

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

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BOARD OF FINANCE

Budget Hearing Minutes
Via In Person and Public Online Video Conference

April 5, 2022
7:00 PM

**Minutes are not official until approved at the next regular meeting*

Members Present (a quorum of 4 members is required to conduct business):

Mike Makuch- Chairman
Geoff Prusak- Vice Chairman
Peter Tanaka- Secretary
Stephanie Summers
Joseph Sherrell
Christina Mailhos
Lisa Woolf- Alt
Jim Gilligan- Alt

Also Present:

Erika Wiecewski- First Selectwoman
Jim Bulick- Selectman
Donna Latincsics- Business Manager
Alex Moore- Chief WFD #1
Phil Stevens- Superintendent
Members of the Public

Chairman Mike Makuch called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

SEATING OF ALTERNANTES: None required

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None to approve

PRESENTATION:

General Government totaled increase is a 5.77%, the combined educational budget (k-8, district 19) is a 2.65% increase, revenue is estimated at a .28% decrease, fund balance reduced 53% from last year's applications, leading to a proposed total increase in taxation of 7.94%, equaling a mil increase of 1.28.

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PRESENT TO SPEAK:

Ralph Tulis, 47 Village Hill Road, asked if there will be any affect on this budget and the mil rate because of the potential errors from the previous assessor and subsequently the grand list. Erika said that they have been finding errors, but not significant enough to cause the grand list to change.

Laurie Semprebon, Turnpike Road, (Board of Assessment Appeals) stated that at their last meeting, they did approve some changes the previous assessor had found but hadn't taken any action on, and the numbers went both ways. She also suggested that the board present the current budget as it is to the voters, she thought it was a good budget.

Bob Wiecenski, Ademic Road, had concerns with fund 17 being misused and diminishing. He stated he would be happy with a higher mil rate if it meant we would have more services provided, including repairs to infrastructure and fund 17 be left alone.

Jim Bulick stated that they did negotiate down from the original proposed budget and he wanted to acknowledge the BOF for their hard work.

John Blessington, 29 Mason Rd, stated that higher taxes are a burden especially on those who are on fixed incomes. He was hoping more cuts can be made. He brought up specific concerns over the DPW budget increase as well as the library's increase.

Carl Pearson, 55 Fermier Rd, had a question as to what the process is for maintaining or replenishing the Capital Reserve Funds. Mike replied by saying a certain amount of money goes into it each year from taxation. Christina added that this year there will be \$245,923.00 from the budget going into the reserve fund.

Walter Zalewa, 141 Turnpike Road, said he could understand increases to keep up with the cost of inflation, but he was hoping for more cuts to the proposed budget.

Peter Latincsics of 97 Trask Road, thanked the BOS and the BOF for working together on the budget, and he suggested finding more cuts.

Matt Clark wanted clarification to which number he should be paying attention to for tax increases.

Erika Wiecenski wanted to point out that there is actually a decrease in the overall capital spending plan.

Pete Tanka asked Erika if there is a decrease due to ARPA funds being in place this year and mentioned without those funds, there would have been an increase.

Robin Campbell, shared some insight from past experiences with the ramifications of budget cuts causing larger more costly problems further down the road. She didn't want to see any more cuts being made to the budget, she thought it should go to the townspeople to be voted on.

Christina Psathas, Jared Sparks Rd, thought that all the departments have been mindful with their requests for budget increases. She acknowledged that no one wants to raise taxes, but it is necessary.

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Peter Latincsics, 97 Trask Road, was wondering if there could be a summary of the ARPA funding and how it affects the budget at the Town Meeting, he was also wondering if the BOF is forecasting any more revenue to come in for the future. Mike answered by saying ARPA funding is separate and it may be confusing to have the BOF share a summary, so he doesn't want the townspeople to get confused and think ARPA allocations are being voted on for the budget.

Peter made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 pm.

Stephanie Seconded this motion

Votes YES: Stephanie, Joe, Geoff, Christina, Pete, Mike.

Votes NO: None.

Motion passed

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Sperry
Recording Secretary

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TOWN CLERK