

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Finance held on May 21, 2008 in the Madison Town Campus

Present: Chairman Kathleen Rossini, Owen Charles, Filmore McPherson, Kathleen Stahelski, Jennifer Tung, David Youngerman

Also present: Al Goldberg, First Selectman; Dotty Bavin, Finance Director; Alma Carroll, Tax Collector; David Melillo, MCTV and members of the press

Ms. Rossini called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

1. Approval of minutes – April 9, 2008, Budget Workshop minutes, March 17, April 10, April 21, 2008. The following corrections were made to the minutes of the regular meeting of April 9, 2008:

Page 2, item 3, a statement to be added noting that the Board discussed Police Department benefits and buy backs, plus a request for written material on the presentation. It should also be noted that the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen should be included in the development of plans.

Page 2, item 3, second paragraph, insert “Mr. Charles noted that it would be preferable to receive written documentation (such as the staffing analysis), rather than just a verbal presentation regarding the complexity of staffing issues

Page 2, item 3 second paragraph, “Mr. Charles requested that he be provided with a copy of the Police Department staffing report and critical evaluations” should be replaced with “Mr. Geisenheimer stated that a copy of the staff analysis will be provided to the Board.”

Page 2, item 3, second paragraph, insert, “Mr. Charles noted that the staffing analysis had not been available on the Police Commission website, and should be available to the public. Mr. Charles also asked that the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen be included by the Police Commission in planning discussions concerning any future engagement of a consultant.

The minutes of the regular meeting of April 9, 2008 were approved as corrected.

The following corrections were made to the April 21 Budget Workshop minutes:

Page 1, paragraph 3, a statement was requested to be added at the end, “since 2 additional staff members were added to the police force and were not presently filled, no further additions would be added to the staff until it was determined how productive the presently approved staff levels performed when fully staffed.”

Page 2, paragraph 2, sentence 1 sentence “many of “was added to “that many of the speakers” and sentence 2 would be changed to state “They felt the budget was sound, but differed...”

Page 2, paragraph 2 “compared to a 5% increase in taxes.” Was added to the end of the second sentence.

The minutes of the budget workshop of April 21, 2008 were approved as corrected.

The following corrections were made to the minutes of the April 10, Budget Public Hearing:

Under the paragraph beginning Hilmi Butun, second sentence “student data and their programs” was added.

In the paragraph beginning Roberta Willenkin, Ms. Rossini's statement was amended to add "service levels and certain services."

The spelling of the name Alisa Masterson was corrected.

In the paragraph beginning Dick Duer, Ms. Rossini was changed to Mr. Youngerman.

In the paragraph beginning Ed Burns, the second sentence was modified to state "Police budget includes one new officer, new surveillance technology, and new uniforms. The BOF discussed the Police..."

In the paragraph beginning Mr. Youngerman, the second sentence shall state "The details were provided in the newspaper last fall."

In the paragraph beginning Mr. Butun the terms "a minimum of" was added before 10%.

Finally, "Attachment Power Point and MPOA Statement" was added at the bottom of the final page.

The minutes of the budget hearing of April 10, 2008 were approved as corrected.

2. Citizen and Finance Member Comments. A Madison resident questioned the source of the \$85,000 special appropriation funded for the Police Chief. Ms. Bavin noted that this special appropriation had come from the fund balance and was approved at a special Town Meeting.

Mr. McPherson expressed regret at Helen Burland's departure. He noted that she had provided exceptional service to the Board of Education, High School Building Committee and First Selectmen's Office and he believes her departure is a loss for the Town. Ms. Rossini commented that Ms. Burland has been a great asset to the Board of Finance and to her during her transition as Chairman of the Board of Finance.

Ms. Rossini noted that the budget referendum passed yesterday for both the Town and Board of Education budgets. There was 21% voter turnout which is low. She thanked all individuals who participated in the budget process.

3. Discuss and take action on setting the mill rate for 2008-2009 fiscal year. Board members were provided with an updated report on the Projected Fund Balance as of 6/30/08 showing a balance of \$1,128,001. Members were also provided with back-up information for a Mill Rate Calculation.

Mr. McPherson commented that looking ahead to next year, the Board needs to keep in mind that there are currently two Police Chiefs and the budget only provides for one Chief. Therefore, the Board should anticipate a special appropriation request in the Chief Salary line item. Mr. Goldberg commented that this assumption is reasonable. He noted that the new Chief is working on a week to week contract basis.

Ms. Bavin noted that Ms. Carroll has kept the grand list information updated. She also noted that while beach pass revenue projections are down, the Beach and Recreation Commission is confident that they will be able to bring their revenue back up. In a response to a question by Ms. Tung, Mr. Goldberg stated that the Beach and Rec. Commission expects to increase their beach pass sales, because fewer people will be traveling this year and there will be an increase in advertising. Ms. Tung expressed concern that this did not seem concrete or encouraging.

