

Woodstock Board of Finance Regular Meeting
Room 1 - Town Hall Tuesday, September 11, 2018

MINUTES

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

M. Dougherty called for a moment of silence, in memory of 17th years ago (9/11), and in honor of the passing of Dave Hosmer, past Board of Finance Chairman.

2. Roll Call Michael Dougherty (Present)

Fred Chmura (A, excused)

David Fortin (P)

Ronald Cabana (P)

Roy Bradrick, Jr (P)

Glen Lessig (A, excused)

Michael Bernardi, Alt (P)

Jeffrey Kelleher, Alt (P)

David Richardson, Alt (P)

Present: First Selectman Michael Alberts, Selectman Frank Olah; Treasurer Karen Fitzpatrick; Tax Collector Linda Bernardi

Members of the public: Wayne Durst; Ernest St. Jean

Recording Secretary: Dotti Durst

3. Seat Alternate if necessary: Alternate J. Kelleher was seated, per the request of G. Lessig.

M. Bernardi was designated by F. Chmura to be seated, but M. Bernardi stepped back to his alternate role, awaiting confirmation of the applicability of the Minority Representation rule.

4. Motion D. Fortin/J. Kelleher to approve the minutes of the June 12, 2018 Regular Meeting as presented carried unanimously, with R. Bradrick and R. Cabana abstaining.

5. Public comment: W. Durst - the May minutes of the Board of Finance have now been posted on the town website, after some delay. Since Woodstock rarely has coverage of Board meetings by the media, the website is the primary method voters have to be informed. He suggests the BOF add, in approving the minutes at each meeting, confirmation that they are posted on the website.

Chairman Dougherty - thanked M. Alberts for being certain that the video camera is back.

6. Old Business:

A. Update on State Budget: D. Fortin - have all anticipated State funds have been received? K. Fitzpatrick - the \$192,000 installment of Town Aid Road is in, but no Circuit Breaker, no Revenue Sharing Grant. ECS (Education Cost Sharing) grant is only due in October.

There is a new procedure for the Renters Rebates (document provided). D. Fortin -ECS is explained; did anything else come in for Education? A: \$312,000 over the anticipated ECS amount was received for FY 17-18, but no other funds.

B. Review Fund Balance Policy: M. Dougherty - the policy is still under suspense. He recommends holding that policy in place until the audit is completed. D. Fortin - this would be prudent. **Motion R. Bradrick seconded by D. Fortin to table review of the Fund Balance Policy until the December meeting, awaiting the results of the annual audit, carried unanimously.**

C. Solar Generation Update: D. Richardson - his handout was distributed which clarifies the profit to the town from the solar system of \$47,780 for the year which ended on August 1. There is a 27,000 kilowatt variance between Eversource and BeFree of \$2,400 (charges) compared to \$3,300 (credits), attributed mostly to summer. In addition, the two companies do not schedule their statements using the same monthly cut-off dates. Beginning on August 1, the generation rate from Eversource dropped and affects our credited amount through January 1, at which time the Eversource will announce the new rate situation will be re-examined at that time.

D. Policy Updates: M. Dougherty - there is no action to be taken. D. Fortin - following up on discussion at the June meeting, a draft for a potential BOF policy was created, related to the utilization of a department's line item budgeted amounts for other uses than specified. After discussion with K. Fitzpatrick, the concept went to the BOS then to the town attorney. This movement/utilization of funds within the department's total budget is at that department's discretion. The department may not exceed the total budgeted amount without BOF approval. D. Fortin -There is no action needed on this policy. K. Fitzpatrick - will provide a monthly report, rather than quarterly, showing both revenues and expenditures, to assist the BOF in monitoring fiscal matters. If specific detailed information is requested, she will provide it to the BOF. M. Dougherty - Woodstock needs to see the same reporting procedures from the BOE as is provided by the town. K. Fitzpatrick agreed to ask for the similar report of the BOE each month. There is no one present to answer questions regarding the BOE budget; it is the Open House at the middle school tonight. The BOE has provided a letter outlining the surplus which resulted at the end of fiscal 2017-18 identifying what they transferred to their Non-Lapsing. M. Dougherty and D. Richardson - praised K. Fitzpatrick for doing an outstanding job in her role as Treasurer.

