

Final Minutes  
Rescheduled Meeting of the RTM-Finance and Budget Committee  
Monday, February 13, 2017

**PLACE:**

Town Hall Room 206  
Meeting Starts: 7:06pm

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Jack Davis, Lisa Yarnell, Bert Von Stuelpnagel, Martha Banks, David Martin, Stacy Tie, James Howe, Matt Raben, (Taylor Carter & Terry Duffy arrived after Resolution 17-3 was voted on)

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Deb Ritchie, Bill Smith, Charles Boulier, Rob Cardone, Brad Pattelli, Steve Anderson

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Peter Graham (Darien Athletic Foundation), James Palen (BOF), John Zagrofsky (BOF), Jill McCammon (BOE), Michael Harmon (BOE), Susan Marks (BOS), Millyn Gaaserud, Shelly Skoglund, Lori Olson, Theresa Vogt, Sarah Neumann, Peter Oprhanos

**CALL TO ORDER**

Jack Davis called the meeting to order at 7:06pm. He asked if there was a quorum. It was agreed there was and the meeting began. This is a rescheduled meeting that was originally due to take place on Thursday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, but got snowed out and had to be rescheduled. To that point Jack made note that some of the parents who would have been there as well as some of the Board members had already departed on vacation, but he thanked all who could attend this rescheduled event.

**Discussion on Resolution 17-3 a gift from the Darien Athletic Foundation (Lights & PA System)**

- The Darien Athletic Foundation, which is a 4 ½ year old 501C3 organization wishes to make a gift of \$662,743.00 for lights for the Darien High School Stadium and to upgrade the PA system associated with the football stadium.
- The gift has previously been reviewed and accepted by the BOS and BOE and does not need BOF approval as it does not require any expenditures.
- Peter Graham of the DAF, stated that Dr. Brenner had taken some of the neighbors and the BOS to see a similar stadium so they could see that the spill, glare and other disruptors can be minimized with this state of the art technology.
- The agreement is that the lights will only be used M-F till 7:30pm not for Sat night events. It is designated for two home games/sport and can be used for the State Playoff Games which previously had to go to other facilities.
- Two of the F&B members had follow up questions; James Howe asked what does it cost to run the lights for a game and Peter said he would send the info over to F&B (Jack) and Martha Banks asked Jill McCammon of the BOE, if the BOE budget reflected the cost of running the lights and the answer was she would have to check but thought not, and it was agreed to make sure there were not going to be any over expenditures to the budget if this gift was accepted.
- A motion was made to accept the donation/resolution by Martha Banks, seconded by James Howe and unanimously accepted by the 8 committee members present at that time. Construction is to begin after graduation.
- Others wishing to donate can do so through [DarienAF.com](http://DarienAF.com) or [DarienLightsBrigade.com](http://DarienLightsBrigade.com)

**Discussion on DHS Cafeteria Expansion Project and a roundtable “sense of the meeting”**

- 10 F&B Members were present for the discussion which went around the table and asked for a sense of whether each member felt an expansion was necessary; no budget guidelines were discussed or voted on simply a “sense” was taken.
- 8 of the members agreed it was apparent to them that given the presented projected numbers, their own analyses and conversations that an expansion (of some magnitude TBD) would have to happen; 2 members were still unconvinced it was definitely needed.
- All unanimously agreed that if any expansion took place it should not take place without the acoustical improvements which were needed and important.

- Jack presented info from the Fire Marshal that the occupancy s/b 304 & is now over some waves
- Discussions were had about the timing on the approval of the final expense amount and design selection of the cafeteria project.
- Jack suggested that it could be a late May or June RTM vote (closer to June 30<sup>th</sup>) so that we could see what was happening in Hartford. Given that Hartford had yet approved their budgets, the RTM may hold off a vote and the town would continue to operate on LY budget till we had a definitive decision from Hartford on the \$2.2MM ECS funds.
- Jim Palen (BOF and Building Committee) went on to add that even after an expenditure was approved there were still 3 or 4 ways to fund it: cash, bonds, general taxation and even a supplemental tax possible.
- BOE to vote on February 15<sup>th</sup> and BOF on April 14<sup>th</sup>.

