

**Minutes Woodstock Board of Finance  
Room 1, Town Hall      Tuesday, March 20, 2018  
Budget Proposal Presentations:  
The General Government Budget and Five Year Capital Improvement Plan  
The BOE Budget and Five Year Capital Improvement Plan**

**1. The Call to Order** was by Chairman Michael Dougherty at 7:00 PM

**2. Roll Call**

Michael Dougherty (Present)

Fred Chmura (P)

David Fortin (P)

Ronald Cabana (P)

Roy Bradrick, Jr (P)

Glen Lessig (P)

Michael Bernardi, Alt (P)

Jeffrey Kelleher, Alt (P)

David Richardson, Alt (A) excused due to illness

**Guests:** Michael Alberts, First Selectman; Frank Olah and Chandler Paquette, Selectmen; Victor Toth, Superintendent of Schools; Megan Bard-Morse, Board of Education Chair; Julie Woodland, BOE Vice Chair, Town of Woodstock Office manager /HR manager; Holly Dearborn, BOE; Linda Bernardi, Tax Collector; John Navarro, Highway Foreman; Karen Fitzpatrick, Treasurer; Tina Lajoie, Assistant to the building office; Crystal Adams, Kevin Withers, Joseph Adiletta, PNZ; Gail Dickinson, PNZ; Dawn Adiletta, Woodstock Open Space Land Acquisition and Farmland Preservation Committee Chair; Suzanne Woodward, Registrar; Wayne Durst, IWWA: and approximately 10 other members of the public

**3. Seat Alternate if Necessary:** No alternate was necessary

**4. Approve minutes of from March 6, 2018 regular meeting:**

Motion by Fortin second by Chmura to approve the Minutes of the March 6, 2018 Board of Finance meeting carried unanimously. Note: the Board of Finance meeting scheduled for March 13, 2018, was cancelled due to weather conditions

**5. Report of Committees:** None

**6. Public Comment:** None

**7. Unfinished Business:**

Motion by Fortin second by Bradrick to add agenda item "Review Fund Balance Policy" as the new "A" under Unfinished Business carried unanimously

**A. Review fund balance policy.**

Motion Fortin second by Bradrick to continue suspension of the cap on the Unassigned Fund balance policy carried unanimously

**B. Update on State Budget**

K. Fitzpatrick and M. Alberts reported there is no new information at this time

**8. New Business:**

Motion Fortin second by Lessig to add agenda item "Presentation from Woodstock Open Space Land Acquisition and Farmland Preservation Committee" as the new "A" under New Business carried unanimously

**A. Presentation from Woodstock Open Space Land Acquisition and Farmland Preservation Committee.**

D. Adiletta, Chair of the Woodstock Open Space Land Acquisition and Farmland Preservation Committee, gave a short presentation of the merits of open space preservation and a description of the property at 210 Child Hill Road, also known as the Valleyside Dairy Farm, for which the Committee wishes to purchase the development rights. The property consists of 129+/-acres; 80% of the land is considered "prime soils." The town's share of the cost would be not greater than \$140,000 which represents 1/4<sup>th</sup> of the cost. The money would be allocated from the Committee's existing designated "Open Space and Farmland Preservation fund" with the balance of the cost being paid by the State and Federal government. The matter will go to a town meeting, and then may be sent to referendum.

Motion Lessig second by Cabana to endorse the expenditure of up to \$140,000 for the purchase of development rights at the Valleyside Farm from the "Open Space and Farmland Preservation fund" as requested carried unanimously.

**B. Warn a Public Hearing.**

A notice dated March 13 of public hearing scheduled for Tuesday, April 3, 2018 at 7 PM was read by Chairman Dougherty. The notice will be printed in the local newspaper.

Motion Lessig second by Cabana to approve the Public Hearing notice carried unanimously

**C. General Government Budget and Five Year Capital Improvement Plan Presentation**

First Selectman M. Alberts provided an overview of the General Government budget, collaboratively created by the three Selectmen and approved unanimously by them, and he recognized K. Fitzpatrick's diligence:

-The amount of the budget request for the FY 18-19 is \$4,817,683, a decrease of \$187,940 or 3.75% from FY 17-18.

-The decrease in expenses allowed for the offset of the cost of bonding for the 2 school roof repair projects, with even a little to spare.