6. New Business:

A. Quarterly Reports: General Government Report . D. Richardson - it looks like a \$530,000 surplus (\$278 in revenue and \$252 in expenses). This is a good report.

K. Fitzpatrick - this is before the surplus so no lines are zeroed out. D. Richardson - the BOE Report, however, shows all but 4 lines zeroed out. At the end of June, the BOE went from a deficit to a surplus. On June 12 action was taken by the BOF, at the BOE request, to rectify a critical issue regarding a deficit, which was subsequently found to be not legal by the Town through the Town Attorney. Then the deficit seems to have disappeared.

M. Dougherty – prior to budget season, we should have a meeting of the 3 Boards (BOF /BOS /BOE). D. Richardson – let’s build trust between the three.

M. Bernardi and D. Fortin – yes, invite the Business Manager, the Superintendent and the Chair of the BOE to have a conversation with the BOS, establishing the opportunity to collaborate and to welcome the new Manager.

B. Approve End of Year Transfers: M. Alberts –local bridges are a long-term liability. Estimates are available for Peake Brook, Hopkins Road and Butts Bridge, totally right around \$1 million. M. Dougherty – this year we can consider these 3 bridges as Phase 1, and look at it again next year if there is a surplus. Neither liability issues nor increasing cost of material and labor can be set aside. This type of projects are usually done during the summer months while the water table is low. The low water table would be next summer for actual construction. D. Richardson – the available funds seem to be only 30% of what will be needed. There are local bridge grant applications submitted as well. D. Fortin – can funds be added to the Local Bridge Phase 1 project? K Fitzpatrick- Yes, if we have not gone to a town meeting to ask to expend it.

Motion D. Fortin seconded by R. Bradrick to transfer \$252,939.33 as requested by the BOS to the CNR for Local Bridge Project Phase1 carried unanimously.

Motion D. Fortin seconded by R. Cabana to request that the BOS warn a town meeting, prior to the expenditure of funds for Local Bridge Project Phase1, carried unanimously.

M. Dougherty – asks to have a conversation with the BOE at the next meeting about their monthly report before taking action. Clarification by K. Fitzpatrick- The BOE can transfer into the non-lapsing fund at their discretion. There is over \$191,919.18 in Non-lapsing. When they are ready to expend it, they will need to come to the BOF. In June, there was \$161,000, but they never spent anything? It is unclear if the Capital Projects that were approved at the 6-12-18 BOF meeting were completed.

8. Public Comment: M. Alberts – the assistant tax collector has moved from the area; a new person has been hired who will begin mid-September

- CCM membership has proved valuable: we are able to compare compensation for elected and appointed positions. Two positions seem to be comparatively low: Assessor and Treasurer. Once a report is received by the BOS, it will come to the BOF.

- Research is underway for a more automated payroll system for BOS consideration. Preliminary work shows that a savings of 5 hours per week on payroll itself, with more savings on tracking time off and other aspects of the payroll department, seem possible.

- A recurring problem exists with finding Recording Secretaries for Boards and Commissions, as applications are not coming in from our advertising. A possible different approach: combine the function into one meatier position which could pay more and still result in lower payroll.

- Many people have approached the selectmen about traffic issues including speeding. There seems to be an undercurrent of interest in a Resident State Trooper. When it was considered 15

years ago, the state covered 30% of the costs; today it is 15%. Other towns are reporting total costs of \$125,000 -185,000 per year. That is not for 24 hour coverage, nor for 7 days a week. A Trooper is hired by a union panel on which the BOS would have a seat. Break-ins in the Bungay Lake area need to be looked into. We would like to arrange a meeting in town with a representative of the Resident State Trooper program for complete information.

