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March 24, 2015

The Board of Finance held a special meeting on this date at the Stonington High School Commons. Members present were Tim O'Brien; Sandy Grimes; Bryan Bentz and June Strunk, Secretary. Chairman Glenn Frishman and Dudley Wheeler were absent. Also present Town Hall; BOE; Police staff and residents. Mrs. Strunk was Acting Chair for the meeting.

Mrs. Strunk called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

Grand List presentation – Marsha Standish Assessor –
Mrs. Standish explained that Mr. Frishman had asked her to provide an understanding for the taxpayers and the impact of the Grand list. October 1, 2013 through October 1, 2014 there was an increase of $2,312,284. generating $414,979. new tax dollars. She explained that the Grand list is composed of Real, Personal property and Motor vehicle assessments, it is not the revenue collected to operate the Town. During the budget process the revenue necessary to run the Town is divided by the Grand list to arrive at the mil rate Multiple occurrences affect the overall Grand List. She explained that Senior Living by Masonicare LLC is presently exempt and not reflected in the Grand List totals.

At this time, the Assessor introduced her assistant Greg Hayes. Mr. Hayes spoke to the growth in the real estate grand list and how the Assessors' office collects data to substantiate growth. He explained complications of errors, site visits, valuation and assessment appeals.

Suspense List -
Linda Camelio, Tax Collector presented the Suspense list for 2015. These are accounts determined to be uncollectable.

Budget transfers -
Fiscal year 2014-2015 Labor negotiations to Police and Highway departments.
Mr. Grimes made a motion to approve the proposed transfers from Human Resources – Labor negotiations to Police and Highway salaries as presented. Mr. Bentz seconded the motion and voting was unanimous.

Use of excess 911-grant money to purchase Net Motion Software Mr. O'Brien made a motion to approve the transfer from the Communication Specialist line to Equipment as presented. Mr. Grimes seconded the motion and voting was unanimous.

Previous Minutes-
Mr. Grimes made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2015 and March 11, 2015 meetings as presented. Mr. Bentz seconded and voting was unanimous.

Budget deliberations-
Mrs. Strunk started with a brief description of the Board and their role. She explained that all six volunteers members and have a working understanding of revenue and budgets. With the differences all members have the same strong commitment to the Town of Stonington and its residents. She explained the 2% guideline suggested to the departments. The guideline was a result of considering the national inflation rate and the increase in revenue the Town could expect. Each department had been asked to explain any increase over 2%. The Board has met with all departments and reviewed the budget prior to deliberations. She stated that tonight was the first time the Board as a whole would discuss the results of caucuses. She reminded those present that the BOF does not have line item responsibility over the BOE budget. The BOF can recommend an overall increase but cannot decide how the budget is spent.

With regard to the Board of Education budget a 3% increase is being considered. After initial discussion with the BOE, this should address the increase in utilities, special education and existing programs. A 3% increase represents an increase of $1,010,000.

At this time, Mr. Bentz asked what the target was. Mrs. Strunk replied that she is unaware of what the taxpayers would accept.

After discussion, the Proposed FY15-16 budget stood at:

General Government	-	$19,239,854.00
Capital Improvement	-	$ 1,368,117.00
Board of Education	-	$35,317,316.00
Debt Service	-	$ 5,135,389.00

Mrs. Strunk stated that she was comfortable with this increase. Members of the Board agreed.

Subcommittee reports - Tabled

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. O'Brien made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Grimes seconded the motion and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

June Strunk
Secretary

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