



Town of Griswold

Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
March 20, 2018
7:00 PM

Town Hall Meeting Room
MINUTES



1. **Roll Call/Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM**

Board of Finance Members Present:

Scott Davis – Chairman
Steve Mikutel – Vice Chairman
Brian Baker
Valerie Grills
Gary Levy
Gail Rooke-Norman
Dan Webster

Also Present:

Erik Christensen, Director of Finance
Jeannette Bell, Recording Secretary
Todd Babbitt, First Selectman
Louis Demicco III, Chief Jewett City Volunteer Fire Department
Tom Holowaty, Chief Griswold Volunteer Fire Department
Indigo Cohen, Registrar
9 Other people

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

3. **Public Forum**

S. Davis asked if anyone wished to speak. No one came forward.

4. **Approval of Minutes:**

MOTION: S. Mikutel made a **motion** that was seconded by D. Webster to approve the following minutes as presented: All in favor; **motion carried.**

- a. February 20, 2018 Regular Meeting Minutes
- b. March 6, 2018 Special Meeting Minutes
- c. March 15, 2018 Special Meeting Minutes

5. **New Business**

a. **Finance Directors monthly report.**

E. Christensen stated the revenues recorded to date are \$26,496,654.07 or 74.63% of budgeted revenues. He stated there has been no change regarding the State budget and there are no other major concerns with revenue at this point. He stated the expenditures recorded to date are \$19,349,580.66 or 54.50% of budgeted expenditures. He stated there are no major concerns as of right now with a few line items over expended. Snow removal and snow removal overtime being the largest due to Sunday storms which are paid at double time and night time or Saturday storms which are paid at time and one half.

6. Old Business

a. Discussion and possible action on FY18/19 budget.

Registrars – 1401 - Indigo Cohen presented the Registrars budget. She introduced herself and stated she as well as Brooke Dieger are new to the registrar department and although there is much to learn they are utilizing resources available to them.

Emergency Services JCVFD – 2201 – Louis Demicco presented the JCVFD budget. He stated there is a zero percent increase in his budget. The department did respond to 723 calls last year with 35 overdoses. They also had 48 scheduled training courses for their members. He stated enrollment is down as they are currently at 20 members.

Emergency Services GVFD – 2201 – Tom Holowaty presented the GVFD budget. He stated his budget is also at a zero percent increase to which they have not had an increase in the past three years. The department did respond to 553 calls last year. They had 45 scheduled training classes for their members. He also stated enrollment is down as they currently have 23 members. He also stated the members in his department donated 5,763 man hours to the town responding to calls.

Building Department – 3301 – D. Webster recused himself at 7:18PM. Todd Babbitt presented the Building Department budget. He stated payroll for the building official had been requested to be full time however the selectmen had reduced it to 25 hours per week. The previous building official had been working 19.5 hours per week but unfortunately there were three drawers of building permits which had not been closed out therefore costing the town in lost revenues. He feels at 25 hours per week the current building official can get the three drawers caught up and keep the new permits current going forward. He also stated the overtime line item is reduced by \$9,000. Health insurance has increased \$10,210 due to the current building official being eligible for insurance with the increase in hours. Pension is up \$6,292 due to the current change in hours for the building official. Todd Babbitt also stated the Service Contracts/Lease line item is up by \$400 which is actual cost. D. Webster returned at 7:26PM.

Selectmen – 1201 – Todd Babbitt presented the Selectmen budget. He stated the Executive Assistant line item is up \$2,312 due to contractual. The longevity line item is up \$775 due to himself being moved to the Selectmens budget from the Public Works budget. Health Insurance is up \$4,727, FICA is up \$113 and Pension is up \$363. Both Second and Third Selectmen meeting line items are each down \$99 seeing there has been no money used from those. Postage line item has also been decreased by \$250. He stated LAP insurance has increased \$4,000 and Worker's Comp has been decreased by \$12,000 due to less claims. Service Contracts/Leases has been reduced by \$4300. Technology Maintenance has increased \$9,000 due to the IT consultant bids coming in higher than last year even after going with the lowest bidder. There was some discussion and questions regarding the amount of the contract increases and the length of the contract. There were also questions as to when it was signed by the previous Board of Selectmen.

Legal – 1701 – T. Babbitt presented the Legal budget. He stated Labor Legal Matters line item had been increased \$8,000 due to contract negotiations this year. S. Davis asked if it is possible to add another line item called Board of Finance Legal. This would enable the Board of Finance to get legal council from an independent source.

