



# Town of Griswold

Board of Finance  
Regular Meeting  
February 18, 2014  
7:00 PM

Town Hall Meeting Room  
UNAPPROVED MINUTES



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

**Board of Finance Members Present:**

Steve Merchant, Sr. – Chairman  
Gail Rooke-Norman – Vice Chairman (*arrived at 7:04 PM*)  
Brian Baker  
Scott Davis  
Peter Dorff  
Gary Levy  
Daniel Webster

**Also Present:**

Erik Christensen, Director of Finance  
Kevin Skulczyck, First Selectman  
Philip Anthony, Third Selectmen  
Bill Czmyr, President, Griswold Ambulance  
Bob Holdsworth, Consultant, Griswold Ambulance  
4 other persons

2. **Approval of Minutes**

a) The Finance Director noted that the minutes from January 23, 2014 has the wrong date at the top of January 24, 2014 and will need to be changed. **MOTION:** P. Dorff made a motion that was seconded by G. Levy to approve the minutes from the November 19, 2014 regular meeting, December 19, 2013 joint special meeting, December 19, 2013 special meeting as presented and January 23, 2014 special meeting as corrected. All in favor with the exception of G. Rooke-Norman who was not present, with S. Davis abstaining from the November 19, 2013 meeting and D. Webster and B. Baker abstaining from the January 23, 2014 meeting; **motion carried**

3. **New Business**

a) **Finance Director's Monthly Report.** *A copy of said report is available in the Finance Office.* S. Merchant, Sr., chose to move this item to after item c on the agenda. The Finance Director spoke in regards of fiscal year 2013-2014 revenues and expenditures. He stated revenues collected for the current year thus far are \$24,628,478.76 or 77.49% of budgeted revenues. There are some line items that are going to be under budget but overall he expects that revenues are going to come in over budget. Expenditures to date for 2013-2014 are \$17,611,512.86 or 55.41% of budgeted expenditures. The Finance Director stated there were some new line items over expended and he discussed those. He stated the highway line items that are overspent are due to the number of storms. D. Webster asked if we were in good shape with salt. The Finance Director stated the last he knew we were ok but that was about a week ago. P. Dorff asked why the Unassigned Fund Balance was projected to be lower than last month's projection. The Finance Director responded that a lot of that was attributed to the amount

of expenses since last month. He stated it is just an estimate and is always a moving target. G. Rooke-Norman stated that according to the projection the Unassigned Fund Balance will be \$2,850,127. The Finance Director stated that is correct and we will be \$148,473 higher than the minimum required.

**b) Discussion and possible action on request from Board of Selectmen for an additional appropriation of \$70,000 to Griswold Ambulance.**

S. Merchant Sr. asked K. Skulczyck to discuss the request from the Board of Selectmen. K. Skulczyck stated they are working on a long term resolution but in the meantime the Board of Selectmen would like to request an additional appropriation of \$70,000 to help Griswold Ambulance make it through the remainder of the fiscal year. P. Dorff asked if it would have to go to referendum and K. Skulczyck replied that it would. D. Webster asked why they need \$70,000 for the last four months when the request for the whole year was \$90,000. Bob Holdsworth discussed the financial state of Griswold Ambulance. B. Holdsworth said the ambulance has been depleting their reserve funds to cover operating expenses. Discussion followed regarding the paramedic intercept. B. Holdsworth discussed the process and stated much of the financial problems are due to the fact that the Town has a large amount of Medicare and Medicaid patients. K. Skulczyck asked if Griswold Ambulance could go to per diem shifts for overnight shifts because he was told by Brian Ayers that the PSA would not allow it. B. Holdsworth stated that they could go to per diem shifts if that is what is needed but response times would be increased and it would be more difficult to find people to volunteer. S. Davis asked if Griswold Ambulance is currently running a \$14,000 a month deficit for their financial obligations. B. Holdsworth responded that at this point they were. S. Davis said if that was the case they would need \$168,000 for the year plus \$20,000 for workers comp and \$36,000 for bundle billing. B. Holdsworth stated Griswold Ambulance does not get the \$36,000 that goes to American Ambulance. He also stated in the past the requests included the workers compensation insurance.

