



# Town of Griswold

Board of Finance  
Public Hearing  
April 4, 2017  
7:00pm



## Griswold Middle School Cafeteria APPROVED MINUTES

1. **Roll Call/Call to Order:** S. Davis opened the Public Hearing at 7:00 PM

### **Board of Finance Members Present:**

Scott Davis – Chairman  
Brian Baker – Vice Chairman  
Gail Rooke-Norman  
Gary Levy  
Dan Webster

### **Members Absent:**

Peter Dorff  
John Wolkowski

### **Also Present:**

Erik Christensen, Director of Finance  
Kevin Skulczyck, First Selectman  
Steve Merchant Sr., Second Selectman  
Martin McKinney, Third Selectman  
Sean McKenna, Superintendent of Griswold Schools  
Jeannette Bell, Recording Secretary  
33 Other People

2. **Public Input on the proposed 2016/2017 Fiscal Year Budget**

- **S. Davis, Chairman Board of Finance** opened the meeting with highlights of the current proposal for the Town Budget as well as Board of Education budget. He stated as the numbers stand we are currently looking at an increase to the mill rate of 2.48 mills. He also spoke of the uncertainty regarding the State of Connecticut funding as well as the proposal for the municipalities to fund the teachers retirement. He invited any residents to come forward and speak.
- **S. McKenna, Superintendent of Griswold Schools** stated the Board of Education budget was at an increase of 2.78%. He stated this budget is needed to achieve the needs of the students in order to succeed in either the workforce or continuing their education. The Board of Education has negotiated for a new health care savings on insurance in order to further reduce the amount spent. He also noted there has been a reduction in staff as well. He feels there is no more room to cut in order to achieve the goals for all students in education, sports, or activities and to attract tuition students to Griswold Schools.
- **K. Skulczyck, First Selectman** stated the Town budget was an increase of 1.57%

and there is nowhere else to cut other than cutting staff positions. He also noted the teacher pensions cannot be ignored based on the Governors proposal. He stated based on the uncertainty of the revenues to the municipalities it is almost impossible to get final numbers until the middle of June.

- **S. Mikutel** stated he was an advocate for budget clarity and feels we cannot vote on the budget until the final numbers are received from the state.
- **R. Churchill** stated he supports both the Town and the Board of Education budgets. He applauded the Board of Education in actively pursuing students to come to Griswold. He would support as high of an increase in taxes as needed in order to continue providing for the needs of the students.
- **S. Norman** stated he believes both the Board of Education and the Town have done a good job in presenting their budgets. He believes that if we begin to continue cutting budgets it would be a downward spiral that will continue. He stated perhaps it is time to use our reserve money for times like these. He also stated we cannot forget that services need to be provided for the schools, roads and other services.
- **J. Bernie** feels we need to push back against the state for unfunded mandates including teacher pensions.
- **E. Burdick** stated the big elephant in all this is that the State of Connecticut is running out of money. He stated the burden has been shifted to the taxpayer and would support a reasonable increase however not 2.78%. He stated the student base is shrinking and to shoot for a 1 mill increase, however be prepared for the worst.
- **T. Madonna** stated regardless we all need to find ways for all boards to plan for the long term. She stated we all need to work together and stop competing.
- **S. Davis** asked if there was anyone else who wanted to come forward to speak. After hearing none:

2. **Adjournment:** S. Davis closed the public hearing at 7:37 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeannette Bell  
Recording Secretary