

Woodstock Board of Finance

Special Meeting

Tuesday, May 5, 2020 – 7:00 pm

In accordance with Governor Lamont’s Executive Order and social distancing guidelines recommended by the CDC, members of the BOF participated in the meeting via ZOOM online.

MINUTES

- 1. Call to Order:** Chairman M. Dougherty called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.
- 2. Roll Call:**
Michael Dougherty (Present)
David Fortin (Present)
Roy Bradrick, Jr. (Present)
Frederick Chmura (Present)
Michael Bernardi (Present)
Jeffrey Kelleher (Present)
Barry Shead (Alternate) (Present)
Charlene Cutler (Alternate) (Present)
Michele Woz (Alternate) (Present)
Absent: None
Noted for the Record: Quorum
Others Present: Karen Fitzpatrick, Victor Toth, Janice Thurlow, Megan Bard-Morse, Jay Swan, Chandler Paquette, Holly Dearborn, Sonia Greene, Adam Keser, Hans Frankhouser, Members of the Public
- 3. Seat Alternate if Necessary:** None.
- 4. Approve Minutes from March 10, 2020 Regular Meeting:**
Michael Bernardi **Moved to Approve** the March 10, 2020 Regular Meeting minutes as presented;
Frederick Chmura **Seconded; Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- 5. Public Access:**
 - A. Access to Board of Ed Budget Document and Comments**
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfKEebX1fT3bBZx4KlqUKqk2qFqQnAi7POapjsHv8000EDWyQ/viewform>
 - B. Access to General Government Budget Documents and Comments**
<https://www.townofwoodstock.com/index.php/i-want-to/view/2020-2021-town-budget.html>
 - C. Access to Additional BOF Meeting Agenda Items**
<https://www.townofwoodstock.com/index.php/government/boardscommissions/board-of-finance.html>

The public was given the opportunity to provide comments through the town website relative to this budget process. Six comments were received—five recommended not raising the mill rate or increasing the budget without a public hearing and the sixth comment was regarding the insurance stipend. The general public was able to access all documents via the town website and hard copies of the budget were available in the Town Hall lobby prior to the meeting.
- 6. New Business:**
 - A. Use of Contingency Funds for Emergency Renovations to the Town Hall**
Chairman Dougherty stated the Selectmen’s Office requested funds to install service windows on either side of the lobby of the Town Hall to accommodate citizens’ ability to conduct

business specifically with the Tax Collector and Town Clerk. The inside lobby doors and walls will be moved as well. The cost for labor and materials is \$5,000.

David Fortin **Moved to Approve** an amount not to exceed \$5,000 to be taken from the contingency fund for emergency renovations to the Town Hall as described above; Roy Bradrick **Seconded**; **Motion Carried Unanimously**.

B. Tax Suspense List Approval

This information was included in the BOF packets prior to the meeting.

David Fortin **Moved to Approve** the Tax Suspense List as presented; Michael Bernardi **Seconded**; **Motion Carried Unanimously**.

C. BOE request for use of \$150,000 from Health Reserve Fund

In the past, this account was a special service account set aside for health insurance payments that were fully covered or to pay premiums, if necessary. Since the BOE is no longer self-insured, the auditors have recommended to eventually remove it. Mr. Dougherty stated there are additional funds in the account beyond the \$150,000. Ms. Fitzpatrick confirmed there is approximately \$474,000 in the cash account, and the \$150,000 request was presented in the FY 2020-2021 BOE budget.

Frederick Chmura **Moved to Approve** the transfer of \$150,000 from the Health Reserve Fund for BOE use; Roy Bradrick **Seconded**; **Motion Carried Unanimously**.

D. Appoint Auditor

Mr. Dougherty explained the BOF is currently on its last contract year with auditors Mahoney Sabol & Company. The BOF is required to approve the auditor annually. The decision to go out to bid for auditing firms will be determined at a future meeting.

Jeffrey Kelleher **Moved to Approve** the appointment of Mahoney Sabol & Company as the auditors for the upcoming year; David Fortin **Seconded**; **Motion Carried Unanimously**.

E. Estimated Revenues

Mr. Dougherty asked Treasurer Karen Fitzpatrick to speak to the estimated revenues, a copy of which was distributed to the BOF prior to the meeting. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated she has not seen any drastic increases over the current fiscal year. She has spoken with the Town Clerk and Tax Collector to get a consensus of how much more could be collected on various taxes. She further explained her process in reaching these numbers. The estimated revenues for FY 2021 totals \$23,879,640.

