

# Woodstock Board of Finance Minutes

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Tuesday, March 21, 2023

7:00 pm

Town Hall Room 1

Regular Meeting

1. **Call to order:** Michael Dougherty called meeting to order at 7:03 pm

2. **Roll Call**

- a. **Members Present:** Michael Dougherty (Chairman)  
David Fortin  
Fred Chmura  
Jeffrey Kelleher  
Michele Woz  
Philip Parizeau, Alternate  
Julie Marcotte, Alternate  
Asa Scranton, Alternate

**Members Absent:** Michael Bernardi

- b. **Others Present:** First Selectman Jay Swan, Selectman Chandler Paquette, Selectwoman Kate McDonald, Finance Director Karen Fitzpatrick, Woodstock Public Schools Business Manager Janice Thurlow, Superintendent of Schools Victor Toth, BOE Chair Hans Frankhouser, Sonia Greene, Emily Green, Megan Bard Morse, Pam Minella, Ray Morgan, Lisa Dalterio, Jessica Weaver Boose, John Dlugoz, Glen Lessig, Linda Bernardi, Mary Weaver, Frank Giardiello, Recording Secretary Amy Monahan and others.
- c. **Noted for the Record:** Quorum

3. **Seat Alternate if Necessary:**

- a. David Fortin made a **\*Motion** to seat Phil Parizeau. **\*Seconded** by Fred Chmura. **\*The motion passed unanimously.**

4. **Approve Minutes**

- a. February 14, 2023 Regular Meeting
- i. Jeffrey Kelleher made a **\*Motion** to approve the February 14, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. **\*Seconded** by Phil Parizeau. **\*Motion passed** with one abstention (Chmura).

5. **Public Comment**

- a. None

6. **Old Business**

- a. Update on State
- i. No updates at this time.
- b. Update on Local Bridge Projects
- i. Jay Swan stated that Peake Brooke Road is moving forward pending approval from state. Hopkins Road and Butts Road have extensions with the following timeline: design and application will take place next month and construction should start in August of this year.

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Hopkins Road completion date is expected to be May of 2024 and Butts Road completion date is expected to be November of 2024.

- c. Update on ARPA
  - i. Karen Fitzpatrick noted that no major expenditures have been made since last update. She expects to have updates with ARPA funding at the next meeting.
- d. FY 23 General Government Budget Update
  - i. No updates at this time.
  - ii. The CNR fee has been paid to Woodstock Academy.
- e. FY 23 Board of Education Budget Update
  - i. Janice Thurlow noted that she is still monitoring expenses with potential overages but has no updates at this time.
- f. Update on 2022 Grand List
  - i. Karen Fitzpatrick sent updated Grand List revenue calculation sheet the board for review. She noted that there is new tax abatement for child daycares included in FY 24.

## 7. New Business

- a. Approve 2023 Tax Suspense List
  - i. Linda Bernardi has presented the 2023 Tax Suspense List to the Board of Finance for review. She shared that the larger than normal total is due to 2 large outstanding business accounts. Without those business tax numbers, the total would be similar to previous year numbers.
  - ii. David Fortin made a **\*Motion** to accept the 2023 Suspense List in the amount of \$120,457.74 as presented. **\*Seconded** by Jeffrey Kelleher. **\*The motion passed unanimously.**
  - iii. David Fortin congratulated Linda Bernardi on her retirement and personally thanked her for her years of service to the Town of Woodstock. Michael Dougherty also thanked Linda Bernardi for a job well done and noted that she will be missed.
- b. BOE FY 24 Budget Presentation
  - i. Victor Toth shared that documents are available for reference and introduced Janice Thurlow to review the proposed budget.
  - ii. Janice Thurlow explained that the first document of reference is an evaluation document that shows what would like to be added to the Woodstock Public Schools if possible. It is a three year plan of prioritized positions and items desired. She reviewed the positions/items and reasons for them to be added into the school system.
    - 1. 23-24 Improvement Plan Budget Items include: Math Instructional Coach, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher (due to number of students increased in current grade 3), Restoration of Library Media Specialist to be sheared between WMS and WES, Additional Pre K Teacher with 3 paraprofessionals (due to large number of students on waitlist every year), Funding for remainder of EL Materials, Professional Development on Differentiation Strategies, WMS LA Series consumables, WES Software Licenses
    - 2. 24-25 Improvement Plan Budget Items include: Math Coordinator, Literacy Coach K-8, Illustrative Math or Envision Math Series Grades 5-8, Continue with LA Series consumables at WMS, Social Studies Curriculum Alignment, Science Curriculum Alignment, Technology Refresh (smart displays, laptops & tablets)
    - 3. 24-25 Improvement Plan Budget Items include: Health and Wellness Teacher WES, 2<sup>nd</sup> Math Instructional Coach, 2<sup>nd</sup> Literacy Coach, Spanish Teacher, Literacy Coordinator K-8, Social Studies Series WMS, Technology Refresh (smart displays, laptops & tablets)
  - iii. The second document is the proposed budget package.
    - 1. Janice Thurlow reviewed the tuition numbers for the upcoming year. Tuition makes up 40% of the Education Budget and is projected to increase 8% for the upcoming year.

