

**SALEM BOARD OF FINANCE  
Salem Town Office Building  
270 Hartford Road, Salem, CT 06420**

**Thursday, March 10, 2016  
Special Meeting - 7:00 PM**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman TJ Butcher called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS:** None.

**Roll Call/Seating of Alternates.** Members present: Chairman TJ Butcher, Clerk George Householder, Hernan Salas, Janet Griggs, Deborah Cadwell, Marshall Collins and John Houchin, Alt. Members Absent: Ken Thomas, Alt. and Robert Wolk, Alt. Also present: Kevin Lyden, First Selectman and Pam Henry, Town Treasurer.

All regular Board members were present, so there was no seating of Alternate Board members.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

**Chairman TJ Butcher read correspondence into the record from Sue Spang, who nominated Jim Burke for dedication of Annual Town Report.**

**ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:** None.

**AGENDA:**

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES :**

**M/S/C Griggs/Salas to APPROVE the minutes of the February 25, 2016 BOF Regular Meeting with the following amendments :**

- Page 1 of 4, Paragraph 2 – Roll Call – Change “absent” to “late” Marshall Collins.
- Page 2 of 4, Paragraph 5, Line 2 of Item C – #158 Library – Change “Giambria” to “Giambra”.
- Page 2 of 4, Paragraph 9, Line 1 of Item D – #220 Gardner Lake Fire Co. – Change “Houdin” to “Houchin”.

**2. TREASURER’S REPORTS.**

Town Treasurer, Pam Henry presented Treasurer’s Reports as follows:

**A. REVENUE SUMMARY.** Pam Henry stated Revenues are up from last year at this time. There was brief discussion regarding monthly billing by the Tax Collector as being an effective practice.

**B. TRIAL BALANCE.** Pam Henry stated the year end will be on next month's agenda.

**C. FUND BALANCE.** There was brief discussion by Pam Henry of Budget v. Actual and the TAR check.

**D. OTHER :** TJ Butcher stated the overall budget projections were close. George Householder stated utilities costs were down.

### **3. PUBLIC COMMENTS.**

Sarah Bernhardson of 229 Buckley Road, Salem, CT addressed the Board in support of the proposed 16/17 school budget stating lower class sizes make up for the lack of foreign language and before and after school care at Salem School.

Shannon D'Aquila Haynes of 345 Darling Road, Salem, CT addressed the Board in support of the proposed 16/17 school budget stating she has two children at Salem School and is supportive of the teachers. She stated she is afraid if the proposed 2% increase is not approved, there will be less services, such as special desks for children with special needs and that more cuts will decrease the quality of education, and more families will gravitate towards magnet schools.

Tiffany Cunningham of 89 Rattlesnake Ledge Road, Salem, CT addressed the Board in support of the proposed 16/17 school budget stating she attends all the Board of Education meetings, that significant thought went into the budget and that she supports three first grade teachers to teach kids to read.

Suzanne Gendron of 79 Mill Lane Road, Salem, CT addressed the Board in support of the proposed 16/17 school budget stating nobody wants the tax base to go up. She referenced an Efficiency study, which she stated suggested reorganization administration and the administration is now more efficient. She stated Salem School is right on the mark, but missing key components to be the same as other owns, such as enrichment programs, which are now parent volunteer programs and not sustainable. She stated she has a third grade student not reading, that is not only costing her thousands of dollars, but Salem School for extra services now required that she believes would not have been necessary if the child had received core teaching when he needed it in first grade. She stated everything is going up and 1-2% is a fraction of what is needed per the Efficiency Study and that percentage is what is needed to survive.

#### **4. SELECTMAN'S REPORT.**

First Selectman Kevin Lyden congratulated the Board of Finance for keeping a healthy fund balance. He reviewed the need for the Town to retain two State Troopers; that Uncas Health District costs would be the same per Town; that he attended the Kindergarten DARE graduation with the School Principal and Trooper Laroux & Trooper Chris, who are DARE certified Troopers; that he attended the monthly Senior meeting with Pam Henry, who is the agent for the Elderly and advised bus service is available if needed; that the United Way Food Pantry set up behind Salem School last week and served 59 families week, that there is no income verification and that food can be deleivered upon request; that on March 30, 2016, CT DOT will hold a public informational meeting regarding Route 85 safety improvements from the Roundabout to Waterford including the Skyline Drive area and drainage improvements that will cost 40-45 million dollars and responded that Route 11 improvements are 20 years out with zero funding of the 500 million dollars needed.

#### **5. ACT ON APPROPRIATIONS FOR 2016/2017**

Chairman TJ Butcher reviewed the process for approving the 2016/2017 budget.

##### **A. BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET**

Stephen Buck, Chairman of the Board of Education, presented the Board with a Power Point presentation regarding the proposed budget (see attached file).

Board Clerk George Householder presented the Board with a Power Point presentation addressing his comments and concerns (see attached file).

Chairman TJ Butcher stated that although the Board did not have to recognize members of the audience, after Board comments, he would accept questions and comments.

