

*Minutes*

# Board of Finance Meeting

**March 29, 2011**

Room 206 7:30 PM

## **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Liz Mao at 7:36 PM. All members of the Board of Finance except Murry Stegelmann were present. Also in attendance was Kate Clarke Buch, Finance Director. The meeting was broadcast over Channel 79.

## **TRANSFERS**

- **Public Works** – Facility Maintenance \$10,000 (Board of Selectmen approved 03/28).

Unanticipated maintenance at the Darien Senior Center, 35 Leroy and Town Hall has created a need for this budget transfer. Repair costs associated with maintaining the room air conditioners and kitchen equipment at the Senior Center were not anticipated as part of the DPW budget request for the current fiscal year. Expenses at 35 Leroy have been more than budgeted as well. At the Town Hall, there have been a series of expensive failures in the steam piping valves totaling \$2,000. The transfer eliminates the current deficit of \$3,800 and provides funding for repairs during the last 3 months of the fiscal year.

Gwen Mogenson moved approval of the transfer. The motion passed 6-0.

- **Elections** – Special Election – revision of previously approved transfer \$3,150.

When the original request was submitted, sufficient funds were available in the Seasonal/Temporary line, but after the payroll was completed for the election, that was no longer the case; therefore the request has been revised to include a second source of funds.

Joe Duwan moved approval of the transfer. The motion passed 6-0.

## **MINUTES**

Joe Duwan moved approval of the February 15<sup>th</sup> minutes as amended; the motion passed 6-0.

## **BUDGET REVIEWS**

**Darien Public Library.** Gwen Mogenson and Jon Zagrodzky reviewed the proposed budget over the course of two sessions with the Library leadership. For the Board's budget discussion, Louise Berry, Alan Gray and other members of the Library Board were in attendance.

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. Jon mentioned the need at some to revisit Library salaries, which have been held flat for four budgets in a row.

**Tax Collector.** No changes to the budget. Decreases in spending driven by personnel changes (assistant collector retired; replaced by more junior, lower paid person). It was noted that the town's tax collection rates continue to be favorable.

**Town Clerk.** No changes to the budget. The proposed budget is essentially flat, as a planned promotion will not take place. The budget continues to include funds for archiving and microfilming old records. See below for changes in this department's revenue budget.

**Voter Registry and Elections.** No changes to the budgets. Lower overall budget due to no planned primaries. One increase in expense is the cost of maintenance contracts for voting machines.

**Information Technology.** The budget provides technology support for Town Hall and the Munis financial system. Given the lower recent telecommunications costs, it was decided to **cut \$15,000 from the telecom budget.**

**Probate.** No changes to the budget. This is their best estimate for operating the new combined court. They are still working out who is supposed to pay for the phone system and supplies (the Court or the Town). Also, how to manage cost sharing with New Canaan is under consideration.

**Sewers.** No changes to the budget. This budget includes fees paid to the City of Stamford for wastewater treatment. The contract for these fees is under negotiation. At issue is the sharing of the benefit Stamford receives from carbon credits.

Separately, Kate Buch mentioned the need for town sewer charges to keep up with the costs of running the sewer system, as the sewer fund balance and investment income is dropping. She recommended that someone from the Board of Finance should meet with the Sewer Commission.

**Contingency.** The budget proposes an increase of \$120,000 to the Board of Finance Reserve Contingency Fund. Liz Mao proposed eliminating this increase (**a cut of \$120,000**). She also proposed funding the planned gas line to Town Hall in the current fiscal year from this Reserve Contingency Fund, which would **cut \$170,000** from General Government. The Board of Selectmen will propose the required transfer for this change.

Both of these changes would still leave approximately \$414,000 in the fund, after costs related to the Shuffle and solar panels (N.B. – there is a possibility the solar panel grant might not come through. If it doesn't, we can restore \$80,500 to the contingency – the original appropriation was for a little more than the anticipated cost).

Separately, the following additional changes to the Board of Finance Infrastructure Reserve were made:

- Eliminate the proposed addition (**a cut of \$90,000**)
- Eliminate proposed funding for the Intervale Road drainage improvement project and fund it in the current year, with no offsetting addition to the reserve (**a cut of \$130,000**)
- Eliminate proposed funding for the West Road drainage improvement project and fund it in the current year, with no offsetting addition to the reserve (**a cut of \$125,000**; a 20,000 cut had already been approved for this account)

**Hoyt Street sidewalk project.** This project is still under development. Since the project is not “shovel ready,” the Board decided to handle the project's funding, if it moves forward, through the BoF Contingency Fund, thus eliminating the need for a separate provision in the Roadway and Walkway Maintenance accounts (**a cut of \$40,000**)

## Revenue.

- Liz Mao recommended that the Town Treasurer be allowed to invest town funds in CDs up to \$10 million (up from \$6 million) to better capture interest opportunities. It is expected that this would increase revenue by **\$40,000 (equivalent to a cut)**.
- Revenue for the Town Clerk's office continues to improve. Based on recent trends, the Board decided to boost projected Town Clerk revenue to \$1.1 million (**equivalent to a cut of \$150,000**).
- The board decided that the assumed Tax Collection rate, which has always run higher than budgeted, should be increased. The Board will look at scenarios with higher rates at its next meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Jon Zagrodzky made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded and approved 6-0 at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Zagrodzky  
Clerk