

**TOWN OF GRISWOLD
SPECIAL TOWN BUDGET MEETING
JULY 15, 2014**

The Special Town Budget Meeting held at the Griswold Middle School Cafeteria, 267 Slater Avenue, Griswold, CT was called to order by First Selectman Kevin Skulczyck at 6:30pm. Present were Selectmen Steven Mikutel, Philip Anthony, Superintendent of Schools, Paul Smith, Board of Finance Chairman, Steven Merchant, Registrar of Voters, George Kennedy, Cathlene Briody and approx. 70 interested townspeople.

NOMINATION FOR MODERATOR:

Leona Sharkey was nominated Moderator by Steve Merchant, 2nd by Frank Everett. Nominations were closed.

**VOTE UNANIMOUS
LEONA SHARKEY WAS DULY CHOSEN AS MODERATOR**

WARNING was read by Valerie Pudvah, Town Clerk.

1. To consider and take action on the Board of Education Budget for FY 2015 in the amount of \$25,291,300 as recommended by the Board of Finance at their Special Meeting held July 8, 2014. Notice and warning is further given that the question of whether to approve the amount of the proposed appropriation, as set by the Special Town Budget Meeting be adjourned to a date set by the Special Town Budget Meeting, such date to be not less than seven (7) days nor more than fourteen (14) days after the Special Town Budget Meeting, for a **YES** or **NO** vote on the Optical Scan Voting Machines. The following polling places will be used:

DISTRICT #1 Griswold Town Hall, 28 Main Street, Griswold, CT

DISTRICT #2 Griswold Town Hall, 879 Voluntown Road, Griswold, CT

2. At the recommendation of the Board of Finance, there will be an advisory question on the ballot:
Is the Board of Education budget too high?
Is the Board of Education budget too low?

3. Resolved: That the Date and Hours of the Vote on the appropriation proposed by the Special Town Budget Meeting, shall be Tuesday July 22, 2014, between the hours of 6:00a.m. and 8:00p.m.

MODERATOR Sharkey read Item #1.

Moderator Sharkey asked for a motion to open Item #1 for discussion, Norman Sylvestre made motion, 2nd by Gail Rooke-Norman. All in favor, aye. Motion carries.

Resident Ed Berdick asked what question #1 was. Moderator reread item #1. Ed Berdick came forward to speak on how he feels that the town should aim for a 0 mil increase, he thinks there are a lot of people that cannot afford an increase in their taxes and that the school has adequate funding.

Stuart R. Norman Jr., Board of Education, Vice-Chairman came forward to thank the Board of Finance for adding back \$131,000 to the budget. He noted that all of the stipends for the after-school enrichment programs will be added back into the budget if this referendum passes. He would like to see a Spanish teacher put into the middle school so it would allow for AP courses when they get to high school and also an elementary reading teacher. These positions have not been decided if they will be full or part time, Mr. Norman noted that the budget needs to get passed first before they can decide on that.

Elijah Perry, student at the high school noted that he learned that it would be about 12cents per day for the average taxpayer to pass this budget with an 0.3mill rate increase.

Many residents stood up for the budget to pass they came to live in this community because of the school system, but there were some that stated that they cannot afford an increase in their taxes. Many seniors are living on a fixed income and just cannot afford the increase in taxes.

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Alex Grezlak asked what the premise was for the Board of Finance to put money back into the budget. Steve Merchant answered by saying that the board members voted to do that, he cannot answer for them, being the Chairman he only votes in the event of a tie.

Mr. Lyle Gabor asked how the questions would work on the ballot if the advisory questions were answered or if they weren't answered. Moderator Sharkey explained how it would work.

Moderator Sharkey asked for any further discussion, hearing none, Norman Sylvestre made motion to close the discussion, 2nd by Steve Merchant. All in favor, aye. Motion carries.

**VOTE UNANIMOUS
1 OPPOSITION
MOTION PASSED**

Moderator Sharkey asked for a motion to accept Item #1. Norman Sylvestre made motion to approve, 2nd by Gail Rooke-Norman, motion carries. Moderator Sharkey asked for a raise of hands to approve Item#1.

**VOTE UNANIMOUS
4 OPPOSITION
MOTION PASSED**

MODERATOR read item #2: At the recommendation of the Board of Finance, there will be an advisory question on the ballot: **Is the Board of Education budget too high? Is the Board of Education budget too low?**

Steve Merchant made motion to accept Item #1, 2nd by Norman Sylvestre. Moderator opened it up for discussion. A question was asked if you have to vote on the advisory questions. Town Clerk, noted that you should answer only 1 advisory question but you have the option to answer both or none. Mr. Gabor stated that this will be very confusing to a lot of people. Gail Rooke-Norman, Board of Finance, explained her reasoning why you can vote on both of the advisory questions. Mrs. Rooke-Norman noted that the Board of Finance is looking from the people of why they voted the way they did. The board is trying to figure out what the taxpayers are thinking so they can do a better job next time. Also, a question was asked if the advisory questions are not voted on, is it rejected and does the first question get counted. Registrar of Voter, George Kennedy answered that it would.

Moderator entertained a motion to close the discussion, hearing no further discussion. Gail Rooke-Norman made motion to close the discussion, 2nd by Laurie Sorder. All in favor, aye. Motion carries.

Moderator asked for a motion to have the 2 advisory questions on the ballot, by Norman Sylvestre, 2nd by Steve Merchant. Motion carries.

**VOTE UNANIMOUS
2 OPPOSED
MOTION PASSED**

MODERATOR read Item#3: Resolved : That the Date and Hours of the Vote on the appropriation proposed by the Special Town Budget Meeting, shall be Tuesday July 22, 2014 between the hours of 6:00am and 8:00pm. Steve Merchant made motion to accept, 2nd by Lyle Gabor, all in favor.

**VOTE UNANIMOUS
MOTION PASSED**

Steve Merchant made motion to adjourn, 2nd by Norman Sylvestre, meeting duly adjourned at 7:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

