

WOODSTOCK Board of Finance

Regular Meeting Room B - Town Hall

Tuesday, May 15, 2018 Immediately Following Referendum

MINUTES

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Michael Dougherty at 8:21 PM, following the close of the Budget Referendum. (Yes votes to support the 2018-2019 combined budget were 511, with 171 Nay votes. The Yes votes to support the Purchase of Development Rights at Valleyside Farm were 589, with 92 Nay votes). Total voters were 675 or 13%.

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 (P)

Guests: Michael Alberts, First Selectman; Selectman Frank Olah; Megan Bard-Morse, Board of Education Chair; Dawn Adiletta, Woodstock Open Space Land Acquisition and Farmland Preservation Committee Chair; Karen Fitzpatrick, Treasurer; Mitch Eaffy, Former Selectman; Members of the Arboretum Committee; Joseph Adiletta; Wayne Durst; Ed Larson; Preston Schultz, and other members of the public

Recording Secretary Dorothy Durst

3. Seat Alternate if Necessary- not required

4. **Motion F. Chmura, seconded by R. Bradrick to accept the Minutes of April 10, 2018.**

Note was made that on New Business, B, p 4, some words should be struck, substituting: *D. Richardson – The BOE using the Non-Lapsing Account to cover budget shortfalls has some issues and those should be on the table.* **With that note, the minutes were accepted unanimously.**

5. Public Comment: Mitch Eaffy – in his 13 ½ years on the Board of Select men, the question of how to deal with the eventuality of the Fire Departments being unable to adequately staff exclusively with volunteers was not addressed. He calls for the BOF and the BOS to form a committee to begin to formulate a plan. M. Alberts – the Fire Chiefs and the BOS have been in discussion during the budget process; this issue is on their common radar screen.

6. Old Business:

A. Update on State Budget: M. Alberts – the State budget was passed but conditions are not favorable. K. Fitzpatrick - some Education Cost Sharing Grant Funds came in, but other anticipated funding categories have not.

B. Fund Balance Policy: **Motion by D. Fortin seconded by G. Lessig to continue the suspension of the fund balance policy maximum as has been done for several months carried unanimously.**

C. Arboretum CNR Request: Price quotes from Sansoucy Quarries and Young's Excavation Services for the public safety improvements to the Town-owned Arboretum were received. Mitch Eaffy and two other members of the Arboretum Committee were present. After brief discussion, the amount to be allocated to permanent improvements was rounded off at \$4,000. **Motion by D. Fortin seconded by F. Chmura to fund the permanent improvements at the Woodstock Arboretum for up to \$4,000 carried unanimously.**

D. BOE CNR Request: K. Fitzpatrick – Communication from the Board of Education was received. As a result, the agenda item should be deferred to next month when the BOE will make a presentation. **Motion by D. Fortin, seconded by G. Lessig, to table the BOE discussion of the request for funds from the CNR until the June regular BOF meeting carried unanimously.** D. Fortin verified that in June, appropriations are possible. K. Fitzpatrick was asked the amount currently in the Capital Non-Recurring account, to which she stated that, before this meeting, the total was \$43,000. With the public safety improvements at the Arboretum, the balance will be \$39,000. D. Fortin asked K. Fitzpatrick to provide final, exact numbers previous to the June BOF meeting.

7. New Business

A. Set Mill Rate: To open discussion: **Motion by D. Fortin seconded by G. Lessig to set the tax rate with a .28 mil increase.** The Budget numbers would remain as presented. Discussion: D. Richardson – In light of surpluses year after year on the Town side because of very conservative budget revenue estimates, he proposes to give the taxpayers a break with a zero mil rate increase.

D. Fortin – we face a high level of volatility; not using any taxation increase can cause a spiking situation next fiscal year. I suggestion we exercise caution. We moved funds into the General Fund last year, which may be utilized for town projects that are waiting to be handled.

R. Bradrick - Yes, keep the rate flat. The Town has roughly 17% set aside compared to the State expectation of 15% *and* there is enough in the Undesignated Fund.

D. Fortin – Funds can be moved to the Capital Non-Recurring Fund in June.

G. Lessig - Questions how the State apportions funds back to the towns.

K. Fitzpatrick – The State asks for fiscal year projections. The \$294,000 from the previous fiscal year in the General Fund could be used in fiscal 18-19. There will be a surplus in the current General Government fiscal year which can go to the CNR, then still over 15% in

reserve. The auditors will want Woodstock to do something with the funds in excess of 15%.
F. Chmura – We are consistently very conservative in revenue projections, resulting in an income surplus.

D. Fortin – What is happening with State revenues? We are still uncertain.

K. Fitzpatrick – we start with what was planned for distribution.

M. Dougherty – That amount was \$1.2 million.

D. Richardson – This mil rate increase results in \$200,000 in a \$23 million budget; send the message to the taxpayers that we are looking out for them with a zero increase.

G. Lessig – Asks D. Fortin if he is willing to change his motion to a zero mil increase.

D. Fortin declined.

J. Kelleher – If we go with a zero mil increase for fiscal 18-19, consider the impact in the subsequent fiscal year. Maybe a very large increase will be required. A better way to move ahead is with a small increase this year (a small bitter pill) and then if an increase is needed the subsequent year it too will be a smaller bitter pill.

M. Dougherty – probably a .20 mil increase is the way to go, due to the volatility.

F. Fortin - amended his motion to set the Woodstock 2018-2019 tax rate with a **.20** mil rate increase over the current fiscal year; amended motion seconded by G. Lessig. **The amended motion to set the tax rate with a .20 mil increase carried, with R. Bradrick voting Nay.** Chairman Dougherty states the tax rate increase for fiscal 2018-2019 will be **.20** mils.

K. Fitzpatrick states this means the rate will have been set at **24.5 mils**.

8. Public Comment: None

9. Other From Board: None

10. Correspondence & Announcements:

- today's letter from the BOE; the BOE should receive updated numbers in the CNR account previous to their June presentation.

- reminder: the schedule was amended; the BOF will meet on June 12, with no meetings scheduled for July or August at this time.

11. Motion D. Fortin second by G. Lessig to adjourn carried unanimously.

Adjournment was by Chairman M. Dougherty at 8:59 PM

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).