David Fortin **Moved to Approve** the FY 2021 Estimated Revenues of \$23,879,640 as presented; Michael Bernardi **Seconded**; **Motion Carried Unanimously**.

F. Approve FY 20-21 Combined Budgets

Chairman Dougherty stated that there is a shortfall based on the budgets as last presented. He welcomed discussion on next steps.

David Fortin shared that although he has supported the maximum amount under Proposition 46 in the last three budget cycles, he does not recommend going to the maximum this time due to the many uncertainties surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. He proposed increasing the budget for FY 20-21 by 2% over FY 19-20 (\$24,015,417), which would bring the budget to \$24,495,725 with a 90/10 split to the BOE and general government, respectively. Showing the

difference of \$480,307 between the above referenced budget years, \$432,277 would be allocated to the BOE and \$48,030 to the general government fund.

Jeffrey Kelleher asked based on the original proposals from the BOE and BOS, if Mr. Fortin had any suggestions on how to cover the shortfall in revenue. Mr. Fortin offered taking \$337,000 from the undesignated reserve fund and increasing the mill rate by 0.2.

Mr. Kelleher asked if it was possible to fund the entire shortfall from the undesignated reserve fund and avoid a mill increase this year. Mr. Bradrick supported funding the shortfall from the undesignated reserve fund and opposed any tax increase at this time. Mr. Bernardi was curious if increasing the tax collection rate from 97.5% to 98% would help. Mr. Dougherty did not feel it was a good time to raise the expectation on tax collection due to the current challenges many are experiencing. Ms. Fitzpatrick confirmed there is approximately \$3.9 million in the undesignated reserve.

Michele Woz asked if the BOE anticipates additional expenses as a result of the COVID-19 situation. Ms. Bard-Morse stated that although they thought there would be a cost savings in some areas, transportation costs will continue to be required and technology upgrades will be expected in order to provide a more uniform process to implement the curriculum. Ms. Bard-Morse noted that should a reduction of about \$400,000 occur, the BOE budget would essentially be funding only Woodstock Academy tuition and no PreK-8 students.

Chairman Dougherty proposed the BOE reduce the allowable by one-third which would give a total of \$627,500. Should this occur, there would still be a 90/10 split for the BOE and general government fund, with a potential increase in the mill rate by at least 0.25. A total of \$585,365 would come from the general government reserve fund (exclusive of the capital assessment). This would bring the total budget to \$24,642,917. Mr. Bernardi and Ms. Woz agreed with Chairman Dougherty's proposal. Further discussion ensued.

Jeffrey Kelleher **Moved to Approve** a total budget of \$24,642,917. Out of that total, the 90/10 split reflects \$564,750 for the BOE with a total budget of \$19,205,251 and \$62,750 for the general government with a total budget of \$5,437,666. These figures represent an overall budget increase of 2.61%, a BOE budget increase of 3.03%, and a general government budget increase of 1.17%; Michael Bernardi **Seconded**; David Fortin and Roy Bradrick were **Opposed**. **Motion Carried.**

G. Approve FY 21-25 Combined Five-Year Capital Plans

Mr. Dougherty referenced the FY 21-25 Five-Year Capital Plans with the BOE plan totaling \$1,374,517 and the general government plan totaling \$9,217,800, reflecting a combined total of \$10,592,317.

Frederick Chmura **Moved to Approve** the FY 21-25 Combined Five-Year Capital Plans as presented; Mike Bernardi **Seconded**; Roy Bradrick was **Opposed**. **Motion Carried.**

H. Set Mill Rate for FY 20-21

Chairman Dougherty stated that the shortfall now reflects \$763,277 as a result of the approved budget. Although he does not want a mill rate increase, he is recommending a 0.25 increase of \$177,912, which would reflect a \$585,365 shortfall that would be taken from the general reserve fund. Mr. Bradrick recommended there be no tax increase this year and the shortfall be taken from the general reserve fund.

Roy Bradrick **Moved to Hold** the mill rate flat and fund the shortfall in its entirety of \$763,277 from the general reserve fund; David Fortin **Seconded**; Michael Bernardi was **Opposed**.
Motion Carried.

7. Other from Board:

Charlene Cutler recommended the BOF consider discussing at a future meeting a policy allowing municipal funds to be used only for direct costs.

8. Correspondence & Announcements:

Chairman Dougherty stated the next meeting is scheduled for June 9, 2020, at 7 pm.

9. Adjournment:

David Fortin **Moved to Adjourn**; Michael Bernardi **Seconded**; **Motion Carried Unanimously**. The meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm.

The recording of this meeting can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvlrsixkiLY>

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.