

Board of Finance
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 15, 2014
7:00pm Clifford B. Green Memorial Center

Present: Gene Michael Deary; Sandy Brodeur; Kim Conroy; Drew Dionne; Jeff Otto; and Shelley Hopkins,
Recording Secretary

Also Present: Rick Ives and Joe Voccio

Absent Member: Ken Dykstra

1. **Call to Order:** Gene Michael Deary called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.
2. **Public Comment:** None
3. **Approve Previous Minutes:** Drew Dionne made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from 9/24/14 as presented. Kim Conroy seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.
4. **Discussion on 2014-15 Budget:** Sandy Brodeur expressed concern about not getting the reports sooner. Gene Michael Deary stated that this concern can be part of the conversation about what the Board would like to see from the new Finance Director.

Drew Dionne noted that the Board has not received the capital reports from the last couple of years. Rick Ives stated that they are ready and he will make sure the Board receives them.

Rick Ives stated that attorneys' fees have been a little quieter, but they will start to pick up when negotiations begin with three units in December. Jeff Otto stated that if the progress on the noncertified staff at the school is any indication on how interested AFSCME is in negotiating, the outlook is bleak. Rick Ives noted that the AFSCME employee representing the noncertified staff will be representing one of the Town's units.

Rick Ives noted that there is a minor mistake in the budget. A \$600 training item that was under Planning & Zoning should be under Land Use.

Kim Conroy inquired whether 83.1% of the Rukstela Road garage maintenance alarm monitoring line item has been spent. Rick Ives answered yes; it is all upfront.

Rick Ives stated that the Town will not start to see revenues until the end of the month. The first ECS payment is on October 31.

5. **Liaison Reports:**
 - a. Gene Michael Deary presented the Board of Selectmen report. An offer has been made and accepted, and a contract signed, for a Finance Director. Both Dr. Berry and First Selectman Ives are pleased with the candidate. Rick Ives stated that her start date is November 3. Gene Michael Deary suggested that Board members bring to the November meeting their thoughts and ideas as to the types of activities in which they would like to see the Finance Director engaged. He noted that the Finance Director has ample experience preparing municipal budgets. He stated that now is the time to put into place a professional, interactive framework. This will require significant

cooperation from the Board of Education, the Board of Selectmen, and the Board of Finance. Rick Ives remarked that the Finance Director's HR and Special Ed backgrounds will prove useful. Jeff Otto inquired as to how much of budgeted funds are going to be used for salary and benefits for the Finance Director. Rick Ives replied that \$115,000 was budgeted and \$117,000 will be paid on an annualized basis. Jeff Otto inquired as to what steps will be taken regarding the Treasurer. Rick Ives replied that the Treasurer's position will be eliminated at the end of the fiscal year. Sandy Brodeur asked whether there is a process in place to do performance evaluations on the new employee. Rick Ives stated that the answer is yes; all employees are being evaluated routinely.

- b.** Drew Dionne reported that Capital has not met.
- c.** Sandy Brodeur was unable to attend Resource Recovery.
- d.** Jeff Otto presented the Board of Education report. One of the main topics at the last meeting was the fire alarm system. Joe Voccio has yet to see the initial report or specs from Hughes Associates, but expects Dr. Berry will have something this month. This will enable the Capital Committee to schedule discussion of this item. Jeff Otto inquired as to the cost of the initial report. Joe Voccio said it was approximately \$5,600, with the balance of the total cost of \$34,000 attributable to the development of specs. Jeff Otto stated that the Board of Education discussed an estimated cost of the new system of \$280,000 or \$140,000 per school. The provenance of this estimate was unclear.

Jeff Otto reported that Al Yanku, principle of the middle school, has been out for several weeks and is expected to be out an additional two to three weeks due to a medical issue.

Jeff Otto reported that the Board of Education held a special meeting to accept the resignation of Dave Kowolenko, Property Services Director.

