

April 11, 2018

A special meeting of the Board of Finance was held immediately following the public hearing in the Commons at Stonington High School. Members present were Chairwoman June D. Strunk, Secretary Glenn Frishman, Tim O'Brien, Mike Fauerbach, Blunt White, Lynn Young and Danielle Chesebrough. Also present were Director of Finance Jim Sullivan, First Selectman Rob Simmons, Superintendent of Schools Van Riley, Board of Education members, Town Hall staff, interested citizens and members of the press.

Chairwoman Strunk opened the special meeting at 8:12 pm.

Budget Deliberations

Chairwoman Strunk initiated deliberations by asking the Board for their thoughts regarding the current budget.

Ms. Chesebrough-impressed with the town and departments. She said that a large portion of the Town is on a fixed income, and the Board needs to be cognizant of that. She also urged the Board not to be short sighted, to think in the long term and not cut things that will effect our quality of life.

Mr. O'Brien- Board had asked for a target of 3%, and will be ill perceived if we then put 3.8 (amount to be raised by taxes) to the taxpayers, and said that the Board needs to get the budget down to their own internal target. He noted their conscious decision, when the school bonding project started, that there will be two very lean years, and that is where we stand now.

Mr. Frishman-concurred with member O'Brien that we need to get the percentage raised by taxes down to 3%.

Mr. Fauerbach- agreed to look through the budget for more opportunities for savings, but not overly concerned by where we are at this point. He clarified that 3.8% is the amount raised by taxes, and within that, there is growth in the grand list beyond the revaluation. He said that the average taxpayer, with the revaluation increase, will likely see something less than 3.8 %. He is hesitant to cut services that are critical to the future of Town, but is comfortable going through the budget one more time, not necessarily down to 3%.

Mr. White- top line spending has been growing more than it should be, top line percentage increases in spending growth over the last 3 years were 4.6%, 4.6% and 5.6%. The Board needs to work on reducing what we spend. He noted that debt will decrease after two years, however we need to be very careful up until it rolls off.

Ms. Young-agreed with Mr. White, reiterating that the top line spend is over 15% for the last three years. She is uncomfortable with the spend down of 2.85 M for CIP, as she doesn't believe it leaves us with enough of a cushion. She also noted that there have been cuts made that make sense in these lean years.

Before deliberating the budget, Mrs. Strunk noted that it makes sense to rely on the people at Town Hall and the BOE to reduce the budget where it would make the most sense and not impact the residents.

Discussion ensued regarding making further cuts in the budget including:

Police Services- Cuts were made in the operations budget, in the regular officers line and the retirement line. In CIP there was a reduction in the cost of the new Emergency Operating Center generator. These cuts totaled \$40,000. Mrs. Strunk asked the Board to keep in mind that that these budgets were done in November, and now more accurate numbers are coming in.

Dept of Public Works-Reductions of \$31,212 in the line item for leaf vac, and \$6,999 in the line for the leaf program.

WPCA-Regarding the WPCA hurricane barrier study, Mr. Vincent said the line can be reduced from \$50,000 to \$20,000. Mr. Deledda, Town Engineer, said they could repair only the roof of the pump house at this point, versus an entire renovation. Total reduction is \$49,999.

Department of Public Works-Reduction of line items Equipment Protection Facility, \$15,000, and line item light duty pick up truck, \$28,091. Director McKrell stated that due to the fact that she only has a part-time administrative assistant, she and others are required to do admin work. Consequently, she is forced to hire outside inspectors to do her job. She noted that administrative pay is about \$25 an hour, while a low cost inspector is \$75 per hour. She said that of all her requests, getting a full time admin is the most critical to her.

WPCA- I and I study line, reduction of \$24,999.

BOE CIP- Dr. Riley said the Computer Lease line item can be reduced by \$55,000, as upgraded firewalls, etc. can be put off for one more year. Line item portable lease can be reduced by \$10,000, resulting in a total reduction for of \$65,000.

Mr Fauerbach wanted to acknowledge to Kate Randolph et al., from the Stonington Free Library, stating that although we can't raise funding at this time for the library, the Board is open to revisiting this later in the fiscal year when the reimbursement from the State is determined.

Chairwoman Strunk asked Dr. Riley to cut \$110,000 from the education budget. Dr. Riley said it was a bigger cut than he expected, but he would make it work.

The reduction in budget at stands at just over \$400,000.

Ms. Young reiterated that she is uncomfortable with spending so much of the undesignated fund balance. Mr. Fauerbach countered that Stonington is targeted in Hartford because of the size of the balance, and he would rather we spend the money, than the State take it.

After reductions, the increase to be raised by taxes is 3.13%, with a proposed mill rate of 22.68.

Mr. Frishman made a motion to send the following budget to the Board of Selectman, and Mr. Fauerbach seconded.

General Government	21,578,105
Board of Education	38,016,336
Debt Service	8,146,981
CIP	2,510,064
<hr/> Total	<hr/> \$70,251,486

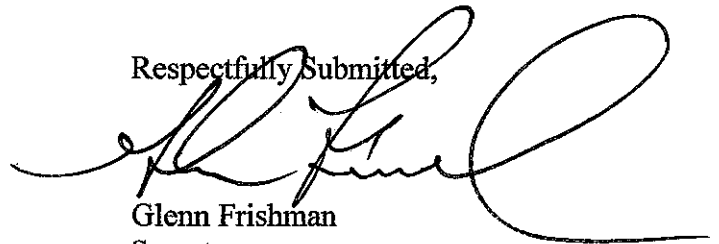
Voting was as follows:

Ms. Chesebrough	yay
Mr. O'Brien	yay
Mr. Frishman	yay
Mrs. Strunk	yay
Mr. White	yay
Mr. Fauerbach	yay
Ms. Young	yay

Voting was unanimous, motion carried.

With no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Frishman mad a motion to adjourn, Mr. O'Brien seconded, and voting was unanimous. Motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:53pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Glenn Frishman', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned to the right of the typed name and title.

Glenn Frishman
Secretary

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