



BOARD OF FINANCE

Clifford J. Hurgin Municipal Center, 1 School Street
Bethel, Connecticut 06801 Telephone: (203) 794-8501

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, April 10, 2012
7:00 p.m.

CJH Municipal Center - Meeting Room "A"

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TOWN OF BETHEL
TOWN CLERK

PRESENT: William Kingston, Chairman, J. Philip Gallagher, Patricia Smithwick, Eileen Freebairn, Claudia Stephan, Gary Regan and Timothy Draper. Also in attendance were Comptroller Robert Kozlowski and First Selectman Matthew Knickerbocker.

Call to order/Pledge of Allegiance: William Kingston called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Public Comments: Kevin Smith, Superintendent of Schools (Board of Education budget - \$400,000 reinstatement for good trajectory, \$250,000 addresses most critical need) and Ann Scacco, Tax Collector (recommends full-time position in Assessor's office).

Correspondence: none

Minutes of January 10, 2012: Patricia Smithwick made a motion, which was seconded by Gary Regan, to approve the minutes as presented. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved. J. Philip Gallagher abstained from the voting as he was not present at the meeting.

Minutes of January 26, 2012: Patricia Smithwick made a motion, which was seconded by William Kingston, to approve the minutes as presented. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved. J. Philip Gallagher abstained from the voting as he was not present at the meeting.

Minutes of February 21, 2012: Gary Regan made a motion, which was seconded by Patricia Smithwick, to approve the minutes with the correction that the vote to table the consideration of establishing the Board of Education Unexpended Funds Account was J. Philip Gallagher, William Kingston, Gary Regan and Timothy Draper in favor of tabling the issue and Patricia Smithwick,

Eileen Freebairn and Claudia Stephan opposed to tabling the issue. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

Minutes of February 23, 2012: Gary Regan made a motion, which was seconded by Patricia Smithwick, to approve the minutes as presented. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

Minutes of February 27, 2012: Patricia Smithwick made a motion, which was seconded by William Kingston, to approve the minutes as presented. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

Minutes of February 28, 2012: Patricia Smithwick made a motion, which was seconded by Gary Regan, to approve the minutes as presented. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

Minutes of March 5, 2012: Patricia Smithwick made a motion, which was seconded by J. Philip Gallagher, to approve the minutes as presented. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

Minutes of March 12, 2012: Patricia Smithwick made a motion, which was seconded by J. Philip Gallagher, to approve the minutes as presented. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

Consideration of Tax Collector's request for Suspense List authorization:

Tax Collector Ann Scacco presented a request for Suspense List authorization; she noted that by transferring these accounts to suspense, it will remove them from consideration as assets to the town, but remain a liability of the person against whom it was levied. Most accounts will be turned over to a collection agency. The collection agency is paid 18% of all of the charge (15% by the taxpayer and 3% by the town.)

Patricia Smithwick made a motion, which was seconded by Claudia Stephan, to accept the Tax Collector's request dated April 3, 2012 and authorize placing \$122,022.01 in suspense. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

Consideration of Appointment of Town Auditor:

Comptroller Robert Kozlowski recommended that the Board of Finance appoint the audit firm of J.H. Cohn as auditors for the Town of Bethel. He explained that the firm of Kostin, Ruffkess & Company, LLC has combined with the firm of J.H. Cohn. He noted that they proved most helpful with the combining of the two accounting systems. The audit firm will be invited to meet with the Board of Finance in either May or June.

William Kingston made a motion, which was seconded by Patricia Smithwick, to appoint the firm of J.H. Cohn as auditors for the Town of Bethel. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

Consideration of FY 2012-2013 Budget(s)

450 - BOARD OF EDUCATION:

William Kingston made a motion, which was seconded by Eileen Freebairn, to add \$250,000 back to the 450 - Board of Education account. Discussion ensued. Board of Finance commented that based on the public comments at the Public Hearing last week, they were inclined to add funds back to the Board of Education account. Some members expressed concern with the taxpayer's ability to absorb the tax increase based on declining revenues. Discussion took place on getting more people to participate in the budgeting process, attending meetings, etc.

