

Thomaston Board of Finance
Regular Meeting of March 9, 2010

Present: D. Colavecchio (Chairman), G. Seabourne, F. Treglia, M. Galbraith, S. Turner, K. Mosimann O'Sullivan.

Also present: Head of Public Works, Paul Pronovost; Finance Director, Sue Smith; Selectman John Scheppard.

Also present: Members of the public, press

1. Call to Order

D. Colavecchio called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

On a motion by S. Turner, seconded by K. Mosimann O'Sullivan, it was voted to move item 7. New Business i. Public Works budgets, to the top of the agenda. Vote: Unanimous

3. New Business

i. Public Works

Paul Pronovost reported that most of the 3.3% increase in the FY2011 proposed budget is contractual such as wage increases. He noted that there are some new expenses including street signs required by the state or federal government that identify tributaries of the Naugatuck River. The signs are erected at the expense of the Town. They cost about \$125 each. Other expenses include the following:

- Monitoring of the contaminated site at the Public Works garage
- 2 new trucks will require specialized equipment
- 2 older trucks will need repairs
- 12 trees that are potential hazards to the public need to be removed at \$1000 per tree
- Snow and Ice budget is higher due to contractual considerations

On a motion by G. Seabourne, seconded by K. Mosimann O'Sullivan, it was voted to add the Capital Improvements Committee to the agenda. Vote: Unanimous

4. Capital Improvements

S. Smith reviewed the process that the Committee uses for reviewing and prioritizing capital projects and why they are placed in a series of categories of descending urgency. She reported that there are \$373,490 projects in Categories 1-3: Code 1 Committed Highest Priority; Code 2 Urgent, High Priority; Code 3. Needed; Code 4 Deferrable. She reviewed all of the projects on the FY2011 funding list.

Sue Smith reviewed the Capital Improvements Funding Policy which also includes a WPCA Capital Improvements Funding Policy developed by the WPCA Board.

On a motion by K. Mosimann O'Sullivan, seconded by M. Galbraith, the Capital Improvements Policy was accepted. Vote: Unanimous

5. Minutes

i. Minutes of Special Meeting of 2-9-10

On a motion by K. Mosimann O'Sullivan, seconded by G. Seabourne, the minutes of the Special Meeting on 2-9-10 were accepted as presented.

ii. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of 2-9-10

On a motion by K. Mosimann O'Sullivan, seconded by S. Turner, the minutes of the Regular Meeting on 2-9-10 meeting were accepted as presented. Vote: Unanimous

iii. Minutes of the Special Meeting of 2-23-10

On a motion by K. Mosimann O'Sullivan, seconded by G. Seabourne, the minutes of the Special Meeting of 2-23-10 were accepted with the following addition: under Board of Education, after the sentence "The proposed Regular Education budget is \$11,556,747 which represents a 3.69% increase of \$411,463 over the current budget," insert the following "Teachers' Severance of \$72,115 is not included in this number." Vote: Unanimous

6. Communications

D. Colavecchio reported that he received the following communications and the Board acknowledged receipt of, but did not read the following:

1. Former Executive Director of the Opera House Jeff Dunn's Response to the Auditors' Report
2. A letter from former Treasurer of the Opera House, Betty Bazin

The following letter was read:

3. A letter from John Dufour of All Star Transportation requesting to be allowed to bid on the Special Education bus contract. D. Colavecchio will discuss the letter with the Chairman of the Board of Education.

7. Financial Director's Report-no report

8. First Selectman's Report-

E. Mone reported that he will meet with representatives from Middlebury and Watertown to discuss the feasibility of regionalizing communication/dispatch services.

He reported that the FY2011 Budget for the Town Hall departments will be lean.

9. Old Business

i. High St. sewer lateral

E. Mone reported that he met with the home owner to discuss the matter of the broken sewer lateral. The cost of the repair was \$1379; E. Mone contacted CIRMA who will look at the site and pay for the repair.

ii. Energy Audit: E. Mone reported that the Board of Finance must modify its motion of 3-2-10 to approve the project. On a motion by K. Mosimann O'Sullivan, seconded by S. Turner, the Board of Finance recommends that the Town enter into a long term contract with CL&P for \$31,761.59 over 28 payments for electrical upgrades to the Town Hall subject to approval at a Town Meeting. Vote: Unanimous

10. Budget Discussion

D. Colavecchio confirmed that the anticipated tax collection rate for FY2011 Budget will be 96.7%. Sue Smith reported that the current tax collection is on target to meet this collection percentage.

D. Colavecchio recommended the following cuts to the FY2011 Budget:

Library: \$22,210

Education: \$46,106 Busses

Education: \$42,959 Business Teacher

Education: \$24,736 Capital Expense

Police Dept: \$15,000 Overtime, Police Dept.

Social Service: \$16,476 Personnel

D. Colavecchio said that he was looking to limit the increase to 3% which will require “massive cuts.” He called on the former Chair of the Board of Finance John Scheppard for his advice. John Scheppard stated that the Board of Finance has the responsibility to offer the townspeople an opportunity to pay for the services that they want and need such as teachers, police and fire protection. He observed that, “Last year the Board was told resoundingly that the Town could not afford services. Give people a chance to say, ‘I want to pay for my child’s education.’ ” After much discussion, it was decided to attempt to get to a 5% increase in the budget which will require cutting \$950,000 from the proposed budgets, most of which are salaries and benefits.

11. Member Comment

D. Colavecchio spoke at length on the regrettable choices that the Board and the townspeople face because of the economy and the limited resources of many of Thomaston’s taxpayers.

12. Public Comment

1. T. Durso- Noted that the FY2010 Budget was at a 16% increase when first reviewed.

2. K. Yost- Is it possible to break the budget out by departments at referendum?

Answer 1: Yes, however, this was done in the past and the voters defeated the Debt Service budget which is a legal obligation.

Answer 2. In another referendum, the separation of budgets at referendum was voted down.

3. P. Yost- Knows of 5 companies that are leaving Thomaston. Any increase in taxes will impact these people.

4. C. Veronisi- Heard that the Board of Finance said it will double the class sizes in the schools.

Answer: Board of Finance has not said that.

13. Adjournment

On a motion by K. Mosimann O’Sullivan, seconded by G. Seabourne, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm.

Marie Galbraith, Secretary
Thomaston Board of Finance

