

**WOODSTOCK BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL, MEETING ROOM 1
TUESDAY MARCH 12, 2019 AT 7:00 PM**

Minutes

1. Call to Order: M. Dougherty called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

2. Roll Call:

Michael Dougherty (Present)
Fred Chmura (Present)
David Fortin (Present)
Ronald Cabana (Excused)
Roy Bradrick, Jr. (Present)
Glenn Lessig (Present)
Michael Bernardi, (Alternate) (Present)
Jeffery Kelleher, (Alternate) (Present)
David Richardson, (Alternate) (Present)

Others Present: John Navarro, Michael Alberts, Cindy Alberts, Frank Olah, Karen Fitzpatrick, Rich Roberts, Mr. & Mrs. Durst, Suzanne Woodward, Stewart Peaslee, Terri Lasota, and 3 others.

3. Seat Alternate if Necessary:

M. Bernardi was seated for R. Cabana

4. Approve Minutes from March 5, 2019 Regular Meeting:

M. Bernardi **MOTIONED** to **APPROVE** the March 5, 2019 minutes as **AMENDED**; G. Lessig **SECONDED**;

R. Richardson requested the following corrections:

- 1) Agenda item #6 pg. 2, item E first sentence: "and/or generation rates" should be "in generation rates"
- 2) Agenda item #7 pg. 3, item B, addition of a sentence before the first paragraph: "D. Richardson asked why the BOF was going to review the BOE draft budget tonight as it has just been published this afternoon at 2:30 and since it is so far beyond what is fiscally possible as to not be a real budget."

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

5. Public Comment:

Stewart Peaslee said he was present to voice his support, and one of the reasons he had decided to become a member of several of the boards was because of Tina Lajoie. He felt it would be wise in the interest of consistency and stability, to recognize and maintain those of value despite of budget cuts.

6. Old Business

A. Update on State Budget: None

B. Update on Local Bridge Project:

M. Alberts commented there was only some preliminary info; John Navarro said he has been in touch with Chuck Eden and Ryan Cooley, and things were moving forward. He also felt things were still on schedule to start with Peake Brook. M. Alberts added that Rep. Pat Boyd had been trying to get one bridge in the Town of Woodstock included in the bonding initiative and it has been voted up to Rep. Pat Boyd's office. He also added that receiving it may be a longshot, but if it was received it would make a huge difference.

7. New Business

A. Warn a Public Hearing:

M. Dougherty read the public hearing notice into record:

*TOWN OF WOODSTOCK
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
APRIL 2, 2019 7:00 P.M.
WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL*

The Board of Finance of the Town of Woodstock will hold a Public Hearing at the Woodstock Town Hall on Tuesday, April 2, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in accordance with section 7-344 of the 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 shall recommend or reject for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020.

Dated at Woodstock, CT. this 12th day of March, 2019

Michael Dougherty, Chairman

Woodstock Board of Finance

D. Fortin **MOTIONED** to put into record to Warn a Public Hearing; G. Lessig **SECONDED**;
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

B. General Government Budget and Five Year Capital Improvement Plan Presentation:

M. Alberts said he would present the budget page by page and answer any relevant questions at the end of each page; he added that a Special Board of Selectmen meeting may need to be scheduled to adjust the proposed budget to address a recent development.

One of M. Alberts opening remarks was that he doesn't believe that the number of hours a town hall is opened translates into the caliber of work that people do, nor is it a good means to judge their value to the Town in terms of the contributions they make. He also noted that the Board of Selectmen had philosophic differences in terms of this budget. M. Alberts presented a side by side, local town comparison of key Town Hall position salaries, and felt this helped to discover several positions were undercompensated compared to what others are doing.

M. Alberts noted all 3 of the Selectmen worked hard on and contributed to this budget, which in a vote was passed by 2 with Selectman Olah abstaining due to philosophical differences.

Each of the budget categories/departments were briefly reviewed by M. Alberts:

Board of Selectman

Assessor

Tax Collector

Finance Dept

Town Clerk -

M. Alberts said that on a weekly basis, up to 6 hours of the 31.5 hour Town Clerk Assistant staff position will be used to help in the building department; he added this was not yet formalized in this budget. G. Lessig questioned the hours; K. Fitzpatrick confirmed they are not adding to her hours, just reallocating 6 of her current hours to building department. G. Lessig inquired about the hours of elected officials; M. Alberts confirmed there are no hours allocated to elected officials, but they must meet the statutory obligations of the job.

Election

Probate

Town Council

Town Hall

Data Processing

Insurance and Employee Benefits -

M. Alberts said the increase reflects the Office of the State Comptroller raised the rates that municipalities contribute to the Municipal Employees Retirement Plan from 11.4% to more than 20% over the next few years, which will double the pension costs.

Planning and Zoning Commission

Town Planner

Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Agency

Economic Development Commission

Contingency Fund

General Government Boards and Commissions

Building Official

Fire Marshal

Fire Protection

Police Protection

Public Safety Boards and Commissions

Highway Department –

J. Navarro presented the Highway Department portion of the proposed budget.

Environmental

Transfer Station/Recycling Center

Public, Recreation & Welfare Boards and Commissions

Principle and Interest Payments

M. Alberts felt the Board of Selectmen did a good job coming in with a fairly flat budget, noting there could be difficulties in the future due to some of the union obligations and adjustments per the State.

