

Woodstock Board of Finance Minutes

Ad Hoc Planning Subcommittee

Wednesday, July 12, 2023

6:00 pm

Town Hall Room A

1. **Call to order:** Michele Woz called meeting to order at 6:00 pm

2. **Roll Call**

- a. **Members Present:** Michele Woz (Chair)
David Fortin
Kate McDonald
Charlene Cutler
Sonia Greene
Hans Frankhouser

Members Absent: None

- b. **Others Present:** Ray and Pam Morgan, Michael Dougherty, John Dlugosz, Recording Secretary Amy Monahan.

3. **Approve Minutes from the June 14, 2023 Meeting**

- a. Kate McDonald made a ***Motion** to approve the minutes from June 14, 2023 as amended. ***Seconded** by Dave Fortin. ***The motion passed unanimously.**

4. **Old Business**

- a. Tax Relief Programs
- i. Michele Woz noted that she has started a working draft with information from previous meetings. She has also discussed the current Tax Relief programs and their values with the assessor and included that in the working document.
 - 1. Currently, there are 82 participants with a value of \$50,667.64 in the Circuit Breaker Program in the Town of Woodstock.
 - a. Dave Fortin asked to clarify about qualification restrictions for properties being second houses and not primary residents.
 - 2. There is a Renters Rebate program available in town that is fully funded by the State. Michele Woz will follow up for more information about current participation in this program.
- b. Topics to Discuss
- i. Michele Woz noted that our focus must be prioritized, and future meetings need to be planned with purpose. The group agrees to choose a select number of items to focus upon and institute in the upcoming year.
- c. Special Taxing Jurisdictions/Fire
- i. The Fire Tax District was brought up and voted down approximately 25 years ago. Years following this, the Board of Selectmen added Fire Departments as a line item in the budget.
 - ii. Michael Dougherty noted that the people will pay for service no matter what and that the question at hand is what the people want to pay for with a separate tax system. There is also the concern of having 3 fire departments and the possibility of 3 different districts. The Fire Protection Association is currently acting as a joint board that makes requests of the Town.
 - iii. Michele Woz stated that she feels the special taxing district concept is a choice of the electors. Charlene Perkins Cutler noted that a district would require a separate system and process which

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would be more costly to institute. Creating a special district would separate the fire budget from the general budget and allow the people to choose the specific amount that they want spent on fire services.

1. Dave Fortin noted that the Town currently has the additional bureaucracy of the Fire Protection Association in place.
- iv. Michele Woz suggests including a section about special taxing districts along with how they are created and used in the final subcommittee document. Specific uses for the districts would be explored in the Future Needs of the Town section of the report. Fire Service is a topic that the Town needs to create a strategic plan to address.

5. New Business

- a. Future Needs of the Town
 - i. Michele Woz suggests that the group identify a list of people to talk to for upcoming concerns that need to be added to the budgets.
 - ii. Charlene Perkins Cutler noted that the Board of Selectmen should create a municipal cyclical maintenance plan and perform a study of town owned lands. Michele Woz noted that schools should be looked at by the municipal level to prioritize needs (not be separated into Board of Education Budget).
 1. Dave Fortin noted a building subcommittee that reported on municipal building maintenance in the past (roughly 2015) that would have beneficial information about this topic.
- b. Potential Revenue Expansion
 - i. Michele Woz noted that there has never been an audit for personal property tax collection and this is an area of opportunity to collect revenue due under the concern of fairness and equity.
 1. Dave Fortin noted that this would require an additional process and enforcement mechanism.
 2. Michele Woz also suggested investigating a tax amnesty program with the participation of the State.
 - ii. Town own lands
 - iii. Transfer Station
 1. Kate McDonald worked with data from the Town Clerk and reported to the Committee that an increase of \$30 per permit would create the revenue needed for self-funding. Dave Fortin noted that there was a transfer station committee in 2003.
 - iv. Recreation Department
 1. The only cost for recreation is the salary of the Director. Recreation does offer the following free of charge: summer concerts, upkeep of town beach, Egg hunt at Roseland Cottage (all other recreation programs are funded by fees and sponsorships).
 - v. Board of Education Options include paying for pre-K, grants, building rentals and tuition for nonresident students. Sonia Greene and Hans Frankhouser will meet with Victor Toth and Janice Thurlow for more information.
 - vi. Admissions Fees
 1. To be discussed at future meeting
 - vii. Grant Writing
 1. To be discussed at future meeting
 - viii. Tax Base Expansion and Economic Development
 1. To be discussed at future meeting

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6. Public Comment

- a. Ray Morgan noted that fire tax information needs to be carefully presented to the public and that the discussion the group had today was very informative.
- b. Pam Morgan noted use of an asset management plan- which is the reciprocal maintenance plan. She also noted that there is a current "Bric Grant" option that she will relay information about.
- c. John Dlugosz thanked the committee for the information presented and noted the importance of getting information to the residents to make positive changes.
- d. Amy Monahan noted that the Concerned Citizens are willing to help with sharing information with the public.

7. Other From Subcommittee

- a. None

8. Correspondence & Announcements

- a. The next Board of Finance Ad Hoc Planning Subcommittee Meeting will be July 12, 2023 at 6 pm.

9. Adjournment

- a. Dave Fortin made a ***Motion to Adjourn. *Seconded** by Hans Frankhouser. ***The Motion Passed Unanimously.** Meeting Adjourned at 7:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Amy Monahan, Recording Secretary. DISCLAIMER: These minutes have not yet been approved by the Board of Finance. Please refer to next month's meeting for approval/amendments.