Highway – 3201 – T. Babbitt presented the Highway budget. He stated Regular Full-Time Payroll is up \$16,432 due to contractual raises. The Seasonal Maintainer position was eliminated with a savings of \$23,650. Bulky Waste Overtime was increased \$1,000 to reflect the actual cost. T. Babbitt stated the Longevity line item decreased \$1,185 due to

the transfer to the First Selectman and an employee retiring. Health Insurance increased \$11,762 due to the possible hiring of a Public Works Director who might require the family plan insurance. FICA line item decreased \$767 and Pension had increased \$1,908. Gasoline line item decreased \$5,000 due to the savings realized on a new contract. Snow Removal line item has been increased \$10,000 which is in line with the actual cost. Historic Research decreased by \$4,000. Total Highway budget increased \$6,500.

Waste Disposal – 3204 – T. Babbitt presented the Waste Disposal budget. Resource Recovery line item was reduced \$5,000 to reflect the actual cost. Electricity line item was increased \$250 to reflect the actual cost. Dumpster line item was reduced \$7,490 as it is not needed for this year.

Town Hall Maintenance – 1801 – T. Babbitt presented the Town Hall Maintenance budget. Payroll line item was increased \$1,123 due to contractual raises. Health Insurance, FICA and Pension all increased due to contractual as well. Electricity was decreased \$1,000 which is in line with the actual cost. Building Repairs were reduced by \$3,000.

Pachaug Town Hall Maintenance – 1802 – T. Babbitt presented the Pachaug Town Hall Maintenance budget. The only change was an increase to Telephone of \$430 for a newly installed phone system.

Highway Garage Maintenance – T. Babbitt presented the Highway Garage Maintenance budget. All line items remained at the same dollar amount as last year.

Soule Street Building Maintenance – T. Babbitt presented the Soule Street Building Maintenance budget. All line items remained at the same dollar amount as last year.

S. Davis once again thanked the Board of Education and the Town Government for presenting their respected budgets at a zero or less than zero increase. That being said there is still a deficit to make up due to the continued cuts from the State. In order to achieve a zero mil increase an additional \$1,347,000 would need to be cut from both budgets. In order to have no further cuts to either budget the mil rate would need to increase by 1.93 mils. S. Davis took a poll of the Board of Finance members to get a feel for what they think should be done. The range was from an increase of .65 mils to 1.93 mils, with the majority around a 1.5 mil increase. The consensus was that most taxpayers are uninformed as to the magnitude of impact the State cuts have had on the Towns Budget.

b. Update on gas line project.

B. Baker stated there have been no meetings on the gas line since the last Board of Finance meeting therefore there are no further updates.

c. Discussion and possible action on BOF policies as recommended by audit.

E. Christensen submitted a policy regarding accounting for compensated absences.

MOTION: G. Rooke-Norman made a **motion** that was seconded by B. Baker to approve the updated policy as presented. All in favor; **motion carried.** E. Christensen submitted an updated draft policy for the Recreation Revenue Collection including some changes and additions. He also submitted a policy from the Town of New Fairfield for their Parks and Recreation which they are currently working on as well. S. Davis once again stated he would like to see all revenue collected for the Parks and Recreation as well as the Transfer Station done either on line or at the Town Hall. There was some discussion that followed. It was decided for all members to read through the proposed draft policy and decide what should be implemented into a final policy. There would be further discussion on this at the

next Board of Finance meeting which is scheduled for March 27, 2018.

7. Any Other business

There was no other business.

8. Public Forum

J. Barnie – Made a pitch for the fire fighters recruitment to be increased for future years in order to attract more volunteers. He believes we should not be nickel and diming people for increased assessments to improve their homes. He is in favor of a ½ mil increase but would not support anything above that.

S. Norman – Thanked the Board of Finance for their opinion on the mil rate increase due to the fact no more money could be cut from either budget.

L. Sorder – Is in favor of a higher mil rate increase. Believes the utmost concern is educating the public on what we are facing due to the cuts from the State.

M. Malin – Supports up to a 1.93 mil rate increase. Also believes people do not get it and are not paying attention to the crisis at the local level due to the State cuts. We are all victims of the State and the public needs to be educated.

L. Sorder – Believes every candidate needs to be grilled regarding the State cuts on the local level.

J. Barnie – Also believes the public has no clue on the situation.

9. Adjournment

MOTION: D. Webster made a **motion** that was seconded by S. Mikutel to adjourn the meeting at 8:52PM. All in favor; **motion carried.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeannette Bell
Recording Secretary