Ms. Rossini commented that the Board needs to give some thought as to where the members see the fund balance level moving forward. This will play a role in determining what part of the undesignated fund balance can be used for tax relief. She noted that Madison is at the high end of providing for reserve funds for needed expenses. She recommended that the Board consider utilizing \$300,000 from the undesignated fund balance for tax relief.

Mr. McPherson commented that in most years, an item comes up that is out of the ordinary such as the legal fees this year due to the Police Department issues. The Board needs to ensure that adequate funds are available for unanticipated expenses. Mr. Youngerman commented that he agrees with Mr. McPherson's comments.

Ms. Rossini noted that the Town will be maintaining the current conveyance tax for the next couple of years. Ms. Carroll clarified that this tax has been an ongoing item for the past few years that was scheduled to be sunset this June. The State will be in discussion on this matter and Representative Heinrich stated to Ms. Rossini and Ms. Carroll that she expects it to remain effective.

After discussion on a motion made by Ms. Stahelski, and seconded by Mr. Youngerman, the Board of Finance voted unanimously to include State Revenue in the amount of \$2,700,649 in the mill rate calculation. The motion carried 6-0.

On a motion made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Ms. Tung, the Board voted unanimously to allocate \$163,228 of the Property Tax Relief Reserve Fund to reduce the amount to be raised by taxes. The motion was carried 6-0.

On a motion made by Ms. Stahelski, and seconded by Mr. McPherson, the Board voted unanimously to allocate \$295,000 of the prior year's fund balance to reduce the amount to be raised by taxes, with the assumption that \$45,000 is anticipated in revenue from beach passes and will be added to the Beach and Recreation revenue for next year. The motion was carried 6-0.

On a motion made by Ms. Tung, and seconded by Mr. Charles, the Board voted unanimously to set the mill rate for the 2008-2009 fiscal year at 17.84. This rate anticipates a tax collection rate of 98.5%. The motion was carried 6-0.

On a motion made by Ms. Tung, and seconded by Mr. McPherson, the Board voted unanimously to read the following into the record: "In compliance with the State Law requiring that the tax bills indicate the number of mills that the anticipated State Revenue would equate to this year the bills would show 18.64 mills." The motion was carried 6-0.

Mr. Youngerman left the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

4. Discuss status of Pension Plans. Ms. Rossini noted that the unfunded amount in both the Town and Board of Education budgets have been decreased from last year. She noted that she can arrange to have a representative from the Pension Committee attend the next Board of Finance meeting to present a report if this would be beneficial. She noted that Mr. McPherson will be serving as the Board of Finance representative representative to the Pension Committee.

Mr. McPherson noted that the Firemen's Pension Fund is in a different format. Ms. Bavin noted that this fund is more of an annuity rather than a pension. She noted that Mr. Gladstone is the current Board of Selectmen liaison to the Pension Committee so he can be invited to attend at a future date to give a report or answer questions.

5. Discuss and take action on submission of the Drug Free Communities Support Program Application. Mr. Melillo noted that his Department had pursued a grant under the Selectman's Council on Youth Substance Abuse to improve collaboration efforts in dealing with youth substance abuse. The grant is for \$125,000 for five years with an option to continue for 6-11 years. Ms. Tung noted that the Town's portion of the annual matching funds is over \$58,000 and Mr. Melillo stated that those matching funds are already expended in the present budget under normal expenses.

Ms. Rossini noted that she has been a part of the Task Force and agrees that this is a very important issue. The Task Force is made up of very committed individuals who represent different organizations.

On motion made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Ms. Rossini, the Board voted unanimously to approve submission of the Drug Free Communities Support Program application.

6. Discuss and take action on request from Director of Human Services to apply for a grant from the State of Connecticut's Department of Transportation in the amount of \$32,003 for Elderly and Disabled Demand Responsive Transportation for FY 2008-2009 and to resolve that the First Selectman, Alfred J. Goldberg is authorized to sign contracts with the State Department of Transportation for the purposes of this grant. Mr. Melillo noted that there has been an increase in the number of individuals requesting transportation services.

On motion made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Mr. Charles, the Board voted unanimously to approve the request from the Director of Human Services to apply for a grant from the State of Connecticut's Department of Transportation in the amount of \$32,003 for Elderly and Disabled Demand Responsive Transportation for FY 2008-2009 and to resolve that the First Selectman, Alfred J. Goldberg is authorized to sign contracts with the State Department of Transportation for the purposes of this grant.