Board Member Marshall Collins stated that due to increasing State funding cuts, there will be less revenue to the Town, and he's concerned with declining enrollment. He stated the Board asked all Town Departments to pare its budgets down, but the Board of Education is proposing a 2% increase and he is concerned where the money will come from.

Board Member Janet Griggs stated that a lot of effort went into reducing other line items to get other things and she is concerned that since proposed utilities projections are based on the current year's warm winter, there will not be enough funds for a harsher winter.

Board Member Deborah Cadwell discussed the current numbers of teachers and aides.

Board Member Hernan Salas stated not to increase the budget to the point it can't be sustained, to be conscious the State is a mess and that the Board needs to look ahead for the next five years. He stated last year was a really good budget. He stated that with a

the next five years. He stated last year was a really good budget. He stated that with a \$224,000.00 increase plus another 200,000.00 in State cuts, that is another \$400,000.00 plus we will pay in taxes.

Board Member John Houchin addressed the Special Education side of the budget and requested the Board of Education look at negotiating with outside providers to roll back out of district special education services. Superintendent Joseph O'nofrio stated there is no established rate, so it is more difficult to negotiate, but that they do what they can do to cut those costs.

George Householder asked the BOE to consider 2 first grade teachers and two aides. There was detailed discussion about the numbers and need for teachers qualified to teach, the role of classroom aides, the number of children per classroom both in Salem and surrounding towns.

Joseph O'nofrio stated that thousands of hours went into preparing the budget, that it was carefully thought out and written.

Board of Education member Mary Ann Pudimat stated that stipends were thought out and based on actual dollar amounts. George Householder requested actual dollar amounts, not a round number.

BOE Member Stephen Buck discussed class sizes and the savings on special education services in higher grades by keeping first grade class sizes small.

Marshall Collins again expressed his concern over where the money is coming from.

TJ Butcher stated the Board had to look a little further down the road and cannot continue down this road with reduced enrollment without heading in a bad way by spending more than we can afford. He responded to Sarah Berhardson and stated he is not unhappy with the quality of education in Salem, but that we are at a fiscal cliff and the Board of Education could make other cuts other than first grade teachers. He stated the Board of Finance only has the authority over the bottom line.

There was further detailed discussion by the Board of Finance, Board of Education, Superintendents, Members of the Audience regarding the proposed budget. Public comment ended at 9 :45 p.m.

**M/S/F Householder/Collins to APPROVE the proposed Board of Education Budget as presented in the amount of \$10,859,710.00. Vote: Motion Failed Unanimously.**

**M/S/F Householder/Collins to APPROVE a proposed Board of Education Budget in the amount of \$10,645,000.00. Vote : Motion Failed. In Favor : Householder. Opposed : Collins, Salas, Griggs, Cadwell.**

**M/S/F Salas/Collins to APPROVE a proposed Board of Education Budget in the amount of \$10,753, 579.00. Vote: Motion Failed. In Favor : Salas, Griggs. Opposed : Householder, Collins, Cadwell.**

**M/S/C Householder/Collins to APPROVE a proposed Board of Education Budget in the amount of \$10,698,225.00. Vote: Motion Carried. In Favor : Householder, Collins, Griggs, Cadwell. Opposed: Salas.**

## **B. REVENUES**

**M/S/C Householder/Collins to APPROVE Dept. 42000 Revenues as amended in the amount of \$328,442.00. Vote: Approved unanimously.**

**M/S/C Cadwell/Griggs to APPROVE Dept. 93 Revenues as amended in the amount of \$3,151,690. Vote: Approved unanimously.**

**M/S/C Collins/Householder to APPROVE Dept. 94 Revenues as amended in the amount of \$153,140.00. Vote: Approved unanimously.**

**M/S/C Collins/Griggs to APPROVE Dept. 95 Revenues as amended in the amount of \$24,800.00. Vote: Approved unanimously.**

**M/S/C Householder/Griggs to APPROVE Dept. 96 Revenues as amended in the amount of \$7,000.00. Vote: Approved unanimously.**

**M/S/C Collins/Salas to APPROVE Dept. 97 Revenues in the amount of \$47,355.00. Vote: Approved unanimously.**

## **6. DISCUSS/ACTION ON PUBLIC SAFETY EAP FOR EMERGENCY RESPONDERS.**

The Board liked the idea of covering all Emergency Responders with a Public Safety EAP and will make a decision in the next few meetings.

## **7. DISCUSS/ACTION FOR DEDICATION OF ANNUAL REPORT.**

**M/S/C Collins/Griggs to dedicate the Annual Report to Jim Burke. Vote: Approved unanimously.**

**OLD BUSINESS.** None.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**M/C Householder to ADJOURN the meeting at 10:59 p.m.  
Vote : Approved unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Burdick  
Recording Secretary

APPROVED BY THE SALEM BOARD OF FINANCE ON \_\_\_\_\_.

UNAPPROVED