bonuses on dollars saved in the budget. The bonuses would be paid to those involved in identifying and implementing the savings. This would incentivize everyone to save, to look at different ways of doing things. Mr. Alper said it is an especially interesting mix to add given we are hiring a new Superintendant.

The board discussed the various plusses and watch-outs in implementing such a system including: maintaining a minimum level of service, defining what constitutes savings, paying beyond the person at the top, i.e. down to the people who execute and perhaps paying for cost savings ideas (rather than paying a bonus). Ms. Vanderslice agreed to put a committee together to study the issue further.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Mr. Meinhold reported that the Retirement Trust for the Wilton Town Employees Pension Plan is status quo.

Mr. Rutishauser gave the members an overview of the presentation that was made by Fiduciary to the Investment Committee, Retirement Trustees and OPEB.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Dennies presented the Board with a grant application in the amount of \$3,000 from Area 9 Cable. \$1,500 to be used to offset the cost of video taping board meetings and \$1,500 to be used for another portable microphone and for the replacement of a small computer in the video room. Mr. Creeth made a motion to accept the grant, which was seconded and carried.

Mr. Creeth said that he had accepted a request made by Judy Zucker to be on the Comstock Building Committee.

Mr. Rutishauser passed out a copy of a page from the New York Times showing a side-by-side comparison of a house in Greenwich and a house in Wilton with comparable taxes but vastly different market values. A discussion followed regarding property taxes in neighboring towns.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no Public Participation

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM

Respectively submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Mariana Corrado".

Mariana Corrado  
Recording Secretary  
(taken from video)