- On August 22, the BOS voted to fix the town's electrical energy costs by using a third party consultant who researches and recommends the provider with the best rate. We have locked in with Eversource at .08930 cents; last year was .09422 cents. The rate is locked in, and so are the savings. The contract with the third party consultant is for a middle-length time span of 26 months, until November 2020 and the cost is minimal. There is no cancellation fee if any one of the 5 accounts is cancelled, but there is a fee formula if the contract is cancelled early.

- The BOS has heard disappointing stories about the Q V Emergency Dispatch Center; the Bungay Fire Brigade has had a number of situations which do not reflect well on that Center, although the town has had a long, good relationship there. A decision must be made if to remain with them; the Fire Chiefs and Emergency Management personnel meet this Thursday to vote. We need a careful, thoughtful process in place. We have been impressed with the state-of-the-art technology at Tolland Dispatch, and they have an Emergency Response mobile unit for use at events such as fairs or in other situations. The contract expiration date at Q V Dispatch is unclear. There is normally one payment per year and none has gone in yet.

- Legal services have been slow, regarding various projects including questions on Proposition 46, despite about 15 years with the current firm. The BOS will be bidding out legal services.

- The Building Department status: the new Building Official is in place; activity there has picked up. The Planner is now NECCOG-contracted, and the ZEO and Wetlands enforcement matters have all been shifted to the Building Clerk. It may be time to look at this office differently. Tina is over-worked and yet is always willing and eager to help out. Perhaps these duties should be re-configured, combined/expanded and simultaneously address the shortage of Recording Secretaries for Boards and Commissions. If there seems to be a better solution, it will come to the BOF.

- Woodstock Academy would like to see the tennis courts owned by the town at the Middle School updated to modern standards. Originally there were thoughts of a joint venture between the town and WA to share the update costs, but at this time the BOS feels it would be better for the town to renovate them alone. The fencing had already been purchased years ago and is in storage, so it is the surface that will need to be replaced. Since the Recreation Department brings in funds from events and activities, the repairs are feasible. Crystal Adams, Recreation Director, has been asked to collect data. She did a fabulous job with the PTO's Playground Equipment drive.

- Paving of the town hall lot is underway. Catch basins are installed. Sidewalks will be addressed.

Q: Will the paved sidewalks be re-done? They are crumbling/heaved and pose a safety issue.

E. St Jean - one Resident Trooper (40 hours) could not handle matters in town; 3 are needed

9. Other from Board: M. Bernardi - asks the status/duties of the Planner. M. Alberts- reviewed the duties. Inside the town hall, though, the permitting process, zoning enforcement, IWWA matters

are all taking place. The Boards/Commissions Tina works with all like her performance and in addition, want her at their meetings, but her current work description restrains that.

M. Bernardi – will the staffing comparisons done by the CCM include the 4-day work week? M.

Alberts – yes; there is also the specifics of Woodstock's demographics and other factors. I am honor-bound to be transparent with the BOF. Some staff are union members, which will be a factor. D. Fortin – it will be helpful to identify the levels of responsibility for the staff members in order to make effective comparisons.

M. Alberts – we are keeping track of the numbers of people who come to the town hall on Fridays, now that tax season is past.

D. Fortin – How can a date be established for a tri-Board meeting, ideally in November? This would need to be a Special Meeting. M. Dougherty - will look into setting it up.

K. Fitzpatrick will request the BOE for a general ledger budget original, showing budgeted amounts and spent as well as a monthly report (rather than quarterly as is currently provided).

10. Correspondence and Announcements: Note that there is no October meeting scheduled. The next regular meeting is scheduled for November 13.

11. There being no further discussion: **Motion to adjourn at 8:45 PM by J. Kelleher seconded by D. Fortin carried unanimously.**

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).