

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

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BOARD OF FINANCE

Special Meeting Minutes

April 5, 2022

Via In Person and Public Online Video Conference

7:00 PM (after Public Hearing concludes)

**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 Wiececki- First Selectwoman
Jim Bullick- 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 8:25 PM.

SEATING OF ALTERNANTES: None required

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None to approve

PRESENT TO SPEAK:

Jim Bullick, Lauren Drive, wanted to comment that it would be helpful to bring in more businesses to help alleviate the tax burden on taxpayers.

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NEW BUSINESS

Budget Discussion

Peter made a motion to make a budget adjustment of a reduction of \$65,000 on the K-8 education Geoff seconded the motion.

Peter comments that every year there is an increase in k-8's budget and this budget can never go down, it can only go up. This year part of it (\$65k) was for the fuel increase. His reasoning is if they vote to increase the budget \$65,000 this year, they will get stuck with that amount every year, even if the cost of fuel goes down. Peter thinks it might be a better idea to take the money out of the non-lapsing fund instead. This will help keep the k-8 budget down in future years and it will help chip away at the non-lapsing fund because he is under the impression there is a ceiling to the non-lapsing fund at \$250k and its balance is currently around \$230k. He says that they are taking \$50k out of the fund already, if they were to take this \$65k as well it would leave them with approximately \$115k which would be sufficient for one special ed. student's outplacement costs.

Lisa Woolf doesn't think it is fiscally prudent to take money away from the k-8 budget just hoping that the fuel costs will go down, she says that cost of living is always going to go up. She says Phil Stevens (Superintendent) has always been very transparent with the town for his budget requirements and if they didn't spend it all, etc. She says the k-8 budget is directly related to teachers' salaries as well as supplies and doesn't want to see the teachers or schools go without due to the budget decrease.

Mike wants to step in and state that the BOF is not allowed to decide how the non-lapsing fund is used, only the BOE can.

Christina asks what happens when the non-lapsing fund reaches its limit of \$250k? Phil Stevens says the cap is non-statutory, but it was set by the Town at 3% of the current fiscal year budget. Phil says it can't go over that cap, and it doesn't mean that the BOE can't return the money, it just means the BOE cannot ask the BOF to put more money into the non-lapsing fund. Phil also adds that the average special education student outplacement is \$100k, there could be special circumstances where it could be \$500k. Typically outplacement around us with transportation costs around \$130k and that is what some of the non-lapsing fund is for.

Stef says of course the k-8 budget is always going to go up, it is contractual.

Geoff, Mike and Phil discuss that there is no placeholder for special education within the BOE budget, it is solely in the cushion of the non-lapsing fund.

Votes YES: Pete, Geoff

Votes NO: Joe, Stephanie, Christina, Mike

Motion fails

Peter made a motion to make a budget adjustment of a reduction of \$30,000 on the K-8 education Joe seconded the motion.

Votes YES: Joe, Pete, Geoff

Votes NO: Stephanie, Christina, Mike

Motion fails

PRESENT TO SPEAK:

Laurie Semprebon, Turnpike Road, (Board of Assessment Appeals) stated that she thinks the buffer in the non-lapsing fund is very important because you never know when they might get any special ed. outplacements.

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Peter Latincsics of 97 Trask Road states that he is happy townsfolk make it out to the meeting to discuss their opinions on the proposed budget, and he is disappointed that the BOF didn't take more time to look over the budget after the budget hearing.

GOOD AND WELFARE:

Mike states that the next step in this process will be the town meeting held on Tuesday, April 19, 7:00 pm at the "Old Town Hall" and it will not be hybrid.

Peter made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 pm.

Mike Seconded this motion

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

Votes NO: None.

Motion passes

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Sperry
Recording Secretary

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TOWN CLERK

