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March 30, 2016

The Board of Finance held a special meeting on this date in the conference room of the Stonington Police Department. Members present were Bryan Bentz, Chairman; June D. Strunk, Secretary; Tim O'Brien,Glenn Frishman, Dudley Wheeler, and Michael Fauerbach. Director of Finance James Sullivan and several town department heads were present.

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

Mr. Bentz asked members for their input on the budget presentations . Mr. Fauerbach stated that the Board cannot bring a 10 % increase to the voters. He suggested a 5% increase. Mr. O'Brien said they should be in the same range as last year, as situations have not moved drastically. Mr. Frishman mentioned that the economy is still not robust and that the increase should be no more than 1mill, which is 5% or less. Chairman Bentz stated that he thought 1 mill was a good target. Mrs. Strunk said that she thought the budgets this year were good overall and she thought that starting at 1 mill was acceptable. Mr. Wheeler agreed with that and suggested they go through the budget and see where the board ends up at.

Mrs Strunk stated for the record that the reason the board goes through this exercise is because the expected tax increase is under 1% and inflation is at 0, and anyone on fixed income got 0 increases. A 3.71% increase is asking taxpayers to pay more than they have gotten, however to provide services that the town needs, such as roads and education, it is a well thought out number.

Mr. Frishman recommended amortizing the costs of the Police Department Radio system over two years. Chairman Bentz suggested doing the

remainder of the funding in the next fiscal year.

Mr. Wheeler questioned the purchase of a new backhoe for the highway department. Mr. Frishman suggested cutting from the line item road rehab projects.

Under Outside agencies, Mr. Frishman asked the board about the funding for the Stonington Como safety and security. Mr. Fauerbach suggested supporting this, as did Mr. O'Brien. The board decided to revisit the Town hall and Hillside Avenue projects

Mr. Frishman suggested keeping the funding for the lift for the music room at MMS. Discussion ensued regarding the rest of the line items from the BOE. Director of Operations and Facilities, Bill King, stressed the importance of replacing the underground storage tanks at the West Broad, PMS and Central Office. The board agreed to leave those funds intact.

Mrs. Strunk noted that she would like the people working in the various town departments be the ones who decide where money needs to be shaved as they know best.

Mr. Frishman suggested possibly eliminating a town position. Mrs. Strunk said she would not feel comfortable with that without more info. Chairman Bentz noted that there is a request for a new police officer and asked Chief Stewart if he felt that could be delayed for 6 months. Chief Stewart said it could.

Mr. Wheeler asked if the First Selectman could possibly reach out to all departments to see what could be cut voluntarily. Chairman Bentz and Mr. Frishman agreed that it was a sound idea. Chairman Bentz said the Board could see where they were now with cuts made so far and go from there.

Mrs. Strunk said that while she agrees that the departments should trim their budgets, our roads are in terrible shape and the residents should be asked if they are willing to pay for the repairs.

Mrs. Strunk made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Wheeler seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

June D. Strunk

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