B. Holdsworth went into detail regarding the billing arrangements and how much Griswold Ambulance received for services. G. Rooke-Norman stated that she would like to request the Finance Director to locate the tapes from the Board of Finance meetings from two or three years ago that specifically had statements that Griswold Ambulance did not bill for the portion that was not covered by the other pay sources. B. Holdsworth stated that G. Rooke-Norman may be referring to the difference between the allowable charge for Medicare (\$379.00) and the amount Griswold Ambulance charges (\$563.00) and it is not and cannot be billed. G. Rooke-Norman asked if Griswold Ambulance is owned by a parent corporation. B. Czmyr responded that it is its own corporation. G. Rooke-Norman asked if Griswold Ambulance ceased operations where would the assets go. B. Czmyr responded they would go to the American Legion Post 15. G. Rooke-Norman asked who owns the American Legion Post and if there were shareholders in Griswold Ambulance or the Post Corporation. B. Czmyr stated there were not. G. Rooke-Norman asked who owns the Post Corporation. B. Czmyr responded the membership does and the National Headquarters does. G. Rooke-Norman asked what would happen with the assets that were built up from 2001 to 2009 or 2010 and if the money would leave Griswold. B. Czmyr said that money has been spent over the last three or four years to keep the service running. There were questions regarding the land that was purchased and if it was for sale. B. Czmyr stated it was not for sale. G. Rooke-Norman stated as long as the money invested in the assets came back to the Town of Griswold if operations ceased she would not have a problem. B. Czmyr stated the Town received a service for the funds invested. Discussion followed regarding the possible sale of Griswold Ambulance and land. K. Skulczyck discussed the possibility of an RFP

being prepared to establish a standard and see what the price would be to achieve that standard. Discussion followed regarding the RFP, funding and audit. **MOTION:** P. Dorff made a **motion** to send the request for \$70,000 for the Griswold Ambulance service to Town Meeting pending the production of the annual report from the ambulance service before the date of the Town Meeting. There was no second. The **motion** died on the floor. Discussion followed regarding the audit report.

**c) Discussion and possible action on request from Board of Selectmen for an additional appropriation of \$48,000 to the Bicentennial Committee.**

G. Rooke-Norman recused herself due to being a member of the Bicentennial Committee and left the room. P. Anthony spoke on behalf of the Bicentennial Committee. He stated he expected Larry Laidley the Chairman to be there to speak on behalf of the Committee but he was held up at work. P. Anthony stated \$48,000 is representative of what is needed for the events such as fireworks, re-enactments, parade, etc. He stated the Committee already had \$10,000 allocated to them through the budget and was working on additional fundraising. P. Anthony stated the fundraising funds would be spent first before any Town money is expended and any money not expended will go back to the Town. D. Webster asked if a referendum is required because the total request is \$58,000. The Finance Director stated it does not have to go to referendum because the additional appropriation is under \$50,000. P. Dorff asked if they could still go to referendum even though it is under \$50,000. Discussion followed regarding the possibility of referendum and/or Town Meeting. S. Davis asked about the timeline. P. Anthony responded that late spring/summer of next year. S. Davis asked why the Committee felt it is necessary to request the money now and not in the next budget. P. Anthony stated many of the activities are required to be booked well in advance and the Committee needed to work on reserving services now. P. Dorff asked if a new fund would have to be set up. The Finance Director stated there was already a fund set up for it as a result of the prior funding. **MOTION:** P. Dorff made a **motion** that was seconded by D. Webster to send the request of \$48,000 from the Bicentennial Committee to a Town Meeting. There was no discussion. All in favor with the exception of G. Rooke-Norman who had recused herself; **motion carried.**

**d) Discussion and possible action on adopting fiscal year 2014/2015 budget schedule.**

S. Merchant Sr. asked if anyone had a problem with the schedule. The Finance Director stated that he used essentially the same schedule as last year. He used the same days just changed the date by a day. P. Dorff stated he could not make either of the Wednesday meetings. **MOTION:** G. Rooke-Norman made a **motion** that was seconded by S. Davis to adopt the fiscal year 2014/2015 budget schedule as presented. There was no discussion. B. Baker, S. Davis, G. Levy, G. Rooke-Norman and D. Webster voted in favor, P. Dorff opposed; **motion carried.**

**e) Discussion and possible action on the fiscal year 2014/2015 budget.**

The Finance Director spoke in regards to projected revenues for fiscal year 2014/2015. He stated that after talking to the Tax Collector he increased motor vehicle supplemental and interest and lien fees. The Finance Director stated that in total it looks like State Grants are going to decrease slightly. Interest income is being decreased by \$10,000 recording fees for the Town Clerk was increased by \$5,000, copier fees were reduced by \$2,000. After talking to the Building Official, building fees were increased by \$10,000.

