



**THE TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE
BOARD OF FINANCE
MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2019
6:00 PM**

A Board of Finance Meeting for the Town of Woodbridge was held in the Central Meeting Room at the Town Hall, Woodbridge, Connecticut on Thursday, February 21, 2019 at 6:00 pm

PRESENT: Chairman, Matthew Giglietti; Vice Chairman, Sandy Stein; Tom Handler; Tom Kenefick; Paul Kuriakose (6:10 pm); Andrew Pels

ALSO PRESENT: First Selectman, Beth Heller: Administrative Officer / Director of Finance, Anthony Genovese; Budget Analyst / Payroll & Benefits Administrator, Karen Crosby

Chairman Matt Giglietti called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Bill Silberberg of 31 Jenick Lane, Woodbridge addressed the Board of Finance and distributed a Grand List Data Sheet.

Bill stated that over the past ten years the estimated market value of taxable real estate in Woodbridge has decreased \$112,000,000 or approximately 6.4%. During the same period of time the amount of taxes raised on the taxable property has increased \$6,700,000 or about 18%. There is a decreasing tax base of \$12,000,000 and an increasing tax on that. These facts are worrisome. Using as the numerator the property taxes collected and as the denominator the market value of the taxable property of the Town. The taxes as a percentage of the estimated market value was 2.14% in 2009 and it looks like it will be 2.81% for the present fiscal year. In the last eleven years the percentage of tax on taxable property has risen 31%.

Bill stated that these are the true facts. He is aware that the economic climate in the State of Connecticut has deteriorated under multiple administrations and multiple legislatures. If Woodbridge addresses our suburban problems on a local level in order to improve the livability of our community involving taking stock of what the existing problems are, doing a comparative analysis and a value-based prioritization, setting out objective and targets and identifying various measures to meet those targets. The Town has a chance to reverse the onward downward spiral of the quality of life in Woodbridge. Although the demographics of the Town has changed these factors should not preclude the administrative leadership of the Board of Selectmen from identifying the problems and analyzing the problems and setting out objectives and targets at the local level in the confines of economic reality.

Bill appreciates the time the Board of Finance takes in analyzing the submitted department budgets. Russ Stoddard, a former First Selectman, once said "When an individual gets on a board or commission of this town, he or she loses perspective of the Town of the total Town and Town's wants and needs and only sees the wants and needs of the particular board they are serving on. The Board of Finance has a responsibility of the total citizenry of the Town of Woodbridge. The Board of Finance work just on the annual budget is not enough.

The Board of Finance must help the community determine which programs and services are necessary and important. It must be value-based. We must have a total reassessment of the budget – what can we afford and what do we need. The Board of Finance should lead by the power to control the money.

Bill looked at Bethany and Orange as well as the shoreline towns of Branford, Clinton, Guilford, and Madison. His best estimate is that the shoreline towns have taxes as a percentage of estimated market value of approximately 25% less than Woodbridge and Bethany and Orange is between 5-10% less. A house with a property tax bill of \$12,000 would have a bill of approximately \$2,500 to \$3,000 less in one of the shoreline towns. This affects market value of a house.

Property taxes affect real estate value. Bill believes that the high taxes relative to market value will continue to depress any growth in the estimated market value of real estate in Woodbridge. Therefore, in order to fund our budget using the same process we have followed for decades we will require an increasing percentage of the estimated value which will further depress the real estate market in Town.

Hopefully the Board of Selectmen will address our complex suburban problems in order to improve the livability of our community. He strongly suggests that this board demand and implement a requirement that each board and commission feel some degree of discomfort with its proposed budget and that zero-based budgeting which each and every expense must be justified at each annual presentation.

Bill thanked the Board for their time.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER / DIRECTOR OF FINANCE REPORT

Tony reported on the revenues and expenditures through January 2019. There is a projected surplus of approximately \$811,914 at the end of the fiscal year. The fund balance at 6/30/2019 is projected to increase by \$411,914 to \$6.16 M or 12.40% of the annual projected expenses at the end of the year.

Revenues

Interest Income is projected at a surplus of \$140,000

Intergovernmental revenue will experience a surplus of \$139,708. This is mostly due to an increase in the municipal stabilization grant of \$75,000 and an additional \$66,000 in ECS grant revenue.

Charge for Services is projected to experience a deficit of \$93,501 primarily due to a shortfall of \$83,526 due to the closure of the outdoor pool.

Other Revenues are projected to experience a surplus of \$765,434. The Town received \$981,853 in surplus funds from Amity school district's fiscal year ending June 30, 2018. Tony reduced this amount in his projection by \$220,710 to reflect a potential contribution to next year's budget dropping the net Amity surplus amount to \$761,134.

Expenses

Finance Department has a surplus of \$40,000 due to the elimination of a payroll clerk position.

Library is projected to generate a surplus of approximately \$15,000 due to the elimination of a part time bookkeeper position.