J. Philip Gallagher amended the motion, which was seconded by Timothy Draper, to add \$150,000 back to the 450 - Board of Education account. Voting in favor of the motion: J. Philip Gallagher and Timothy Draper. Voting against the motion: Patricia Smithwick, Eileen Freebairn, Claudia Stephan, William Kingston and Gary Regan. Amendment fails.

Voting on the original motion to add \$250,000 back to the 450 - Board of Education account. Voting in favor of the motion: Patricia Smithwick, Eileen Freebairn, Claudia Stephan, William Kingston and Gary Regan. Voting against the motion: J. Philip Gallagher and Timothy Draper. Motion passed. Account 450 - Board of Education stands at \$39,660,925.

435 - LIBRARY:

Eileen Freebairn made a motion, which was seconded by Claudia Stephan, to increase Account 435- 212 Books & Materials by \$3,000. Voting in favor of the motion: J. Philip Gallagher, Patricia Smithwick, Eileen Freebairn, Claudia Stephan and William Kingston. Voting against the motion: Gary Regan and Timothy Draper. Motion passed. Timothy Draper expressed concern that the library, when completed, will have additional staffing costs.

350 - HEALTH DEPARTMENT:

J. Philip Gallagher offered that for clarity purposes, since there is no full-time Sanitarian and hasn't been for several years, instead several part

time/contracted employees are being utilized and paid from this account, that the funds for this position be transferred to 350-313 Contracted Services. He explained that this does not do away with funding the position; funds could be transferred back at such time when there is a full-time Sanitarian.

First Selectman Knickerbocker expressed concern with this proposal in that there would be no guarantee that the Board of Finance would transfer the funds back.

J. Philip Gallagher made a motion, which was seconded by William Kingston, to transfer funding for Account 350-123 Sanitarian in the amount of \$66,579 to Account 350-313 Contracted Services. Voting in favor of the motion: J. Philip Gallagher, William Kingston and Gary Regan. Voting against the motion: Patricia Smithwick, Eileen Freebairn and Claudia Stephan. Timothy Draper abstained from the vote. Motion fails.

190 - DATA PROCESSING:

J. Philip Gallagher expressed concern that the Board of Finance was not fully informed that the town had hired an IT Technician as a full-time employee and felt that the Board of Finance should have been involved with the creation of this position; they assumed it was still a contracted position not a hired employee. The funds had not been transferred from 190-313 Contracted Services to 190-102 Asst. IT Technician until this budget cycle. First Selectman Knickerbocker explained that there were some major computer issues and a quick resolve was needed. He noted that there is still a cost savings and remains budget neutral.

J. Philip Gallagher made a motion, which was seconded by Gary Regan, to transfer \$40,000 back from 190-313 Contracted Services to 190-102 Asst. IT Technician. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

William Kingston made a motion, which was seconded by Claudia Stephan, to recommend to the Annual Town Meeting a proposed Town Budget (which includes Debt Service and the 460 - Board of Education Maintenance account) a budget of \$25,565,784. Voting in favor of the motion: Patricia Smithwick, Eileen Freebairn, Claudia Stephan, William Kingston and Gary Regan. Voting against the motion: J. Philip Gallagher and Timothy Draper. Motion passed.

William Kingston made a motion, which was seconded by Patricia Smithwick, to recommend to the Annual Town Meeting, a proposed Board of Education budget of \$39,660,925. Voting in favor of the motion: Patricia Smithwick, Eileen

Freebairn, Claudia Stephan, William Kingston and Gary Regan. Voting against the motion: J. Philip Gallagher and Timothy Draper. Motion passed.

Board of Finance members agreed to hold a Special Meeting on April 23, 2012 to consider funding of items from the capital plan.

As there was no further business on tonight's agenda, William Kingston made a motion, which was seconded by Patricia Smithwick, to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m.. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wendy Smith". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Wendy Smith, Recording Secretary