

North Stonington Board of Finance Meeting
Meeting Minutes, Wednesday, April 22, 2020
North Stonington Zoom Meeting @7:00pm
North Stonington, CT

1. **Call to Order:** 7:04pm, Members present: Chairman Dan Spring, Dan Smith, Paul Simonds, Carolyn Howell, Anne Akin, Michael Anderson, Mustapha Ratib Absent: Chris Hundt
2. **BOE:** Christine Wagner, Chair readdressed the BoE budget. A list of proposed cuts necessary to reach each of the following budget increases were provided to BoF members: 2.1% increase (no replacement of retiring spec ed teacher, no replacement for open math position, cut literary specialist position, cut MS sports), 2.85% increase (no replacement of retiring spec ed teacher), 3.27% increase (fill 2 open teacher positions and no cut to middle school sports).

3. **BoF: Review and Budget Preparation:**

Discussion on presentation by BoE, no consensus on way forward. Closed out discussion on BoE budget.

BoS budget- Discussion on possible ways to reduce BoS budget including putting off \$108K road repair, reducing land acquisition fund from \$10K, reducing lake treatment fund from \$15K. Mike Uργο is willing to take the BoS budget back to the board to look for more cuts.

Chairman Dan Spring stated that with a 2.1% increase in the BoE budget and a 0.93% increase in the BoS budget (includes increase in debt redemption) we are looking at a 1.1mil increase. With a 2.85% increase in the BoE budget we are looking at a 1.25mil rate increase. Both of these numbers include using \$270K from the unassigned fund to cover the revenue shortfall.

Chairman Dan Spring suggested working with Christine Diaz over the next week to put some scenarios together in OpenGov to put some real numbers forward for our consideration.

BoE would like some decision from the BoF about approving the formation of a RISA account for their use. BoF not prepared to do that tonight.

4. **Public Comments and Questions on Non-Agenda Items-**

- a) Joe Cassata- Questioned lack of response from BoF and BoS on request to reconsider funding for per diem firefighters.
- b) Shawn Murphy- 1) Tax collection rate proposed for 2020/2021 budget may not be realistic considering current situation and long range effects on taxpayers' personal budgets. 2) Use of the undesignated fund to cover budget shortfalls will lead to an even greater shortfall next year. 3) Will not support a 1 mil increase.

- c) Joe Grosse- 1) How does this year's \$225K revenue shortfall influence next year's revenue? Proposed budget should be reduced by the same amount the revenue was reduced. Public is looking for direction from BoF, BoF should not look for direction from public. 2) BoE-Stop moving \$s around on line items. Money approved for a specific budget line item should only be spent on that line item. 3) The BoF should direct the BoS and the BoE as to what their budgets should be. Stop all the back and forth.
 - d) Brian Rathbun- 1) Have to deal with reality of here and now, not what ifs. Currently have lots of unemployment and a reval occurring. Want to see 0% budget increase from BoE and BoS. 2) If there is an increase, it should be taken out of undesignated funds. 3) To the BoE, lay-offs can be a temporary thing. Do lay-offs now to save money, and bring teachers back later when the town can afford them.
 - e) Michael Noon- Schools are the only asset the town has. Should bring budget to the town as is and let the taxpayers decide. Shouldn't strip the schools and leave empty buildings.
5. **Previous Minutes-** Proposal by BoF secretary to email draft copies of past meeting minutes to board members for review and correction before next meeting so they can be quickly amended and approved at next meeting. Proposal accepted.
6. **Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn at 9:18pm by Chairman Dan Spring, 2nd by Paul Simonds. Approved 6/0/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Akin
BoF Secretary