7. Discuss and take action on accepting donation from Mrs. Pardo's First Grade Team at Island Avenue School of a recycling receptacle to be placed in the center of Town. On motion made by Ms. Rossini, and seconded by Ms. Tung, the Board voted unanimously to accept the donation of a recycling receptacle to be placed in the center of Town from Mrs. Pardo's First Grade Team at Island Avenue School

Mr. Goldberg noted that the receptacle will be placed on Main Street near the Post Office. Ms. Rossini requested that the public use the containers appropriately so that the maximum amount of materials can be recycled.

8. Discuss and take action on special appropriation request of \$5,170 from Madison Youth and Family Services to provide assistance for individuals qualifying for aid. There has been an unanticipated increase in assistance requirements this year. Mr. Melillo provided a statistical

breakdown on the distribution of services. The economy downturn has had the impact of increasing the number of individuals looking for assistance.

On motion made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Ms. Tung, the Board voted unanimously to approve the request of Youth and Family Services for a special appropriation of \$5,170 from Contingency to Account No. 1-100-6120-0000-3300-770-00, Prof./Tech – Mental Health to provided funds needed, because the increased number of qualified individuals seeking assistance has surpassed expectations.

9. Discuss and take action on the following special appropriation requests from Registrar of Voters:

\$500 to purchase 26 battery powered lights for the election privacy booths for District 1 to alleviate some of the lighting issues at the Surf Club building.

\$900 to purchase from LHS two yes/no memory cards for the optical scan machines at a total cost of \$900, which includes programming.

\$6,600 – Support/poll Workers.

On a motion made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Ms. Stahelski, the Board voted unanimously to approve the request of the Registrar for a special appropriation of \$8,310 from Contingency to include \$500 to Account No. 1-100-1120-0000-6900-743-00, Supplies, to provided funds to purchase 26 battery powered lights, \$900 to Account No. 1-100-1120-0000-6900-843-00, Supplies, to purchase from LHS two yes/no memory cards for the optical scan machines, \$310 to Account No. 1-100-1120-0000-1040-843-00, Wages, to cover the wags for the Deputy Registrar which was increased for FY 08-08, and \$6,600 to Account No. 1-100-1120-0000-1124-843-00, Support/Poll Workers, for increased wages.

Mr. Goldberg noted that the Registrar of Voters are elected officials who report to the State, however, the Town needs to provide support for election activities. Ms. Carroll noted that this was the last time the Town needed to rent a ramp for the Surf Club. Under the current system the flow of voters and the parking has improved.

10. The following line transfers are designated as routine and appropriate for approval as a single action by the Board of Finance, if so desired. A Board member may request removal of any line transfer item from the consent agenda for review and discussion.

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Motion: To approve Line Transfers totaling \$92,458.41.

In response to a question by Ms. Tung, Ms. Bavin noted that they are seeing increased police department phone costs due to increased cell phone use. Mr. Goldberg noted that there are also increased phone costs due to improvements in the Town's emergency communications system.

On motion made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Ms. Stahelski, the Board voted unanimously to approve line transfers totaling \$92,458.41 as outlined on Town of Madison Summary of Line Transfers.

11. Review of Financials. Ms. Bavin reviewed the process in place to close out the current fiscal year. She noted that Departments were given a May 14 deadline for any special appropriation requests. A Town Meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 24 to act on the legal account.

12. Liaison Reports. Ms. Rossini noted that the Investment Committee continues to monitor rates. She noted that the interest rates have stabilized at 2.32% which is lower than the beginning of the year.

Mr. Charles noted that the Police Commission discussed the work of the new Acting Chief who is taking charge, making small but important changes and working on morale issues. He is discussing a system to put in place to track budget over runs before they occur and wants to revisit some budget items. Ms. Rossini noted that she has talked to the Police Commission Chairman and they will be meeting in the future to discuss legal costs, probably in executive session. Mr. McPherson commented that the Commission should also be briefing the Board of Selectmen who should be invited to attend the meeting.

13. Report from First Selectman. Mr. Goldberg thanked the members of the Board of Finance for their efforts in the development of the budget. Mr. Goldberg noted that moving forward, one of the primary items coming up is the Ad Hoc Committee to study tax relief. He noted that they will be undertaking a State wide analysis of programs. They have talked about various tasks and plan to have discussions on programs to begin early in the fall. Ms. Rossini noted that they are meeting every other week and their next meeting is scheduled for May 28th.

Ms. Rossini noted that if the budget had not passed at the first referendum, the time schedule would have been difficult to repeat the procedure and have a budget in place for July 1. She recommended that the Board keep this in mind when developing the budget schedule next year. Ms. Bavin noted that the budget schedule is driven by the Charter.

14. Citizen and Finance Member Comments. There were no citizen or Finance member comments.

15. Adjournment. On motion made by Mr. Charles, and seconded by Ms. Tung, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

The next regular meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 11, 2008.

Terry Holland-Buckley
Clerk

