

MINUTES

BOARD OF FINANCE – HYBRID 2021 – 2022 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING MEETING

MAY 12, 2021

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In Person:

Board of Finance Attendance: John Grabowski-Chairman, Sharon Huxley, Lars Demander, Sally Huyser, John Ford, and Catherine Erickson.

In-Person attendance: First Selectman Paula Cofrancesco and Interim Director Tom Ellis, Town Counsel Vincent Marino, Esq., Tax Collector Fran Doba, Selectman Don Shea, Park and Recreation Director Janice Loomis, Human Services Director Robin Glowa.

In-Person Visitors: Nick Poulmas, Bruce Loomis, Amy Lestinsky, James Valenti, Elizabeth Appel, Donna Shea, Kerry Triffin, Robert White, Jr., Bob Brinton, Alyssia Walowski, Seth Walowski, Chris Pittenger, Lynette White, Brent Ciccarelli, Matthew Hubbard, Angela Nielson.

Visitors Via Zoom: Linda Bates, Andre Puleo, Elizabeth (Pua) Ford, Liz Scott, Kathryn Sylvester, Will and Kim Brinton, Brandy Spargo, Eric Frieden, Bob Harrison, Connie Royster, Sara Culbertson, David Grimes, Richard Cogill, Angelo Amato, Marie Pulito, Craig Jones, Carol Goldberg, Brad Buchta, Patricia Winer, Tom Reed-Swale, Jennifer Galik.

1. BUDGET HEARING PRESENTATION

The Board of Finance Chairman John Grabowski called the budget hearing presentation to order at 7:04 p.m.

Chairman Grabowski proceeded to the budget hearing presentation of the 2021-2022 fiscal year. The Budget PowerPoint presentation included the 2019-2020 Financial results indicating a surplus of \$430,398.00 from the Amity Surplus and \$619,619.00 from FEMA's 75% refunds from the May 2018 tornado expenses. The 2020 - 2021 Budget trend from tax, revenues, and expenditures to be on track, noting also the 1% and possibly 2% retain surplus by Amity. The major road repair expenses from 2020-2021 towards 2022 included over 50 roads paved, two rounds of chip sealing, with approximately two-thirds of the roads repaired. Currently, the Town is assessing the scope of work needed to complete the road work. The presentation also included the 2021-2022 budget major increases and decreases. The Amity Budget indicated the student enrollment percentage and the surplus given back to the towns. The Bethany Board of Education budget increased due to salaries and benefits; it also included the student average class size, and the estimated student population number. The BOWA Budget provided the percentages budget increase per the Town (Bethany 1.73%, Orange 2.78%, and Woodbridge 2.48%). Amity overall increase is 1.80%. Bethany has a small DECREASE this year due to a reduction of proportionate enrollment.

The Fund Balance, which is the sum of the accumulated surplus, was then presented. A good fund balance helps ensure a good bond rating, which is measured as percentages of expenditures. The Board of Finance goal is to maintain a fund balance between 14 – 18 % in order to cover emergency expenditures/needs, but not at the cost of higher taxes. The Board of Finance noted that by lowering the mill rate by 2.06 to 34.50 would keep the fund balance at 22.92% and possibly maintain the lowered proposed mill rate without the need to increase it next fiscal year. This will allow us to maintain the lower mill rate for several years while also setting aside funds for future capital projects needs.

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The presentation then moved to the Capitals and non-recurring fund which included:

- Town Hall IT Fiber Optic Replacement \$ 10,000
- Town Hall IT Website Design \$ 16,500
- Fire Hose and CO Meters \$ 32,500
- Veterans Park Playground Resurface \$145,000
- Public Works Brush Grapple \$ 15,360
- Public Works Truck Lifts for Garage \$ 50,000
- Public Works 6Yard Dump/Plow(\$234K-3year) \$ 77,938
- **Total** **\$347,298**
- Land Acquisition \$100,000
- Non – recurring Expenses \$347,298
- **Total** **\$447,298**

It also included the presentation on the requested Capital Appropriations for Future Budgets as follows:

- Mason Dump w/ Plow 2023 \$150,000
- PW Pickup w/ Plow 2023 \$ 70,000
- FD SCBA Replacement 2024 \$400,000
- FD Brush Truck Replace 2025 \$125,000
- FD Ambulance Replace 2026 \$250,000
- Land Acquisition 23,24,25,26 \$100,000

The Capital project to be funded by leasing:

- Public Works 6 Yard Dump Truck with Plow (3 Years at \$77,938 starting payment in FY2022).