### **Buddy System**

- Jack said he would mail out the BOF Buddy Matching list in the next few following days.
- The BOF has asked for everyone who participated last year to take on the same role, or to let Jack know if you want something different or want to “buddy up” somewhere if you haven’t before.

### **Board of Selectman Operating Budget -sense of the budget/ Follow Ups**

- Several comments that the BOS had done a good job on the budget, it seemed well vetted in several areas especially on the library, which is a big number. It was also stated that the Friends of the Library contribute 30% of the Library’s total budget now.
- A question was raised about the Civilian dispatch from two of the members, it seems more information and analysis is needed. - FU
- Another question came up about Engine 21 being replaced and could the old truck be donated or the money from it to a charity- it needs to be asked of Kate Buch for further information. -FU
- There was an issue raised last year on the parking lots and how many of the owners are out of town? Jack to elevate that question to Kate to find out the number- FU
- Could the Fire Dept “car simulator” training become a source of revenue if they can bring the Norwalk guys down to train—again it will be deferred to Kate- FU
- It was re-emphasized that the Town needs to do a Technology Strategy across departments. - FU
- It was suggested that a Committee be put in place to look at Revenue Generating Opportunities, if not for this year, for completion before next year’s process- several members of the RTM volunteered to work on this- FU

### **Discussion on Capital Project Requirements-Set Parameters**

- A Capital Project Request Form was requested during last year’s budget process for each of the BOE and BOS projects to be considered. At minimal it was to give a brief description of the work 750why these amounts of monies and projects were being approved.
- It was also suggested that the one page write-ups could include information on the justification of the efficiencies that would be gained from the expenditures, the payback period and/or the excess costs that might be incurred if these projects did not get approved.
- J. Zagrofsky (BOF) agreed that one thing the BOF could do, as a start, was to write up what they had learned on the (bigger) Capital projects so when they got moved to the F&B we had the same level of detail to start out with that the BOF had developed.-FU

### **Board of Education Operating Budget -sense of the budget/ Follow Ups**

- Jack started out by pointing out that over the last 5 years for the compounded annual rate of growth, the Town has had a 1.88%; the Library has had a 2.02% (and they raise \$750K in contributions/year) and the BOE has had a 3.25% rate of growth over the same 5 years.
- With the Special Ed component taken out the number falls to 1.98%, more in line with the Town and the Library. That is because the “out of district” placements have continued to grow and are costly with three year contracts.
- It was agreed that there was not enough information to be able to assess The Alternative School project even though it was only requesting \$30K, there was not enough details provide yet to be able to get an assessment.
- The conversation on the addition of the (six) requested new Department Chairs is one that is said to have been going on for several past years also. There was a concern stated that without all the financial details laid out it is difficult to understand how these six roles can be taken down from a year one cost of \$500K to \$200K at this time.

- Several points ensued around the BOE budget not being one RTM should evaluate on a line item bases but rather we need to make sure we are asking the right questions as to what “quantifiable matrices” we will get to measure the success of these programs down the road.
- In sum, this is a +2% budget which is what we asked the BOE for as they must be managing other costs to keep it in line even with a +2.87% proposed increase on contracts.

### **Approval of Previous Minutes**

#### **Dec 6<sup>th</sup>**

- A motion was made by Burt to approve the minutes of December 6<sup>th</sup> and seconded by Lisa
- A vote was taken and passed to approve with the minutes with a 5 voted in favor and 5 abstained; none against.

#### **Jan 17<sup>th</sup>**

- A motion was made by Martha to approve the minutes of January 17<sup>th</sup>, Terry seconded it.
- A vote was taken and passed to approve the minutes which passed 8 in favor, 2 abstained.

A motion was made by James Howe and seconded by Martha to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 pm. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Yarnell  
RTM Finance & Budget Clerk