

**Woodstock Board of Finance
Special Meeting
Tuesday, May 11, 2021 – 7:00 pm
In accordance with Governor Lamont’s Executive Orders and social distancing guidelines
recommended by the CDC, members of the Board of Finance participated in the meeting via ZOOM online.**

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Michael Dougherty called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Chairman Dougherty stated the special meeting is to present a fiscally responsible and reasonable recommendation within the limits of Proposition 46 for the Fiscal 2021-22 budget to the taxpayers for their consideration. A discrepancy was discovered in the Assessor’s net report on the grand list. Therefore, adjustments are required. At this time, a budget reduction of \$32,185 must occur.

2. **Roll Call:**

Michael Dougherty (Present)

David Fortin (Present)

Roy Bradrick, Jr. (Present)

Frederick Chmura (Present)

Jeffrey Kelleher (Present)

Michele Woz (Alternate) (Present)

Charlene Perkins Cutler (Alternate) (Present)

Excused: Michael Bernardi

Noted for the Record: Quorum

Others Present: Greg Kline, First Selectman Jay Swan, Megan Bard-Morse, Karen Fitzpatrick, Janice Thurlow, Victor Toth, Members of the Public

3. **Seat Alternate if Necessary:** It was predetermined that Michele Woz would be seated in Michael Bernardi’s absence.
4. **Public Comment Instructions:** Chairman Dougherty stated the special meeting is specific to discussing the adjustment to the FYE22 budget as a result of Proposition 46. Nothing more would be discussed during the meeting. Chairman Dougherty briefly reviewed the rules and regulations associated with the Governor’s Executive Orders relative to conducting meetings via Zoom Online during COVID-19.
5. **New Business:**
- a. **Discuss and Act on adjusting the FY22 combined budgets based on recent changes to the 2020 Grand List and to recommend the BOS warn a town meeting:**

Chairman Dougherty opened the meeting to BOF members wishing to present proposals. Mr. Fortin reiterated his comments from the previous meeting and felt the approved budget proposal by the Board of Finance at that time was too high. Chairman Dougherty recapped the previous budget approval which was not at the maximum of Prop 46. He confirmed that the minimum required to be cut during this meeting is \$32,185. Mr. Bradrick proposed cutting the budget by \$91,700 under the maximum allowable. Chairman Dougherty confirmed Mr. Bradrick’s figures which reflect a total cut of \$123,885 (\$91,700+\$32,185).

Chairman Dougherty offered two proposals: 1) to meet the Proposition 46 limit, and 2) to remove the entire shortfall, similar to what Mr. Bradrick suggested but reflecting \$120,205 which is the actual shortfall on the net end based on the grand list.

First Selectman Jay Swan stated he would await the Board of Finance’s decision on the final numbers and make the necessary adjustments to the BOS budget per the direction of the Board of Finance.

Megan Bard-Morse stated the current Board of Education budget has the removal of three teachers that are unable to fit underneath grants. Thus, any additional cuts to the BOE budget would be personnel. She noted the compare and contrast document that was provided to BOF members which reflected what can be moved under a grant and what will have to be removed completely from the budget. She closed by recommending the Board of Finance consider going to the maximum of Proposition 46.

Charlene Cutler Perkins asked if there would be any ramifications in the current fiscal year as a result of the grand list issue. Tax Collector Linda Bernardi stated that Crabtree & Evelyn was on the 2019 Grand List and is responsible for that bill. She stated personal property is not prorated. Emily Carlone affirmed Linda Bernardi's comments and had no further comments.

David Fortin shared his concern in taking money from the unreserved general fund for operational expenses year after year. Karen Fitzpatrick noted that over the last three years, \$2.6 million has been taken from the general fund to offset the last three budgets. First Selectman Swan was concerned with how dipping into the general fund would negatively affect the Town's bond rating. Further discussion ensued.

David Fortin distributed a handout proposing taking the two budgets and bringing them back to FYE20/21 figures, and add the redemption of debt of \$300,855, which would give a minimum budget required for operations of \$24,504,004. Then, add 66% of the Prop 46 allowable for a total of \$24,873,996. This would reflect an approximate 1.08 mill rate if no transfer is made from the unreserved general fund. Further discussion ensued.

Motion was made by Jeffrey Kelleher, and **Seconded** by Frederick Chmura, to **Set** a budget to the maximum allowable of Prop 46 resulting in a total budget of \$25,203,511 and taking the \$32,185 as an 80-20 split between BOE and BOS.

Discussion ensued, and Board of Finance members shared their opinions on going to the maximum of Proposition 46.

The motion did not pass and reflected 3 Yea (Chmura, Kelleher, Woz) and 3 Nay (Fortin, Bradrick, Dougherty).

Motion was made by Michael Dougherty, and **Seconded** by Michele Woz, to **Reduce** the current total budget recommendation in the above motion by \$32,200, reflecting a total budget of \$25,203,496 and suggest the previous recommended budgets for the Board of Education and the Board of Selectmen be reduced by \$16,100 each.

Discussion ensued and it was noted by the Chairman that should this motion pass, the BOF would notify the public prior to the town meeting that there may be a mill rate increase of approximately .75+ and some monies drawn from the general fund reserve.

The motion carried with 4 Yea (Chmura, Kelleher, Woz, Dougherty) and 2 Nay (Fortin, Bradrick).

Mr. Kelleher suggested possibly raising the mill rate to 1 mill. Karen Fitzpatrick suggested keeping the budget to a 1 mill increase reflecting a 2.275% overall budget increase. Further opinions were shared by BOF members. There was some consensus from Board of Finance members on Ms. Fitzpatrick's recommendation.

Chairman Dougherty recapped the proposal of reducing the BOS budget by \$16,100 to reflect a general budget of \$5,458,287 and reducing the BOE budget of \$16,100 to reflect a total budget of \$19,745,209 bringing a total budget of \$25,203,496 or 2.275% overall budget increase.

Motion was made by Frederick Chmura, and **Seconded** by David Fortin, to **Recommend** the Board of Selectmen warn a town meeting for the purpose of hearing the new budget proposal as noted in the motion made by Michael Dougherty and reflected in the paragraph above. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

6. **Public Comment:** Public comments were received.
7. **Other from Board:** None.
8. **Adjournment:** **Motion** was made by Jeffrey Kelleher, and **Seconded** by Frederick Chmura, to **Adjourn. Motion Carried Unanimously.** The meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm.

The recording of this meeting can be found here: <https://youtu.be/Uhc5tWBL3Zc>

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