Gene Michael Deary inquired about the practice of the Brooklyn school system using next year's anticipated census of students attending Woodstock Academy instead of last year's actual census, as is the practice of other sending schools. Jeff Otto stated that Brooklyn has always done this and that the business manager at Woodstock Academy convinced Pomfret and Ashford to switch to the practice of using last year's actual census. Gene Michael Deary expressed concern that Woodstock Academy's formal communication to the Board of Education and the Superintendent appears to have gone unanswered. Jeff Otto expressed concern that the Town of Killingly cannot give the Town an accurate accounting of how many Town of Brooklyn children attend their schools. Gene Michael Deary inquired as to what channels of communication are available with regard to this issue. Jeff Otto suggested Superintendent Berry as a logical contact. Gene Michael Deary thinks it makes more sense to use last year's actual census to avoid allocating more funds to the Board of Education than necessary. Joe Voccio noted that this was an issue a few years ago when Woodstock Academy laid off some staff members due in part to a lower than anticipated number of students from Brooklyn. Jeff Otto noted that this is no different than using the NFA methodology, underestimating the number of students, and subsequently not hiring enough teachers.

In a perfect world, projections would be equal to actual numbers. Joe Voccio noted that the Town makes estimates all the time and often has to adjust them. Having to hire more teachers is a better position to be in than having to lay off staff. Gene Michael Deary stated that Woodstock Academy is looking for revenue certainty. Joe Voccio noted that Woodstock Academy has the ability to adjust Brooklyn's projections to suit its own budgeting needs. Gene Michael Deary stated that this still constitutes revenue uncertainty. Rick Ives suggested having a conversation with Dr. Berry, who may not be aware that this methodology is available. Jeff Otto will undertake that conversation on behalf of the Board. Kim Conroy asked for confirmation that the Town would essentially be paying in arrears. Gene Michael Deary replied yes; this would give the Town revenue certainty as well. Joe Voccio reiterated that with the Academy, it is a different mechanism than it is with Killingly in that the Town does not reconcile the number of students on October 1. Rick Ives noted that the Board of Education may be under the impression that they do reconcile the number of students. Gene Michael Deary suggested if the Town is successful with the Academy, the same thing could be done with Killingly. Joe Voccio noted that there have been issues with Killingly. Killingly wants Brooklyn to pay for three projected students who never showed up because the truant officer did not reach out to them by a specified date. Gene Michael Deary stated that if the actual census method was used, this never would have been a problem. Jeff Otto disagreed, stating that Killingly considers a student "actual" if he is on the list. Rick Ives stated that he has been asked what can be done about the capital expenditures for Killingly. This would require working with Town Counsel.

- e. Jeff Otto presented the Board of Fire Commissioners report. He presented a report of budget vs. expenditures for each fire company for the nine month period ending September 30, 2014. These reports just came in this afternoon; the Board may want more time to peruse them in detail. Jeff Otto was somewhat surprised to see that the Mortlake Fire Company has already expended virtually all of its fire company operations budget for the fiscal year. Sandy Brodeur suggested that some expenditures may have been paid for with Mortlake's own funds; budgeted expenditures only reflect the funding supplied by the Town. The expenditures may also reflect some capital expenditures that do not belong there. Jeff Otto will inquire about this. Joe Voccio inquired whether a uniform chart of accounts might be developed for both companies to use. This might include an account for capital non-recurring funds. Jeff Otto stated that this is possible. Kim Conroy noted that the Finance Director may have some suggestions on how to go about this. She inquired whether the number of runs was requested. The answer is no; however, Jeff Otto prepares a monthly report which categorizes every call and he can make that report available to the Board.

Jeff Otto reported that the Board is beginning a process to reach agreement among the Fire Commissioners and the two fire companies about what exists for equipment and what the purpose of that equipment is.

Sandy Brodeur noted that Mortlake's new rescue truck is in. Jeff Otto stated that the truck has been lettered and is now back in New Jersey for some modifications, some of which are due to manufacturer error in placing tooling on the wrong side of the truck.

- f. Kim Conroy presented the Recreation Department report. There were very few people setting up for Spooky Nights on Monday. The new full time employee is working out well. Progress is being made on the teen center. Rick Ives stated that a recruiting push needs to occur at the schools. Kim Conroy stated that the new director is very good. Gene Michael Deary inquired as to the anticipated opening date. Rick Ives stated that the anticipated opening of the center is mid-November. The critical mass is 30-35 members.
6. **Other Business:** Rick Ives presented the grand ratebook balance sheet report for September. The numbers need to be compared to the previous year's numbers.

Jeff Otto spoke against Planning & Zoning application ZRC14-002, which requests to allow multi-family dwellings by special permit in the planned commercial zone.

- 7. **Public Comment:** None
- 8. **Adjourn:** Drew Dionne motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:06pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelley Hopkins
Recording Secretary