And finally, the Budget summary by percentages”

	Budget FY 2021	Budget 2022	Increase/ Decrease	% Increase/ Decrease
Town Govt.	\$ 6,708,116	\$ 6,920,788	\$ 212,672	3.17%
Capital	\$ 443,467	\$ 447,298	\$ 3,831	.86%
Education	\$ 16,171,972	\$ 16,315,094	\$ \$143,122	.88%
Debt Service	\$ 523,669	\$ 785,068	\$ 261,399	50%
Total Spending	\$ 23,847,224	\$ 24,468,248	\$ 621,024	2.60%
Less Non Tax Revenue	\$ 2,944,142	\$ 2,835,971	\$ (108,171)	(3.67%)
Property Tax Revenue	\$ 20,903,082	\$ 20,277,895	\$ (625,187)	(2.99%)
Total Taxable Grand List	\$ 577,706,947	\$ 589,826,155	\$ 12,119,208	2.10%
Tax Collect Rate	98.25%	98.25%		
Mill Rate	36.56	34.5		

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The Board Chairman then proceeded to address the public's questions and concerns.

Speakers:

- Anthony Ciarleglio – Department of Public Works Acting Foreman/Director – provided clarification on the budgeted truck leasing, contracted services, and maintenance.
- Fran Doba – provided clarification on the IT's department proposed expenditures and projects.
- Bruce Loomis – Land Acquisition and Conservation Chairman – spoke in favor of the land acquisition.
- Janice Howard – Parks and Recreation Director – provided clarification proposed budget for the department.
- Paula Cofrancesco – First Selectman – provided feedback on some of the expenditures and also provided the update on the ZEO.

Public/Residents:

- Seth Walowski – 300 Fairwood Road – inquired about the truck lease expenditure. Response was addressed by Mr. Ciarleglio during the meeting.
- Alysia Walowski – 300 Fairwood Road – inquired about the town not having an IT person dedicated to that area of work only. Responses were addressed by Mrs. Doba during the meeting.
- Andre Puleo – via zoom- inquired about the Land Acquisition.
- David Grimes – via zoom - asked about the impact of the Land Acquisition purchase to the Town.
- Kerry Triffin- Downs Road – Spoke in favor of the Land Acquisition.
- Marie Pulito – inquired about Lina's positions and her role as a ZEO.
- Brenda Caldwell – inquired about the ZEO.
- Connie Royster – provided feedback and inquired about the salary for P&R, the salary in the Selectman's office, inquired about the ZEO qualifications, and noted that the budget proposal did not provide the actuals for comparison. She has also shared her comments via email.

To learn more about the discussion and questions addressed during this public hearing, please ask to review the recording via Zoom from the May 12, 2021 named "Budget Hearing", which will be made available at the Town's Clerk office.

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Board of Finance Chairman Grabowski proceeded to announce that the Town Meeting on the Budget will be on May 26, 2021, and all questions will continue to be addressed. Member Huxley clarified that the hearing is intended for the public to provide feedback and recommendations on areas of the budgeted line items that might need to be decreased or increased.

Selectman Shea asked on the possibility to increase the budget for the completion of the road works. Members from the public asked if the town will be provided with a schedule of roads that are to be worked on.

2. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:30 p.m. the Board of Finance ended the Public Hearing for the 2021-2022 proposed budget.

Respectfully submitted,



Lina V. Frazer

Board of Finance Clerk

DRAFT

