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February 24, 2016

The Board of Finance held a Special joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen on this date in the Police Department meeting room. Members present were Bryan Bentz, Chairman; June D. Strunk, Secretary; Dudley Wheeler, Glenn Frishman, Tim O'Brien and Mike Fauerbach. Selectman Rob Simmons, Selectman Michael Spellman, and Selectwoman Kate Rotella as well as Director of Finance James Sullivan were also present, as were many town employees and department heads.

Mr. Bentz called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

Budget hearings

- **General Government**-First Selectman Simmons stated that the largest change in the next several budget cycles is the cost of bonding due to the reconstruction of the town's two elementary schools. He then said that there will be substantial costs in funding new vehicles for the Highway and Police Departments as well as a new radio system for the Police Department. He said Stonington had a less than 1% grand list growth in recent years and must address the problem of growing it. *Programs and Agencies*-Mr. Bentz asked about the SEAT bus increase. Mr. Simmons said that the town is looking into whether or not to stay with SEAT or look into alternative systems. *Administrative Services* Mr. Bentz asked about the rise in advertising costs. Selectman Simmons said it is because the legal ads are now placed in the New London Day rather than the Westerly Sun. Mr. Fauerbach asked about the increase in IT. Roger Kizer, IT Manager, said it is for the new maintenance program. *Office of the First Selectman* and the *Assessors Office* will present their budgets in the near future.
- **Human Services**- Leann Theodore, Director of Human Services, spoke about partnership programs with other non-profits in the area. She spoke of

the expansion of many of their programs. She mentioned that their budget is essentially flat.

- **Outside Agencies-**Representatives of the *Stonington Library* and *Mystic & Noank Library* thanked the board for their continued support. Vicky Anderson from the *Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center* explained that they are revamping and modernizing their food pantry. She said that the senior citizens in town are living longer and there is more need for transportation. They provide over 8,000 rides a year for seniors. Beth Stewart of the *Stonington Community Center* spoke regarding their services. She mentioned 2015 was a bad year for the Como, as they needed a new roof and their server had also crashed. They also lost revenue due to the implementation of full day kindergarten. The Vice President of the *Stonington Ambulance* thanked the board for their continued support and for their help in funding to repair their garage. A representative of *Mystic River Ambulance* spoke of the heroin epidemic and the escalating cost of the drug used to treat a person who has overdosed. Ken Richards from *Westerly Ambulance* stated that they respond to the homeless camp in Pawcatuck at least twice a week which is a substantial write-off for them.

Mr. O'Brien made a motion to adjourn, and Mr. Wheeler seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

June D. Strunk

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