



Town of Griswold

Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
March 17, 2015
7:00 PM

Town Hall Meeting Room
APPROVED 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
Brian Baker
Scott Davis
Peter Dorff
Gary Levy
Daniel Webster

Also Present:

Erik Christensen, Director of Finance
P. Smith, Superintendent of Schools
E. Dorff, Chairman, Board of Education
R. Grabowski, Tax Collector
J. Bell, Recording Secretary
16 Other People

2. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: P. Dorff made a **motion** that was seconded by B. Baker to approve the minutes from the February 17, 2014 regular meeting, the February 25, 2015 special meeting, and the March 10, 2015 special meeting. The **motion carried** with all in favor. D. Webster abstained from voting on the February 17, 2015 meeting.

3. New Business

a) Finance Director Monthly Report.

(This item was moved to after 4a) The Finance Director stated everything to date looks to be on track. To date revenues collected are \$25,424,655.24 which is 79.35 % of budgeted revenues. Expenditures thus far are \$19,719,377.22 which is 61.51%. The Finance Director is currently estimating that expenditures will come in approximately \$115,000 under budget this year while the Revenues will be approximately \$52,000 more than budgeted. The Finance Director then outlined some of the line items that have been over expended since the last meeting. He stated the Board of Selectman advertising line item is over expended by \$258 due to ads for Assessor position and the numerous Town meetings. Highway Dept. overtime has been over expended by \$30,592 due to snow removal and the snow removal line item which is for sand and salt has been over expended by \$23,567 due to the extreme winter. E. Christensen stated we will likely be getting approximately \$50,000 from FEMA which would cancel out the highway over extended line items. He also stated T. Babbitt has \$100,000 in Town Aid Road fund put aside to cover excess snow expenses. E. Christensen stated he estimates the unassigned fund balance will be around 12% at the end of the year. G. Rooke-

Norman asked if all additional items were added to the Grand List. E. Christensen stated yes the Grand List has been finalized. E. Christensen stated as the budget is the mill rate increase is at .85 with .32 being Board of Education and .53 for the Town.

b) Discussion and possible action on suspense list presented by the Tax Collector.

R. Grabowski presented the suspense list for overdue motor vehicle and personal property taxes that are no longer considered longer an asset for accounting purposes. They are however due and collectible and have been turned over to a collection agency for collection. The total of the suspense list is \$43,406. Of which the largest amount due is from International Wire Group Inc. which owes \$11,445 the problem being there is no one to serve the bill to. **MOTION:** G. Rooke-Norman made a **motion** that was seconded by P. Dorff to approve the suspense list as presented. All in favor; **motion carried.**

c) Board of Education FY 2015-2016 Budget Presentation.

P. Smith outlined the proposed budget by stating there is a lot of pressure on the schools from the State due to reforms and unfunded mandates. He is asking for enough money to keep things stabilized and not to fall any further behind. He is not looking to get ahead only stay on an even path. Therefore he is proposing a 1.35% or .32 mill increase in the Board of Education budget. He also stated there were a tremendous amount of cuts in order to achieve the goal of a 1.35% increase. Several businesses stepped forward at the last budget cut to fund some stipends which were cut. He also noted based on the Education Cost Share Grant or ECS, Griswold is underfunded from the state. He noted Griswold is one of the lowest funded in the Eastern part of the state and only receiving 82% of the amount allocated which amounts to a shortfall of \$2,023,402. G. Rooke-Norman asked what can be done to ensure our fair share of the grant, possibly suing the State of Connecticut. P. Smith indicated we should perhaps talk to the State Legislators. Stuart Norman, Vice-Chairman of the Board of Education was not initially happy with the budget but is supportive of the budget and understands for this year to keep the increase at a minimal amount. P. Dorff suggested slowing down on implementing mandates in order to reduce the budget. P. Smith stated they were mandated by the State and they have to teach toward the common core standards. D. Webster had questions regarding salary increases. P. Smith responded that it was just a shifting between line items and not an additional position. G. Rooke-Norman wanted to know if the Senior Capstone Project could be handled by the Guidance Department. P. Smith assured her it would be too much for the Guidance Department to handle completely. P. Smith finished by saying this budget needs to pass on the first referendum otherwise "we will be digging deep."

4. Old Business

a) Discussion and possible action on Griswold Public Schools security upgrades.

P. Smith outlined the laminate glass costs for areas 1-3 and also 1-5. The most critical being area 1-3 which have the highest exposure risk. The total cost would be \$45,934 of which the cost to the town being \$12,861 if we are approved for a grant. The state is currently in round 2 of the grant funding. P. Smith stated he believes they will have a third round that Griswold would be a strong candidate for round 3. E. Christensen stated there is approximately \$50,000 available in LOCIP designated money to fund the 1-3 areas. **MOTION:** was made by G. Rooke-Norman seconded by B. Baker to use \$45,934 from the LOCIP funds to install the security upgrades to areas 1-3 and send to the Board of Selectmen to set a Town Meeting. S. Davis asked if the **motion** could be amended to state that any money reimbursed by the state would go back into the LOCIP funds. G.

Rooke-Norman **amended** her **motion** and was seconded by B. Baker to include any money received for reimbursement from the State go back into the LOCIP funds. All in favor; **motion carried.**

5. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

6. Public Forum

N. Higgins – stated he was extremely impressed with the love of learning due to full time kindergarten. He asked the BOF not to take any money away from the Board of Education.

M. Wooten – was in favor of moving the budget forward and states the full time kindergarten program was helpful with her child’s development. She stated one daughter went to part time and one to full time and the difference is very noticeable.

7. Adjournment

MOTION: D. Webster made a **motion** that was seconded by B. Baker to **adjourn**. There was no discussion. All in favor; **motion carried.** S. Merchant Sr. adjourned the meeting at 8:02PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Recording Secretary
Jeannette Bell**