Savings were realized by making several changes including but not limited to:

- \*Elimination of scheduled raises for department heads

- \*Closing the town hall on Fridays

- \*Reducing staffing in the Tax collector's and Assessor's offices to less than full time

- \*Reduction of hours for the Assistant Town Clerk, Assistant to the Building Official, Assistant to the Assessor, Assistant Treasurer, Public Works secretary, the Assessor and the Building Official

- \*Replacing the full time planner position with a shared resource managed by NECCOG

- \* Providing for the well-deserved retirement of our Building Official and the replacement of staff in that capacity in less-than a 37.5 hour position; further details were provided.

All Department Heads will be able to meet their statutory responsibilities to Woodstock and the State with these adjustments in place.

Several other options are being explored. "Working together, all things are possible and Woodstock's best days lie ahead," M. Alberts stated.

**Capital Improvement Plan:** copies were provided of the identified critical priorities for improvements over the next fiscal years.

D. Fortin asked to confirm that the concept is that we will be paying our Department Heads based on their responsibilities in their positions not based on the town hall hours. M. Alberts stated "that is correct." Responsibilities will be met whatever it takes, including possibly working on a Friday even if the town hall is closed to the public.

S. Woodward: Pay raises show in some areas of the budget. M. Alberts: Yes there are contractual increases of 2.25%. Additionally, some staff will be needed to float to provide coverage during vacations and when there is an increased traffic flow such as in tax season

G. Dickinson: asked about the Planner position. M. Alberts stated that there are several sequential steps but his hope is that Delia Fey, the current planner, who is well-regarded by NECCOG, will be our half-time Planner, with another town sharing her services.

M. Alberts: When we reduce staff time, we understand there are impacts on an employee's work and financial lives. Full-time staff will not be cut below the threshold for benefits. Employees, being individuals, have different responses to these adjustments.

D. Fortin: commends the BOS. These are tough decisions. We all know these people who will be impacted by this proposal. The state has not lived up to obligations; the revenue stream has been reduced below what the state predicted. The hard work by the BOS is recognized: conscious, determined decisions to off-set these fiscal conditions. M. Dougherty noted the difficult choices that have been made.

#### **D. BOE Budget and Five Year Capital Improvement Plan**

School Superintendent V. Toth, after thanking Karen Munroe, presented the proposed budget for the Woodstock school system (as approved by the BOE on February 22, 2018) at \$18,263,949. This budget represents an increase \$981,026 or 5.68% over the FY 2017-18 budget. The goal is to maintain current programs. The significant increases were;

##### **-Woodstock Academy**

- \*Tuition rate increase of \$93,522 (+1.59%)

- \*Enrollment increase at Woodstock Academy (32.5 students) for \$444,470

- \*Special education increase of \$126,165

Total increase \$664,157

##### **-School District: Contractual obligations, \$118,361**

- \* includes all contractual union increases

- \* Woodstock Association of Teachers union agreed to a step freeze for next year and an increase of 1.5 % salary overall

V. Toth provided comparisons between the School District and the Woodstock Academy budgets. Regular Education tuition costs over a wide time span were reviewed, noting the Transportation and Special Education costs.

**Draft 5-Year BOE Capitol Plan:** V. Toth hopes these long-range goals will be approved by the BOE on March 23. M. Bard-Morse: The handout is a Draft only.

**Note:** A \$178,000 school security grant has been received, with a matching requirement 40%, state 60%. The budgetary aspects will be examined.

D. Fortin: confirms the BOE goals are to maintain current programs

**E. Revenues:**

The revenue sheet was presented as prepared by the Town Treasurer with total projected revenue for FY 2018-19 of \$23,168,614

**9. Communication and Correspondence:**

Chair Dougherty stated the dates of the next budget meetings as:

April 3, Public Hearing

April 10, Final Budget

May 8, Town Meeting

May 15, Budget Referendum, with the BOS to establish the time

**10. Public Comment:**

Question from audience: the draft document refers to a 2.99% increase under Proposition 46 that may be allowed? M. Dougherty: yes

Question from audience: is there a determination by the town attorney regarding whether the Education costs at the Academy constitutes an emergency under Prop 46? M. Dougherty: no definite answer is received yet

M. Bard-Morse, BOE Chair: asked when they would receive the combined budget numbers from the BOF. M. Dougherty: the meeting of April 10

**11. Other from Board:** none

**12. Motion Lessig second by Chmura to adjourn carried unanimously**

Adjournment was by Chairman M. Dougherty at 7:57 PM

**Preparation of minutes by Recording Secretary Dorothy Durst**

**Minutes submitted by David Fortin, Woodstock Board of Finance Clerk**

*These minutes have not yet been approved by the Board of Finance. Please refer to next month's meeting minutes for approval of and/or amendments to these minutes. A video recording of this meeting is available on the Town of Woodstock website (see Boards and Commissions/Finance).*