Waste Management is projected to experience a deficit of \$20,000 due to cost increases in recycling disposal. This deficit may increase due to increasing costs. It may come to cost us more to separate the recyclables than solid waste. There is contamination from the glass with the cardboard. They are working on separating the glass. There is hope to offset this deficit with a change in fees collected at the transfer station.

Woodbridge Outdoor Pool will experience a surplus of \$47,782 in expenses due to the closure of the outdoor pool. Combined with the deficit in revenues, the outdoor pool operation will result in a loss of \$36,744 for fiscal year 2019.

Employee Benefits are projected to generate a surplus of approximately \$30,000 due to the elimination of a payroll clerk and a part time bookkeeper position.

WBOE is reporting a deficit of \$251,509 as of December 2018 for fiscal year 2019.

Matt reminded the Board members of the Budget Recommendation meeting on March 7th at 6:00 pm.

The Board of Selectmen have already met and the Board of Finance will get their packet with the Board of Selectmen recommendations prior to March 7th.

FUNDING REQUESTS

1819-11 Allocation.....\$10,000 (Line Item Transfer)

To: Public Works/Rentals-Equipment 1310-00/53610
From: Public Works/Road Maintenance 1310-00/55170

For: Address dead and dying trees
Vote: (Giglietti/Kenefick) unanimous

1819-12 Allocation.....\$22.260 (Line Item Transfer)

To: Public Works/Rentals-Equipment 1310-00/53610
From: Revenue/Misc. Grants 1-2-1100/42600

For: Contracted services for brush removal from 1/19/201 storm
Vote: (Giglietti/Stein) unanimous

1819-13 Allocation.....\$5,200 (Line Item Transfer)

To: Fire/Technical 1230-00/55120
From: CNR Fire/Hose Replacement 302-2300/57470/HOSE

For: replace generator on heat trailer
Vote: (Giglietti/Kuriakose) Unanimous

Tony reported that Scott Bassett will be at the March 7th meeting to review the audit.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board of Finance voted (Giglietti/Stein) unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2019 meeting as presented.

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

Beth reported that she met with State Senator James Maroney, George Logan, and Themis Klarides with Tony to discuss the latest legislative initiatives. There was discussion at a budget meeting regarding the cost of legal ads. As soon as that comes up, Beth will go to Hartford and speak to that. They also discussed bills regarding car tax and property tax reform and bills regarding school consolidation.

Beth met with Derry Gorski and Jim Zeoli about school consolidation and they will stay in touch as this goes further.

Country Club Property constructability review was received and the Board of Selectmen will discuss at the March meeting.

Board of Selectmen has received final report from CERC.

LIAISON REPORTS

Amity - Matt was unable to attend the meeting but they are continuing to tweak their budget and Matt will keep the Board informed.

Police Commission – Paul reported the February meeting was cancelled due to the storm. The January meeting had Officer Mike Mastropetre was sworn in. There are now 24 officers with one vacancy due to a recent retirement. The ISU is over budget at 123%. The transition to Amity IT support is going well. The new radio dispatch console has been installed and there has been training for the dispatchers and it is also going well.

EMS - Paul reported that AMR has re-worked where the car is positioned. By doing that they have improved their numbers on Priority 1 and 2 calls. They have taken over the pre-arrival instructions when someone calls 9-1-1. They have a long history of doing this and they do it well. The 9-1-1 dispatcher transfers the call to AMR seamlessly.

Human Services – Tom Kenefick was unable to attend the last meeting. There was a structure fire and Jeanette showed up working for Human Services. The residents would not be able to stay in the house due to the fire and Jeanette helped with finding housing for them.

Fire – Tom Handler reported on the Fire Commission meeting. They discussed the large number of calls and also the budget. The routine maintenance on the equipment is very expensive.

Recreation – Andy reported on the January 28th meeting. They reviewed all the field requests for the spring and summer to be sure there weren't any conflicts. They are preparing an Anti-bullying policy for the summer camp. It will be reviewed at the next meeting. Beth stated that she asked John Adamovich if the Town Attorney has seen it. John explained that the commission will review it then it will go to the attorney.

Library Commission – Sandy attended the meeting on February 11th. The mini golf is March 8th and 9th. The Friends are contributing about \$12,000 two times a year. It hasn't been that high in years. Kanopy which streams movies is a new subscription that is available through the library. There may be a limit to the number of movies. There is a coin box for the public copier and they are having issues with it. They will rely on the patrons to pay for their copies. They are going to try it for two months to see how it goes.

WBOE – Sandy reported that the deficit is now up to \$251,000 for the first six months. Special Education deficit is \$146,000 due to transportation of out placed students and other programmatic changes special ed costs. \$129,000 relates to the building issues with the humidity and the pool and the work by VanZelm . They will have to spend about \$140,000 between this year and next year as a result of the VanZelm report. They are concerned about their budget request for next year.

The Board of Finance voted (Giglietti/Kenefic) unanimously to adjourn at 6:35 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Crosby

Karen Crosby
Budget Analyst / Payroll & Benefits Administrator