



# Town of Griswold

Board of Finance  
Public Hearing  
April 7, 2015  
7:00pm



## Griswold Middle School Cafeteria APPROVED MINUTES

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

**Board of Finance Members Present:**

Steve Merchant, Sr. – Chairman  
Brian Baker  
Scott Davis  
Peter Dorff  
Gary Levy  
Dan Webster

**Member Absent:**

Gail Rooke-Norman

**Also Present:**

Erik Christensen, Director of Finance  
Kevin Skulczyck, First Selectman  
Steve Mikutel, Second Selectman  
Elizabeth Dorff, Chair, Board of Education  
Paul Smith, Superintendent of Griswold Schools  
72 other people

2. **Public Input on the proposed 2015/2016 Fiscal Year Budget**

- **S. Merchant Sr.** opened the meeting inviting any resident to speak regarding the budget.
- **P. Smith, Superintendent of Griswold Schools** stated the budget as proposed at 1.35% or 0.32 mills is the absolute minimal needed in order to keep the school functioning . Any reduction would further eliminate much needed academics and activities which would further send the school into a downward spiral. He asked that the BOF make no additional cuts to the budget.
- **R. Churchill** (resident, Bitgood Road) stated the after school programs would be the first to be eliminated should the budget be cut. He noted several businesses stepped forward last year to fund these programs however it was for that year only. He also noted enrollment is down therefore causing a loss in tuition revenue of approximately \$400,000 from out of district students. He stated we are losing the battle in competing with NFA and Woodstock.
- **M. Wooten** (resident, Zvinglais Court) asked for the BOF to send the school budget forward as presented.
- **T. Madonna** (resident, Osga Lane) stated she is disappointed with the Board of

Education for funding the afterschool activities instead of academics. She also stated the Second and Third Selectmen should not be a paid position and should not get a travel allowance. She stated the \$25,000 saved from that elimination should be reshuffled to fund another item in the town budget.

- **P. Flowers** (resident, Rixtown Road) stated the Second and Third Selectmen are the highest paid in the state and feels it should be a volunteer position, this would include a possible Fourth and Fifth selectman as well. The only paid position should be the First Selectman. He asked the BOF to render a decision tonight as to the salaries of the Selectmen before the April 21, 2015 vote. He thanked the BOF for volunteering their services.
- **E. Dorff, Chair, Board of Education** is disappointed the school cannot ask for more funding. She was glad the after school activities were put back into the budget which helps hundreds of children. She stands by reinstating all after school programs.
- **L. Sorder** (resident, Ashland Street) wanted to know the total proposed budget for the town and the BOE combined. E. Christensen stated the total is .85 mills. She also asked why the BOE garage was still funded at \$10,583 she had thought it was supposed to be zero. E. Christensen stated it was reduced to the \$10,583.
- **P. Madonna** (resident, Osga Lane) believes the education budget is too low. He stated the budget needs to be sold to the community and we need to spend more money for public safety. He feels our town is getting a bad reputation for drugs and crime.
- **N. Higgins** (resident, Pleasant View) stated he disagrees with P. Smith regarding the school budget. His concern is that Griswold is missing out on attracting out of town students due to the budget cuts. He stated we need to stop sacrificing the needs of our students and if needed take money out of the contingency fund in order to fund the education budget.
- **L. Willard** (resident, Juniper Lane) supports the school budget however wishes it was higher. She was glad the after school activities were reinstated because we need to have well rounded students. She believes the Second and Third selectmen should be volunteer and wanted to note the great job K. Skulczyck is doing.
- **J. Smith** (resident, Crary Road) spoke in support of the school budget but still believes the budget is too low. Also thinks K. Skulczyck is doing a great job.
- **K. Skulczyck, First Selectman** spoke in support of the Board of Education budget. He also stated he would like to see a five member Board of Selectmen with a cap amount for the positions. He asked the BOF to render a decision tonight on that amount. He also stated the Assistant Assessor position should remain at a full time position so the town does not get into the same problem as the previous year. It was determined the amount of money from unassigned properties was \$169,000.
- **T. Cholewa** (resident, Chestnut Hill Road) supports the BOE budget and wants it put forward at 1.35%.
- **L. Anthony** (resident, Walter Drive) stated she is a teacher at the high school and does not want the school budget cut. She stated the classrooms are too large and does not want any stipends cut as well.
- **W. Malin** (resident, Pequot Trail) stated it is a shame the school budget is underfunded. He feels the town needs to bring businesses into the area in order to lessen the burden on the taxpayer. This will minimize the tax increase for the taxpayer making it easier to fund the budgets.
- **M. Wooten** (resident, Zvingilas Court) wanted it to be known the amount of time

and money the parents are contributing to the school. She stated she is constantly looking for additional money for the school through work and grants.

- **Y. Palasky** (resident, Popple Bridge Road) feels it is terrible to watch the unfunded mandates and the after school programs get cut. She stated the town as a whole needs to pull together to fund the BOE budget.
- **S. Merchant Sr. Chairman BOF** stated the next Board of Finance meeting is scheduled for April 21, 2015.

2. **Adjournment:** S. Merchant Sr., closed the public hearing at 7:46 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeannette Bell  
Recording Secretary.