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2. Janice Thurlow reviewed personnel for the upcoming year. She noted that this FY is the last that will use funding from the savings account to pay for early retirement salaries. She also noted that there are 4 teachers currently funded by the ARPA Grant that will be kept on staff and be new to the FY 24 budget. There is a long-term nurse that is retiring and nurse salaries were adjusted based on market analysis. Covid allowed for substitutes to be paid with grant funds and the upcoming year will reflect the loss of these grant funds. Health insurance rates came in at 7.1 % increase for the upcoming year among the other mandated increases. The school district will no longer have free lunches in FY 24 and those funds will need to be included in FY 24.
3. Middle School stipends will be added to the budget and the district hopes that the athletic program will be fully funded in the FY 24 budget. Pay to play costs are currently \$295 per student per program.
4. Maintenance increases include the WPCA rate increase and the instituting of a program for preventative repairs and capital improvements. The WES basement encapsulation project is in the budget for the upcoming year. If this item is moved to capital plan, the timeline could be extended due to process required and this repair needs to be done sooner than later.
- iv. Janice Thurlow reviewed the Board of Education 5 year capital plan items which totals \$4,014,493
- c. BOS FY 24 Budget Presentation
  - i. Jay Swan noted that he wants the public and this board to know what people have requested. He knows that this budget may not be attainable. The full proposed budget document has been distributed to the Board of Finance and is available for the public. He noted the following increases for a total proposed increase of \$799,537
    1. Debt Increase-Local Bridge Project of 34.5% or \$276,547
    2. EMS 24/7 Service with paid EMT's/EMR's of 32.8% or \$262,614
    3. General Government Services of 11.3% or \$90,999
    4. Health Insurance of 5.4% or \$42,800
    5. Public Recreation , Health & Welfare (including TEEG, Libraries, United Services, Elderly Nutrition, etc.) of 4% or \$32,300
    6. Northeast District Department of Health (NDDH) of 3.8% or \$30,777
    7. Highway Department Diesel/Gas of 3.3% or \$26,500
    8. Pension (CT MERS) of 2.4% or \$19,000
    9. Fire Services (including Fire Marshal) of 2.3% or \$18,000
  - ii. Karen Fitzpatrick reviewed the General Government 5 year capital plan items which totals \$9,220,300. Many items are budgeted but left on the plan in case additional funding is needed for the items.
- d. Estimated Revenues
  - i. Karen reviewed the estimated revenues sheet and noted that numbers may change with the March collection totals. She also explained that the over/under total number is used in the upcoming year to offset taxes. The total estimated revenue number for 2023-2024 is \$26,178,356 but is subject to change with the final mil rate.
- e. Public Hearing Notice
  - i. Michael Dougherty read the following notice:  
TOWN OF WOODSTOCK  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
APRIL 4, 2023 7:00 PM  
WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL, RM 1

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The Board of Finance of the Town of Woodstock will hold a Public Hearing at the Woodstock Town Hall on Tuesday, April 4, 2023 at 7:00 pm in accordance with section 7-344 of the State of Connecticut General Statutes.

Itemized estimates of the expenditures of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education will be presented and the Board of Finance will hear all persons who wish to be heard in-regards to any appropriation which they are desirous that the Board of Finance recommend or reject for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.

Dated at Woodstock, CT this 21<sup>st</sup> day of March 2023

Signed by Michael Dougherty, Chairman of Woodstock Board of Finance

## 8. Public Comment

- a. Lisa Dalterio asked about the additional teacher in 4<sup>th</sup> grade being requested and if a teacher could be moved instead of added. Victor Toth noted that the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom size is rather large and they wish to leave the 4<sup>th</sup> teacher in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to better accommodate the incoming class. Lisa also asked if the Town has shopped around for cyber security insurance services. Karen Fitzpatrick noted that the General Government and Board of Education currently share the same insurance agent that shops services for them.
- b. Dan Dombrowski asked if the additional teacher hired for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade would move with the children and it was confirmed that the teacher hired for that grade would move with the students.
- c. Frank Giardiello asked what transpires next with the budget process. Michael Dougherty stated that there is a window of 3 weeks for review of the budget before the hearing. The public will allow the opportunity for everyone to speak as to what they wish to keep or remove from the budget. Then, the Board of Finance will review all the information and set a reasonable budget number at the April 11, 2023 Board of Finance Meeting that will go to Town Meeting and referendum.
- d. John Dlugoz asked if the Town Meeting would be moved from the Town Hall to the Middle School. Town officials are discussing that possibility and will advertise the move accordingly if the location changes.
- e. Lisa Dalterio asked what the mil rate change would be with the current proposal. Michael Dougherty stated that the mil rate would increase by 3.15 (which is a 15% increase) with the current proposed numbers.
  - i. Jay Swan noted that the Board of Selectmen will make adjustments to the Government Budget proposed tonight. These numbers were only presented so that the Public and Board of Finance were made aware of what has been requested.
- f. Megan Bard Morse asked if the boards make revisions between now and the public hearing, will the boards present changes at the public hearing. Michael Dougherty noted that any changes that would lower the proposed budget can be presented at the public hearing.

## 9. Other From Board

- a. Michele Woz addressed the formation of a committee to review and evaluate areas in the Town of Woodstock, gather facts and research information. She would be willing to chair this committee and she envisions it including 2 Board of Finance members, 2 Board of Education members and 1 Board of Selectmen member along with stakeholders in the community. Members from all three boards support this effort to create an ad hoc committee of the Board of Finance as presented.
- b. Michele Woz made a **\*Motion** to create an ad hoc committee of the Board of Finance to study/fact gather all areas of finance. **\*Seconded** by Fred Chmura. **\*The motion passed unanimously.**

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## 10. Correspondence & Announcements

- a. The Board of Finance Meeting will meet on Tuesday, April 4, 2023 at 7:00 pm for the Public Hearing. The next Board of Finance Meeting will be April 11, 2023.
- b. Michael Bernardi has stepped down from the BOF as of today. The Board will decide on filling this seat at the next meeting on April 11, 2023.

## 11. Adjournment

- a. Michele Woz made a **\*Motion to Adjourn**. **\*Seconded** by Jeffrey Kelleher. **\*The Motion Passed Unanimously**. Meeting Adjourned at 8:43 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.