**4. Old Business**

**a) Discussion and possible action on appropriation for Senior Center plumbing repairs.**

The Finance Director updated the Board on the repairs. The \$4,300 bill was received for

the initial moving of the pipes. The problem with the heating lines ended up being an additional \$2,211.70. The total project wound up costing \$6,511.70. S. Merchant asked if the Board needed to act. The Finance Director responded that was dependent on how the Board wanted to handle it. He stated it could be an additional appropriation out of the exchange account or out of surplus. P. Dorff stated if something else comes up by the end of the year we would not be able to do another appropriation. The Finance Director responded that this was correct. The Finance Director stated the department may have enough to cover the overage in the account at the end of the year as a result of the Senior Center Driver position being open for a period of time. No action was taken.

## 5. Any Other Business

a) S. Merchant Sr. spoke regarding G. Levy's Ethics Commission report. He stated G. Levy has no problem with what he can or can't vote for but he has a problem leaving the room. S. Merchant asked K. Skulczyck if he can get a legal opinion regarding having to leave the room. K. Skulczyck said according to the most recent training from the State that was done we were told that you should leave the room. P. Anthony expounded upon the training and process. G. Levy asked why if it is a public meeting he cannot sit in the audience as a taxpayer. K. Skulczyck believes if you recuse yourself you should leave the room but will get a more definitive answer. Discussion followed regarding the current ethics policy and training.

b) S. Merchant Sr. stated he received an invitation for the Board of Finance from Ryan Aubin to attend a Recreation Committee meeting to share the Board's wants or concerns. P. Dorff asked if they discuss their budget. The Finance Director stated that he can find out if and when they do.

c) S. Merchant Sr. received a letter from K. Skulczyck. The letter from the Board of Selectmen is requesting each Board and Commission to take a vote at their meeting to consider adding the opportunity for public forum to the agenda of each regular meeting. S. Merchant Sr. stated that this was already done and asked the Board how they wanted to proceed. **MOTION:** P. Dorff made a **motion** that was seconded by G. Rooke-Norman to add the public forum discussion and action to the agenda for tonight. There was no discussion. All in favor; **motion carried.** **MOTION:** P. Dorff made a **motion** that was seconded by D. Webster to add as a standing agenda item for Board of Finance regular meetings a public discussion section. After discussion regarding structure, P. Dorff and D. Webster voted in favor and B. Baker, S. Davis, G. Levy and G. Rooke-Norman voted against; **motion failed.** After further discussion B. Baker made a **motion** that was seconded by S. Davis to allow public forum at the end of our meeting not to exceed twenty minutes with any one speaker not being allowed to speak more than two minutes for taxpayer or residents of the Town of Griswold pertaining to the Board of Finance. There was no discussion. All in favor; **motion carried.**

6. **Adjournment:** **MOTION:** B. Baker made a **motion** that was seconded by D. Webster to adjourn. There was no discussion. All in favor; **motion carried.** S. Merchant Sr. adjourned the meeting at 9:12 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Acting Recording Secretary  
Erik Christensen

## Town of Griswold

### Board of Finance

28 Main Street, Jewett City, CT 06351

### 2014/15 Budget Meeting Schedule

	Date	Time	
Tuesday	2/18/2014	7:00 PM	Regular Meeting - Revenue Projections
Wednesday	2/26/2014	7:00 PM	Work Session on Budget Senior Center Public Works, Waste Disposal, Town Hall Maintenance, Pachaug Town Hall Maintenance, Highway Garage Maintenance, Senior Center, Election & Registrations, Selectmen, Animal Control
Tuesday	3/4/2014	7:00 PM	Work Session on Budget Town Hall Meeting Room Emergency Services, Town Clerk, Parks & Recreation, Youth & Family Services, Finance, Treasurer, Legal, Uncas Health District, Public Health Nursing
Tuesday	3/18/2014	7:00 PM	Regular Meeting Board of Education
Wednesday	3/26/2014	7:00 PM	Work Session on Budget Town Hall Meeting Room Tax Collector, Assessor, Building Official, Planning & Community Development, Contributions, Capital Projects, Contingency, Fringe Benefits, Debt Retirement
Tuesday	4/1/2014	7:00 PM	Public Hearing on Budget - Middle School Cafeteria
Tuesday	4/15/2014	7:00 PM	Regular Meeting / Work Session for Budget
<b><u>Board of Finance may adopt the budget at the conclusion of the public hearing.</u></b>			
Thursday	4/17/2014	7:00 PM	Finalization of Budget - Special Meeting Workshop
Monday	5/5/2014	7:00 PM	Annual Town Meeting - Middle School Cafeteria