

**SALEM BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
April, 12, 2012**

PRESENT

Tom Butcher
John Dolan (Alt)
Carol Eckart
Janet Griggs
George Householder
Dave Kennedy (Alt)
Greg Preston
Bill Weinschenker, Chairman

ABSENT

P. Lee (Alt)
Virginia Casey, Rec. Sec

B. Weinschenker called the meeting to order at 7:00.

AGENDA

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS: B. Weinschenker recognized the visitors

SEAT ALTERNATES: No alternates were seated

COMMUNICATIONS:

C. Eckart mentioned the email to members from P. Sielman who stated that he liked the way the school formats their budget for presentation compared to the Town's presentation. He would like to see the budgets similar and have more detail in the town side of the budget. The Board decided to address the format of the town's budget side of the presentation at the July meeting.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M/S/C (Eckart/Griggs) to approve the March 15, 2012 minutes as amended.

Move section E, to follow Section K, to better reflect the order in which the Board discussed the items.

Page 5, Section L & M add \$ signs to (0.00) amounts

Vote: Approved Unanimously

M/S/C (Preston/Butcher) to approve the Minutes of March 22, 2012 as amended.

Pages 2, ¶3, add, ing to the word work(*ing*).

Page 3, ¶4, correct spelling of Teal to Teel and add Michael before Teel.

Vote: Approved Unanimously

2 TREASURERS REPORT

The Treasurer was not present. (See File Copy for report)

B. Weinschenker noted the revenues were in line with last year.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

4. SELECTMAN'S REPORT- No Report

5. FARMER'S MARKET APPROPRIATION

K. Lyden sent a written request for an additional appropriation which was recommended by the Board of Selectman in the amount of \$2500 for promotion and advertising of the new farmer's market. The letter stated that approximately \$700 has been received so far with an estimated \$2500-\$2700 total expected for the town's general fund for rental of market spaces. K. Lyden asked if there could be a new line created in dept. 152-Town Services.

M/S/C (Preston/Butcher) to appropriate \$2500 from the unassigned fund to be placed into newly created line 152-095-0651-Farmer's Market. Vote: Approved Unanimously.

M/S/C (Eckart/Preston) to create line 97-700-0006 Farmer's Market Fees. Vote: Approved Unanimously.

Discussion about appropriating funds for the following year was discussed. The Board concluded that the funds could be requested in the following year if needed and requested.

6. CONSIDER ITEMS FROM APRIL 11, 2012 PUBLIC HEARING.

B. Weinschenker asked the members what their general impression of the Public Hearing was.

- J. Dolan: went well and thought the BOE kept it level, budget was well received and presented.
- T. Butcher: counted 52 people and did not think any issue resonated
- C. Eckart: people appreciated the Boards and Commissions keeping the line on their budgets, no axe to grind.
- J. Griggs: J. Fogarty concerns about moving funds from BOE to the general government side were not really addressed and she understands the issues involved.
- G. Householder: thought it went very well.
- D. Kennedy: thought people did not fully understand the consequences of the reval and mil rate.
- G. Preston: two camps, some thought the general government budget was too high and other thought BOE was too high. He stated the school bond for \$100,000 and the school debt service for the high school for \$92,350.00 was put into the general government from the school budget which resulted in an increase for the general government. If not for those two items the general government side would show a decrease.
- B. Weinschenker was surprised that less than half the people at the meeting knew their assessment rate. Worried that people may go home and figure out how much their assessment went down and how the mil rate will affect them and come to the Town Meeting with a different perspective on the budget. He thought the significant items he heard

were the amount spent on computers at the library and school.

C. Eckart thought that N. Rabe did a good job when he compared last year's numbers to this year's numbers and it would be a good thing to highlight those comparisons at the Town Meeting.

The members noted that the budget remained flat due to the decrease in capital, as well as using TAR money. It was noted that this is a one year fix and next year will be much different

G. Householder went over the comments from the Public Hearing,

- Salary increases and new payroll system were questioned at Public Hearing and adequately answered by the First Selectman.
- The library computer costs and conference/dues were discussed at the Public Hearing.
- The aides and tutors for the school were questioned.
- The BOE was up over \$100,000 even with \$140,000 decrease in expenditures of half time superintendent and debt service removed from BOE budget.
- Aides and tutors and MBR, what happens if aides and tutors grant goes away what do you do with the MBR.
- Computer costs for school, speaker at Public Hearing thought the school could get better pricing. Superintendent explained the technology plan.
- Comment to bring the town budget more in line with school budget.

The library computer line was discussed. The members talked about the need to replace the computers and if the library needed that many computers. B. Weinschenker recalled at the last meeting the Head Librarian stated that there were not a many times when all the computers are in use. It was noted that the computers at the library are older models. The members noted that the town is trying to get on a rotation to replace computers as they become obsolete. The question of, are there too many computers and can the library do with less computers in the spirit of sharing the pain.

The school computers and the cost over the last few years were discussed. S. Buck, BOE chairman stated they do look for the best prices.

It was noted that there is one computer for every two students, every teacher has a computer and there are white boards and portable units. Some members thought the technology needed to keep pace and five years old is not a long time for newer computers.

T. Butcher noted that he agrees with transferring the bonding and debt for the high school from the BOE budget to the General Government budget but that it does skew the perspective of the General Government budget.

The Board discussed the purchase of a car for the Fire Marshall due to a call to one of the members from a resident. The Board thought they should have given the request more scrutiny and compared what it would cost for mileage as to buying a new car.

M/S/C (Griggs/Householder) to approve for presentation to the Town Meeting a General Government Budget of \$ 3,466,249, Board of Education Budget of \$10,118,255 and the Capital Budget of \$794,830 for a total of \$14,379,334. Vote: Approved Unanimously

7. TEN YEAR CAPITAL PLAN

The following changes were made to the Ten Year Capital Plan:

- Remove Building Committee, line 2, funds from plan
- Make truck plural,(trucks) in line 25

M/S/C (Householder/Preston) to remove line 39-GLVFCO Engine 127. Vote: Approved Unanimously

- Remove line 39 because outside of the ten years
- Fill out remaining PW Road Improvements for all years in the plan

8. APPOINTING OF AUDITOR FOR THE 2011/2012 YEAR

B. Weinschenker informed the members he received a letter from Myers & Co. interested in doing the town audit. He asked if the Board was interested in following up on the offer for a quote and presentation.

The members discussed the charges from Marien & Co. and how they seemed to bill for every little thing. Some of the members thought the presentations from Marien were very helpful and the fact the company is local and close. It was noted that Marien has been bought out by a large firm and it was not a guarantee the new firm will be as responsive as Marien.

G. Householder stated it was the Town which was not ready for the audit and that is why there were additional expenses for the audit.

T. Butcher agreed that the town was not ready, nor were some of the numbers correct but, he was under the impression that Marien & Co. had an agreement with the First Selectman for a set price.

G. Householder thought the town was on the right track at a cost of \$15,000 for additional help.

G. Preston thought that in years past Marien did not charge for additional services but because of all the additional work this year they had to charge.

The Board agreed to ask for a quote from Myers & Co.

ADJOURNMENT

**M/S/C (Butcher/Householder) Motion to adjourn at 8:15. Vote:
Approved Unanimously**

Respectfully Submitted

**Sue Spang
Recording Secretary**