



Town of Griswold

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



Griswold Middle School Cafeteria APPROVED MINUTES

1. Roll Call/Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM

Board of Finance Members Present:

Steve Merchant, Sr. – Chairman
Gail Rooke-Norman – Vice Chairman (*arrived at 7:02 PM*)
Brian Baker
Scott Davis
Peter Dorff
Gary Levy
Daniel Webster

Also Present:

Erik Christensen, Director of Finance
Kevin Skulczyck, First Selectman
Paul Smith, Superintendent, Griswold Public Schools
Elizabeth Dorff, Chair, Board of Education
Holly McCalla, Business Director of Business and Finance, Griswold Public Schools
25 other persons

2. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: D. Webster made a **motion** that was seconded by S. Davis to approve the minutes from the February 18, 2014 regular meeting, February 26, 2014 special meeting, and March 4, 2014 special meeting as presented. All in favor with the exception of B. Baker and P. Dorff abstaining from the approval of the February 26, 2014 minutes; **motion carried.**

3. New Business

- a) **Board of Education FY 2014-2015 Budget Presentation.** E. Dorff stated the budget from the Board of Education is passed onto the Board of Finance unanimously and feels it is the best balance between the ability of the Town and the needs of the schools. P. Smith spoke on behalf of the Board of Education budget. He stated the budget includes an increase of 2.29% or \$576,450. P. Smith stated he asked the Principals to develop their own school budgets at 0% for items they can control. P. Smith discussed the major driving force in this year's budget. There are three unfunded mandates; common core standards, smarter balanced testing and teacher evaluations. There is no additional funding in the budget for the unfunded mandates but money was allocated from other areas of the budget. P. Smith highlighted new items that are in this year's budget. He stated there is a green tier, which are items that were included in the budget and a yellow tier, which are requests that were made but did not make it into the budget. P. Smith highlighted the green tier items. There is a request for an additional third grade teacher due to enrollment, a math interventionist/coach for mainly grade 3-8, a Spanish teacher for the middle school, which will not be an additional cost because

eighth grade will have one less teacher, a 0.2 FTE string teacher and an increase in athletic trainer services and coverage at Griswold High School. P. Smith also pointed out items that were added at no additional cost by using re-allocated funds within the budget. P. Smith then discussed district enrollment figures and the anticipated increases in fixed costs. He stated that the increases in fixed costs are actually higher than the increased budget request. He stated the increase in salary for administrators, teachers and certified staff is based on anticipated retirements. P. Dorff asked about enrollment and the addition of a third grade teacher. P. Smith responded that the class that is in second grade now has seven sections and they will require seven sections as they move up to third grade. P. Dorff asked about the increase of \$67,000 in operations contracts and what they are. P. Smith responded it was mainly copier machines. H. McCalla stated that the increase is due to an error in budgeting in the current year. The increase reflects the actual cost of the contract. G. Rooke-Norman asked if the athletic trainer position is outsourced. P. Smith responded that we contract with an outside athletic trainer. G. Rooke-Norman asked if the district has considered outsourcing the guidance department. P. Smith responded that the position has to be certified by the State. He can't just bring in anyone from the private industry with a good background; they have to be certified by the State. D. Webster asked how the additional Spanish teacher is going to be funded. P. Smith stated the current eighth grade class has about twenty more students than the seventh grade class so next year there will be one less eighth grade teacher required. S. Davis asked P. Smith about the anticipation of retirements and in the event that the anticipated retirements don't equal the number that you think they will equal, what is the actual number we could be looking at in the event you don't have the anticipated retirements. P. Smith stated he has a good idea and knows who the retirees are going to be. S. Davis asked if they have been notified. P. Smith responded that they have not been notified in writing but he is pretty confident that the number he is anticipating is the number. G. Rooke-Norman asked if as a result of shifting money from items to fund common core standards there will be a critical need down the road. P. Smith responded it is mainly just a reduction of supplies across different classes. P. Dorff asked if the enrichment programs will be funded by the PTO again this year. P. Smith responded that he cannot guarantee it and probably not to the level they were funded this year. D. Webster asked P. Smith to discuss the teacher evaluation process and what additional expenses are there after it is implemented. P. Smith discussed the process and stated the software and training has been purchased and going forward it is going to be a man hour expense. P. Smith mentioned he met with a group of parents regarding the use of school facilities by non-profit groups. He is finding that they are going to other Towns. He would like to waive fees for non-profit groups that have at least 51% Griswold students. This would result in a decrease of use of facility fees of \$2,000-\$3,000. D. Webster asked about the Elementary School budget decreasing but enrollment is increasing. H. McCalla responded it was mostly salaries and staffing changes due to retirement and other changes. G. Rooke-Norman asked if use of facility fees would be waived for only youth groups or adult non-profits as well. P. Smith stated he would like to waive it for all non-profits. He also stated he sees it as a marketing tool to attract out of Town students to the schools.

- b) **Finance Director's Monthly Report.** *A copy of said report is available in the Finance Office.* 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 \$25,445,113.52 or 80.06% of budgeted revenues. He stated that tuition has been received by all sending Town's and we are \$134,601.96 over what we had budgeted. There are items that will be under budget but overall he expects revenues to come in

over budget. Expenditures for 2013-2014 so far are \$19,984,135.62 or 62.70% of budgeted expenditures. The Finance Director stated for expenditures there were line items over expended and he discussed those. He stated that Town Aid Road money would be used to cover over expenditures in the Highway budget that was caused by the tough winter we have had. The Finance Director stated he projects the unassigned Fund Balance to be around \$2,885,806 at the end of the year which is 9.08% of the budget and \$184,152 more than the minimum desired. P. Dorff asked if that included the items that recently went to Town Meeting. The Finance Director stated it did. G. Rooke-Norman asked if there has been an increase in rates for invested funds. The Finance Director stated the increase has been very slight.

4. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

5. Public Forum

Jim Barnie

Mr. Barnie asked P. Smith if he thinks with the increase in stress and strain due to the common core standards if administrators and teachers will leave for other jobs. P. Smith responded that if people are in the twilight of their career they will decide it is time to go and it would be ashamed if we lost talented young teachers.

Norm Higgins

Mr. Higgins mentioned that his wife is a teacher and he sees the stress from the new mandates. He stated the stress has caused her to retire as the track coach. Mr. Higgins also stated he thinks the school should start a language club after school to see what languages could be added in the future.

Laurie Sorder

Ms. Sorder stated that when the Board of Education held their public hearing for the budget many parents expressed concern and hope that the Board of Finance would consider putting the budget as is out to the taxpayers.

6. 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 8:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Acting Recording Secretary
Erik Christensen