

**REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING
TOWN OF DARIEN, CONNECTICUT
FINANCE & BUDGET COMMITTEE
“DRAFT”**

Minutes of a Meeting Held on March 11, 2013

On March 11, 2013, a meeting of the RTM Finance & Budget Committee was held in room #119 at the Darien Town Hall with thirteen of fifteen members present.

Present were:

Bill Ball
John Boulton
Rob Cardone
Mari Lu Cleary
Jack Davis
Werner Domittner
Terry Duffy
Kip Hall
Kirk Hoffman
Deb Ritchie
Anita Rycenga
Marc Thorne
Reilly Tierney

Absent: Bruce Orr, Jim Palen

Audience: RTM Moderator Mrs. Sarah Seelye, BOE Chair Elizabeth Hagerty-Ross, BOE Vice Chair Clara Sartori, BOE Secretary Heather Shea, BOE member Michael Harmon, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Falcone, and Facilities Manager Mr. Lynch.

The meeting was called to order at 8:15 p.m. by Mr. Davis who was conducting the meeting in the absence of Mr. Orr.

Mr. Davis modified the agenda slightly to push the BOE matters to the top so our guest audience could leave afterwards. Change to agenda was unanimously approved.

General overview of Town government accounting was given by Mr. Davis to benefit new committee members.

Resolution 13-3 for oil tank replacement was discussed first. Mr. Lynch discovered that the tanks had not been properly filed with the State for years and began his due diligence by doing tank tightness tests. They did not reveal that any of the tanks were leaking but upon careful scrutiny many of the monitoring systems were not working and this compromises the useful life of tanks due to corrosion and so forth. This could potentially cut the useful life of tanks in half. He is working in tandem with the DEP and their recommendations. A 12 week lead time is needed and the BOE is desirous of accomplishing the work this upcoming summer. General discussion included Q&A about

the various schools and potential to realize appx. 20% in grant money on individual school project costs above \$10,000.

Motion made by Mr. John Boulton to approve, second by Mr. Marc Thorne and unanimously approved by the committee members present.

Next up was resolution 13-5 for security measures at the schools. Some of the items included have been requested within the capital budget in years past, but removed by the BOF in light of the poor economic climate. The events of Newtown have pushed the importance of security cameras and exterior PA systems to the top of the list. In addition to the capital funds being requested, \$75,000 is being requested for security monitor personnel for the remainder of the school year at each of the elementary schools and MMS. The effect on the 2013/14 budget is that it will go from an increase of 3.82% to 4.05% as a result. The original budget presented reflected an increase of 4.07%. Discussion included the roles of the monitors in the schools and how they will work in tandem with police, parents, and administration. Procedural manuals, training, and drills will be fine-tuned and implemented. When asked what other operating cost increases may be a part of this endeavor it was thought that wireless access costs would be incurred but not much else. The monitors will be part of the Union and will qualify for benefits which according to Ms. Haggerty-Ross are not part of the \$75,000 being requisitioned since they do not know to what extent the employees will participate in them. Qualifications for monitors will be previous experience, background checks will be done, etc. per Dr. Falcone.

Mr. Marc Thorne made a motion to approve, second by Mr. Kip Hall and unanimously approved by the committee members present.

Next up was resolution 13-4 regarding amounts due in sewer charges by the schools. Mr. Davis suggested that the resolution might need amending and Mrs. Seelye agreed that it is a topic for discussion with Wayne Fox our Town's attorney. BOE cannot be dictated to as to how to spend operating funds per State law. Interest and fees that had accrued have been waived according to what Ms. Mao told Ms. Haggerty-Ross. The committee decided to defer voting until and if a substitute resolution is ready to review.

9:30 p.m. most audience/guests left the meeting after gratitude was expressed by all committee members for their attendance and willingness to answer questions and shed light on the various issues up for discussion and vote.

Next item was resolution 13-6 for the appropriation of \$250,000 related to hurricane Sandy expenses. The auditors recommended that a special revenue fund be created to account for the expenses specific to the hurricane. For accounting purposes it is cleaner to have expenses and reimbursements from FEMA and or insurance separated. The committee decided to postpone a vote until Ms. Kate Buch, Finance Director could make herself available to answer questions.

Mr. Davis suggested we meet outside the auditorium at 7:30 p.m. prior to the RTM meeting scheduled for Monday, March 18 so we can complete our unfinished business.

The minutes of the 1/22/13 were unanimously approved.

Mrs. Seeyle reminded committee members that BOS budget books were being held for them in Karl Kilduff's office for pick up.

Mr. Davis and Mr. Thorne once again voiced their frustration regarding the format of the BOS budget as published in the local newspapers.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:40 p.m.

Dated: March 12, 2013

Respectfully submitted,

Anita M. Rycenga

Clerk

RTM Finance & Budget Committee