



Town of Griswold

Board of Finance
Public Hearing
May 17, 2021
7:00 pm

Via Teleconference
MINUTES



2021 MAY 20 PM 2:53
L. Babbitt

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

Board of Finance Members Present:

Scott Davis – Chairman
Alex Grzelak – Vice Chairman
Amanda Brycki
Steve Mikutel
Valerie Grills
Gail Rooke-Norman
Dan Webster

Also Present:

Erik Christensen, Director of Finance
Todd Babbitt, First Selectman
Sean McKenna, Superintendent of Griswold Schools
Mary Beth Malin, Chairperson Griswold Board of Education
Kenneth Bomba, Recording Secretary
36 Other People

2. **Public Input on the proposed 2021/2022 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 the Board of Education budget. He stated the proposed budget for the 2021/2022 Fiscal Year is \$38,030,349 which is an increase of \$1,341,118 or 3.8%. The General Government Operating Budget has a proposed budget of \$5,258.476 which is an increase of \$323,754 or 6.56%. The Capital budget has a proposed budget of \$1,636,278 which is an increase of \$347,123 or 26.93%. The Debt Service has a proposed budget of \$1,975,175 which is an increase of \$11,589 or .59%. The Board of Education budget is proposed at \$29,160,420 which is an increase of \$708,652 or 2.49%. He stated as the with the budget as proposed, we are currently looking at an increase to the mill rate of .91. He stated if a home is assessed at \$200,000 that would amount to a \$182.44 increase in taxes. He noted that the town is slated to receive a Distressed Municipality Grant in the amount of \$1,049,919. The restriction on this grant requires part to be spent on Capital items and part on Covid related expenses. If the town can use the grant on expenses in the proposed budget, the mil rate would decrease by .5 mil. A home assessed at \$200,000 would see a \$100.66 decrease in taxes.
- **T. Babbitt, First Selectman** stated that at the start of the budget process they requested the department heads present a zero dollar increase in their budgets. Most of the increases were for insurance costs, and contractual obligations. The largest increase was for the

Recreation department. This increase is for reinstating the Summer Rec program that was cut out of the budget last year due to Covid 19.

- **S. McKenna, Superintendent of Griswold Schools** stated the Board of Education budget was a \$708,652 increase or 2.49%. He stated that most of the increases were from fixed costs, including a 10% increase in insurance. He stated that an important component to the budget is the tuition earning power which continues to exceed expectations. He noted the BOE has removed \$165,946 of capital items from the budget.
- **M. Malin, Chairperson, Griswold Board of Education** noted that the BOE returned approx. \$125,000 from last year's budget, cut \$166,000 from next year's Capital budget, and has brought in \$149,000 over budget in tuition revenue. She stated it is important to move this budget forward so they can meet their contractual obligations and to maintain educational excellence.
- **S. Davis, Chairman, Griswold Board of Finance** asked if there was anyone else who wanted to come forward to speak.
- **J. Norman, resident Norman Rd.** noted that the Board of Education is budgeting 2.2 million dollars in tuition revenue for the 21/22 fiscal year, and that money should be returned to the school to finance their programs and reduce the burden on the taxpayer, instead of going into the unassigned fund. She cautioned the Board of Finance not to use the grant money to support regular items in the budget. She stated she supported the Board of Education budget as proposed.
- **J. Gauthier, resident Talcott Ave,** had two questions on the town budget. The first concerned how the projected Motor Vehicle Supplemental revenue number was determined. **E. Christensen** replied that the number was based on historical trends. The second concerned how the Pilot-State Property revenue number was determined. **E. Christensen** replied that, while revenues from the state are subject to change, this was the latest number from the state legislature.
- **S. Marchand, resident Bitgood Rd** stated she felt that the tuition revenue should be put back into the school, and that she supported the proposed Board of Education 21/22 budget.
- **J. Barnie, resident Hopeville Rd** recommended that the grant money be used on non-recurring expenses only.
- **E. Berdick, resident Voluntown Rd.** stated that since the town is receiving the grant, he would be in favor of no increase in the mil rate this year.
- **M. Wooten, resident Zvingilas Court** had a question on the mil rate of 29.6 from the presentation. **S. Davis** replied that it was a typo and should be 28.6.
- **L. Sharkey, resident Lenox Ave.** requested an explanation on the Distressed Municipalities grant. **E. Christensen** explained that it is a one-time grant that the Governor and the Legislature have put into their budget. The only guidance provided so far is half is coming from State bond funds so that can be used for capital, the other half is coming from the Cares Act and that can be used for Covid related expenses only.

2. **Adjournment:** S. Davis closed the public hearing at 7:23 PM

Respectfully Submitted,



Kenneth Bomba

Recording Secretary