M. Alberts asked J. Navarro to present the **5 Year Capital Improvement Plan**. J. Navarro provided an overview of the projects and improvements; he also talked about the bridge work to be done explaining that the bridge projects for Peakes, Hopkins, Butts, and Woodstock Road Bridge, are long term projects.

D. Richardson, J. Navarro and G. Lessig discussed the condition and replacement of Town trucks.

M. Alberts talked briefly about Crystal Pond Park Trout Pond and the D.E.E.P. Mandated inspection to be completed by the end of December 2019, noting the cost for the overall study and plan development would be approximately \$20,000 to be shared by Woodstock and Eastford. J. Navarro added they need to determine whether to repair the dam or breach the spillway.

Regarding Prop46, M. Alberts said he received correspondence from R. Bradrick expressing his concern with the proposed Capital Assessment Fund tank replacement and roof repairs at Woodstock Academy, quoting from the letter “the Town funding for these repairs would be at best, an improper use of tax payer funds to support a private entity, or at worst, a whole league of illegal expenditures.” A copy of the agreement between the Board of Education and Woodstock Academy, along with this letter and attachments were provided to the Town Attorney for review.

Attorney Rich Roberts said he didn’t believe the proposed Capital Assessment from Woodstock Academy fit within any of the exceptions of State mandate of Prop46. He noted the auditor had suggested perhaps paying this out of one of the CNR funds. R. Roberts said at the request of M. Alberts he familiarized himself with the history of Prop46 and how it works, noting that in 4 decades the

interpretations have been generally consistent.

D. Richardson asked how the capitalization of the WA Capitol Assessment impacts Prop46 as it may be an ongoing issue and how does that get presented. R. Roberts replied it either gets paid through the use of town funding or is placed into the tuition, and it needs to be determined by the Woodstock Academy's business plan if this will be a reoccurring fee.

M. Alberts felt that while they don't know the numbers of future expenditures, it was highly likely to see future requests of sending Towns to come. He added that all of the sending towns and Selectmen were disturbed that there was no advanced knowledge of this anticipated expense, and no one would want to send students into an environment where roofs not safe or stable. M. Alberts believed some of these issues were probably well known, but perhaps the funding source was not there. He also said he is glad this has come out and can be addressed but felt there may be more of this in the years ahead.

M. Alberts and the board members discussed the issues at Woodstock Academy which effect both the north and south campuses. R. Bradrick commented that there has been nothing in the Board of Education's budget not in this one regarding pass thorough capital billing for Woodstock Academy.

8. Public Comment:

Greg Cline asked who was responsible for updates on the Town website; M. Alberts said updates are currently being done by the Town Clerk, but the plan is to have this task become part of the new office manager's position. G. Cline also asked if Town employees pay any portion of their own health insurance; K. Fitzpatrick briefly explained the employees payment responsibility for several various insurance options.

Suzanne Woodward commented on IWWA and Zoning Officer on the Board of Selectman's budget under the staff item, noting with those included she could not see the actual cost of running the BOS office personnel and it was confusing. M. Alberts explained the BOS has responsibility for the Inland Wetlands Agent and the Zoning Enforcement Officer, but the numbers could be subtracted to detail them out.

S. Woodward also commented about the Town of Woodstock losing 2 key employees and was concerned about keeping the town running smoothly. He was also concerned about the comparing of salaries with other towns, and the adjusting of hours to accommodate staff. M. Alberts said we have to find creative ways to adapt to the staffing that is available and figure out the best ways to make it work. S. Woodward said she is frustrated, not sure of objectives being met, and concerned about losing more town personnel.

9. Other from Board:

D. Richardson said it has been 3 months since the audit, and there is still \$74,000 missing with no explanation, adding someone needs to figure out what's going on before an outside agency has to come in and find it.

D. Fortin thanked the Board of Selectmen for coming in with what he felt was a frugal and reasonable budget, and appreciated the work done in the salaried administration process with basing the salaries on responsibilities rather than tenure.

G. Lessig thanked the Board of Selectmen for their hard work in preparing the budget but agreed with S. Woodward's concerns, feeling that policies needed to be adjusted.

M. Alberts commented that these people left for better opportunities and said he believed in people pursuing opportunities that were in their own best interest. M. Alberts said he is sorry to see these people leave, but this is environment we are in and the reality is part time positions tend to make us more vulnerable as a town. He hoped to be able to continue to offer health insurance to these 31.5 hour part time positions but it is very expensive to do so. M. Alberts also commented that they are trying to put

hours back into various positions but there are huge constraints.

J. Kelleher said under the limits of Prop 46 the Town Hall is facing the same types of cuts that the school system has to make.

S. Woodward inquired about the pension increase and asked if the Town was going to double their contribution, would they ask the employees to put more money in as well. K. Fitzpatrick explained the fees are dictated by the State Pension Board, and the letter from that Board did not include employee contributions increases at this time.

10. Correspondence and Announcements:

M. Dougherty reminded everyone of the next meeting on Tuesday March 19, 2019 at 7:00 pm for the combined budgets and revenues, and reminded everyone of the public hearing on April 2, 2019.

11. Adjournment:

G. Lessig **MOTIONED** to **ADJOURN**; R. Bradrick **SECONDED**. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.
The meeting was **ADJOURNED** at 9:39 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Terri Lasota, 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. Please note that the audio record is the legal record of the meeting.