

Thomaston Board of Finance
Special Meeting
Tuesday March 22, 2011

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

Also present: First Selectman Ed Mone; Finance Director, Sue Smith, Barry Bernabe Financial Advisor, Webster Bank

Also: Fire Chief Jamie Wilson; members of the public, press.

1. Call to Order

Chairman D. Colavecchio called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

All rose and recited the Pledge.

3. Fire Dept:

Jaime Wilson presented the proposed 2011-2012 Budget which calls for a \$13.34% increase of \$15,415 for a total budget of \$135,544. The increase is due to the following: required mandatory training, \$1800 increase; radio pagers, \$5050 increase; cost of diesel fuel, \$2975 increase.

Chief Wilson noted that the Dept .received a grant of \$47,000 for new turnout gear which will require a match of \$17,000.

4. Capital Improvement Committee

Finance Director Sue Smith gave a power point program showing photos of many of the repairs needed in the Town's buildings including the Town Hall, Center School, and Thomaston High School. She also showed photos of the town trucks and fire trucks that are in need of replacement or repair. The CIP Committee recommended that the Town hire a consultant to review all of the town buildings and equipment and submit a cost of repair and replacement and a priority order for each. The total estimated cost of all of the projects including the road repairs is estimated at \$24,340,000.

5. Bond Counsel

Barry Bernabe, of Webster Bank, reviewed the Town's bond rating as compared to other municipalities in the state. He warned that if the Town uses its Fund Balance to lower the mil rate increase, and if the Town does not systematically and regularly fund its Pension Obligations, its bond rating will be downgraded and the Town will pay higher interest rates on its debt. He advised that the Town needs to have a plan with a chart showing that its reserves will increase over time and the Town's bond rating will go up. The Town's rating was adjusted upwards this year to Aa3.

6. Opera House

M. Galbraith presented the Opera House proposed budget of \$22,298 for 2011-2012.

The Board recommended putting the following items in the Town Budget:

Unemployment Compensation: \$9688.

Leases: \$6584

The Board allotted \$1160 for re-hanging the stage curtain and re-ropeing the fly system. These repairs are required for safety.

D. Colavecchio suggested \$6045 be added to the Town's Computer Information Systems budget for Opera house leases and \$540 for the postage meter. A new department will be created by S Smith for Unemployment and \$9,688 will be added. The remaining costs of \$1,660 will be a subsidy to the Opera House budget for other expense.

7. Public Hearing on Proposed 2011-2012 Budget and further cuts

D. Colavecchio announced that the Public Hearing on the proposed 2011-2012 Budget will be held on Wednesday April 27, 2011 at 7pm at the Thomaston Center School Auditorium.

D. Colavecchio reported that he met with K. Mosimann O'Sullivan and Ed Mone and they recommend the following:

Reduce funding the following obligations:

GASB OPEB Trust \$234,000 (fund \$-0- next year)

Undesignated Surplus \$153,207

Pension Net Pension Obligation \$50,000(\$589,119 obligation at June 30, 2010)

Debt smoothing reduction \$140,000 (original \$180,000 towards future debt)

Cuts from budgeted items:

Tree removal \$6000

Social Services \$15,765

Street signs \$4000

Police Dept. vehicle replacement \$13,000

Library \$4500

Ambulance \$1100

S.B. Anthony Shelter \$500

Fire Dept \$7000

Education \$78,216

K-9 \$300

Tax Collection Rate

Raise rate from 96.7% to 97% increase of \$48,000 in taxes

8. Member Comment

D. Colavecchio reported that these cuts and will bring the increase in the budget to 4%.

He noted that the Real Estate Conveyance income of \$83,000 is not included in this estimate and the mechanic position for the Public Works dept is included in the budget and could also be cut.

The Pension Committee will meet on April 26, 2011 at 6:00pm for a Quarterly Investment Review

K. Mosimann O'Sullivan reported that on April 26 at 6:00pm, CRRA will conduct a recycling program for the public. She encouraged everyone to attend and noted that recycling reduces the Town's tipping fees.

8. Public Comment:

1. T. Durso said he is "cautiously optimistic" about the budget.

2. P. Yoos said he appreciates the efforts of the Board.

3. R. Taylor recommended that Education be cut and the town buildings need to be repaired.

4. C. Yoos thanked the Board for its "hard work."

On a motion by S. Turner, seconded by G. Seabourne, the meeting was adjourned at 10:55pm.

Marie Galbraith

Secretary, Thomaston Board of Finance