

*Minutes*

# **Board of Finance Meeting**

**March 19, 2013**

Room 206 7:30 PM

## **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Liz Mao at 7:32 PM. All members of the Board of Finance were present except Joe Duwan. Also in attendance was Kate Clarke Buch, Finance Director. The meeting was taped for broadcast over Channel 79.

## **APPROPRIATION**

### **Parking Capital – Platform Canopy Extension – \$66,000**

In a memo, Bob Steeger, Director of Public Works, outlined a proposal to extend the canopy on the West-bound side of the Noroton Heights train station, which is part of the Railroad Station Capital Improvement Plan. Jamie McLaughlin moved approval; passed 6-0.

## **TRANSFERS UNDER \$5,000**

### **Payroll costs – Presidential Elections – \$3,332**

Payroll costs for the presidential election ran higher than estimated, as did the costs of travel for the machine mechanics. Printing costs exceeded budget because the new Registrars determined that the existing “75 foot signs” (i.e., those required to be posted within 75 feet of the polls) are beyond repair and must be replaced. This transfer, completely from within the elections budget, addresses these overages. Lori Bora moved approval; passed 6-0.

## **TRANSFERS OVER \$5,000**

### **Department of Public Works – garage repair – \$39,000**

In a memo, Bob Steeger, Director of Public Works, outlined a proposal for repairs to the DPW garage, which was last repaired in 1977. There is evidence that water and salt are penetrating the protective coating of the floor, causing damage to the reinforcing steel and concrete. Although there is no immediate threat of structural failure, these conditions warrant additional investigation. This budget request should provide sufficient funds to investigate the problem

and produce construction drawings suitable for bidding purposes. The work will include estimates for construction funding. Jon Zagrodzky moved approval; passed 6-0.

## **CONTINGENCY TRANSFERS**

### **Waste Management – \$102**

In a memo, Karl Kilduff, Town Administrator, outlined a proposal requesting additional funds to provide the approved scope of education on single stream recycling. The \$102 is for extra copies of a newspaper insert. Jon Zagrodzky moved approval; passed 6-0.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Kate Clarke Buch provided the monthly financial report, with the following highlights:

- Fire hydrants – there was a rate increase after the original budget was prepared.
- The Finance Department is waiting for information on sewer facility repair.
- T-1 lines to the senior center were miscoded and had to be corrected.
- The dispute with Stamford over sewer treatment costs will go to arbitration.
- Post 53 has submitted bills for uncollected EMS charges; more are expected.
- In April, there will be a re-allocation of debt service payments.

## **SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS, COMMITTEE REPORTS, CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

Chairman Liz Mao explained why separate accounts have been set up for the BOE security personnel. Doing so ensures that unused funds can be returned to the town.

## **MINUTES**

Minutes from the February 12<sup>th</sup> meeting were reviewed and edited. Gwen Mogenson moved approval of the edited minutes; passed 6-0.

## **BUDGET REVIEWS**

### **Voter Registry & Elections**

Gwen Mogenson reviewed these budgets. Voter Registration is down slightly due to this year’s redistricting costs not being repeated for next year. The Elections budget is down since 2013 is not a presidential election year.

Several changes were made to the Elections budget (it was noted that an appropriation may be needed for primaries if any positions in the upcoming election are contested):

- Increase in seasonal & temporary salary **(+\$2,000)**
- Printing **(-\$3,200)**
- Special equipment repair & maintenance **(+\$600)**
- Food & related supplies **(+1,000)**

Several changes were made to the Voter Registration budget:

- Part-time salary **(+\$600)**
- Seasonal & temporary salary **(-\$1,000)**
- Conference & meetings **(+\$400)**
- Dues & professional licenses **(+\$10)**

**Darien Public Library.** Gwen Mogenson and Jon Zagrodzky met with the Library leadership to review the proposed budget. For the Board's budget discussion, Louise Berry and Alan Gray were in attendance.

Their budget proposal called for expenditures of \$3,400,566, an increase of \$151,479, or 4.7%. The budget made a provision for a 3% increase in staff and administrative salaries.

No changes were recommended to the proposed budget. Both Gwen and Jon commented on the thoroughness and quality of the Library's budget, and they commended the leadership team for their work.

### **Fire Departments**

Lori Bora and Jon Zagrodzky reviewed the fire station and related budgets.

- **Darien.** The proposed budget of \$167,218 represented a 7% increase over last year's budget. Much of the increase was driven by fuel costs and turnout gear. No changes were proposed.
- **Noroton Heights.** The proposed budget of \$179,192 represented a 6% increase over last year's budget. Much of the increase was driven by fuel costs, turnout gear and medical exams. The Motorized Equipment Repair budget was increased **(+\$1,000)**. No other changes were proposed, except for re-categorization of tire replacement expense (see below).
- **Noroton.** The proposed budget of \$191,060 represented a 5% increase over last year's budget. Much of the increase was driven by fuel costs and medical exams. No changes were proposed.

- **Fire Marshal, Fire Commission.** No changes to the budget.
- **Fire Capital budgets.** For all tire replacements, it was proposed that these expenses be re-categorized to small capital (**\$6,200 cut** from the Noroton Fire Department operating budget; **\$5,200 increase** to this department's Small Capital budget).

Truck 20 repairs at Noroton Heights (\$30,000) were deemed reasonable and necessary.

The proposed repairs to the Norton Heights floor were also deemed necessary. However, the department wanted to get started on the repairs right away and asked if they could be funded in the current year. Jon Zagrodzky moved that the \$275,000 repair estimate be funded through a transfer from the Middlesex Middle School roof account, which is under budget (\$200,000) and from the Board of Finance Capital Contingency account (\$75,000). Passed 6-0.

**Note:** funding this project in the 2012/13 fiscal year will result in a **cut** from the 2013/14 fiscal year budget in the amount of **\$275,000**.

**Legal Services** – a slight drop in this budget is projected, based on current estimates from Jeremy Ginsberg, director of Planning & Zoning.

**Employee Benefits** – Health insurance costs are projected to rise considerably in the coming year (+25%) due to poor experience and high claims costs. Dental costs were projected to rise 10%, but it is now believed that the increase will be zero (**a cut of \$11,214**).

**Risk Management** – Slight increase based on discussions with the town's insurance carriers.

**Public Works** – This budget is up 2.9%. The increase in Traffic Marking Services is to pay for more durable epoxy paint. Fuel costs were also higher.

For the Capital budget, The Board of Selectmen included \$83,000 for a Town Hall generator and the resurfacing of Leroy West (the \$83,000 is the Town's share of the total projected cost of \$320,000). They cut \$120,000 for new sidewalk construction.

No changes were made to the proposed budget.

**Board of Education** – The Board discussed and cut all proposed funding for school generators (**cut of \$1,240,000**). Since the security upgrade and oil tank replacements were funded out of the current fiscal year, these were cut from the 2013/14 budget (**cuts of \$179,000 and \$518,000 respectively**).

### **SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS, COMMITTEE REPORTS, CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Chairman Liz Mao proposed an increase in the salary of the First Selectmen. She noted that the current salary of \$80,000 had not been increased in ten years and was substantially below the salaries of First Selectmen in neighboring/similar towns.

The Board suggested that additional information was needed, which Ms. Mao and Jamie McLaughlin would prepare for the next meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Jon Zagrodzky made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded and approved 6-0 at 9:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Zagrodzky  
Clerk