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*Patrick B. O'Sullivan*  
TOWN CLERK



## **Board of Finance Regular Meeting**

Town Hall Meeting Room  
Monday, February 25, 2019 7:00 p.m.

**Approved**

### **Attendance**

**Board Members Present:** Chairman Kevin Houlihan, Vice Chairman James Leahy, Kevin Moffett, Joseph Nuzzo, and P. J. Shanley

**Board Members Absent:** Patricia Romano

**Staff:** John Cifarelli, Finance Director; Audrey Geer, Assistant Finance Director; Art Williams, Treasurer; Deborah Satonick, Recording Secretary

**Guests:** Dr. Jennifer Byars, Superintendent of Amity; Terry Lumas, Director of Amity Finance and Administration; Scott Cleary, Assistant Director of Amity Finance and Administration; Assistant Director of Amity Finance; John Belfonti, Chairman of the Amity Finance Committee

### **1. Call to Order**

- Chairman Houlihan called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and asked the Board of Finance members to introduce themselves.

### **2. Public Participation**

- Mr. John Belfonti, resident of 67 Hampton Close and Chairman of the Amity Finance Committee, spoke in favor of the proposed 2019-2020 Amity budget. He explained that teachers' salaries comprise two thirds of the budget and teachers receive a 2 ½% increase every year. In addition, the cost of additional security at the three schools has been factored into the proposed budget. Mr. Belfonti felt that a 1.06% increase is very reasonable in light of these factors.

[Mr. Moffett arrived at 7:34 p.m.]

### 3. Presentation of the Amity 2019-2020 Budget – Dr. Byars

- Dr. Byars began her presentation highlighting some of the accolades of Amity. She touched on academics, athletics, community service, and extracurricular activities and clubs. Dr. Byars also spoke on the Transition Academy at Albertus Magnus College and lastly noted that Amity has had nine consecutive clean audits with no management recommendations.
- Dr. Byars presented the proposed 2019-2020 Amity budget with a 1.06% increase. She broke the budget into five segments: 53% represents Salary, 9% is Special Education, 12.7% is Benefits, 9% is Debt Service, and about 15% is Miscellaneous.
- Dr. Byars reported that the proposed budget includes one Special Education teacher, one paraprofessional, and two part-time job coaches for the 18-21 year old transition program. The 2019-2020 budget also includes 3.80 security persons, one at each middle school, and a part-time position for the back door at Amity High School. Dr. Byars indicated that she would also want Sally Ports installed at the two middle schools, which are not currently in the proposed budget. She reported that the estimate for the Sally Ports is \$285k.
- Dr. Byars requested that the Assistant Principal's position be extended from a ten month to a twelve-month position, explaining the importance of this position and the need for this request.
- Dr. Byars spoke on the enrollment projection and the significant increase of students with formal Individual Education Plan (IEP) plans. She discussed the cost difference between out-of-district placements versus in-district. Potential risk factors within the budget, such as medical/dental insurance, Special Education tuition and transportation, State and Federal grants, staff turnovers and vacancy, snow removal, natural gas, and Medicaid, were also included in the discussion.
- Lastly, Dr. Byars discussed their Fund Balance, or budget surplus, noting that approximately 81% has gone back to the Towns over the past five years. Mr. Leahy used this opportunity to explain to Dr. Byars that having a large surplus balance every year, for the past ten years, points to an inflated budget that is overtaxing our residents. Mr. Leahy also suggested that Amity review their bylaws, citing that the end of February deadline for the Amity budget, in his opinion, is slightly premature.
- Lastly, Mr. Leahy presented an alternative view of the Amity budget request. He compared the budget request in prior years to the actual amounts spent. For example, in 2017-2018, the amount spent was \$45.3 million compared to a budget request in 2018-2019 of \$49 million. This change would be a 8.2% increase, not the 1.2% increase that a 2017-2018 budget to 2018-2019 comparison indicates.
- In 2018-2019, after 7 operating months, there is a budget surplus of \$1,175,250. If you compare the actual spending in 2018-2019 (to date, 47.8 million) to the budget request in 2019-2020

(\$49.5 million), the increase would be 4.4%, not the 1.06%. Mr. Leahy concluded by stating that the Orange Board of Finance voted unanimously to support an increase of up to 0.5%. The current 1.06% increase request represents a \$522k budget increase. Thus, if the increase were reduced to a \$245k increase, then the Board would support the Amity budget.

#### 4. Amity Update

- Mr. Leahy had no further updates at this time.

#### 5. Vice Chairman's Report

- Mr. Nuzzo had nothing additional to report at this time.

#### 6. Budget Discussion for 2019-2020 Fiscal Year

- The Board members set the date of Wednesday, March sixth, at 7:00 p.m., to meet with the Orange Board of Education to review their budget.
- The Board members discussed some of the possible implications should the State of Connecticut take car tax payments from the Town of Orange. The Board also discussed the teachers' retirement contribution and how this will affect the new budget. Mr. Leahy recommended that residents continue to watch OGAT to follow the implications of the new governor's decisions on the budget.

#### 7. Discussion and Approval of Minutes – January 28, 2019 & February 1, 2019

##### January 28, 2019 Board of Finance Minutes

- The Finance Director and Board of Finance members made revisions to the minutes.

*Mr. Leahy made a motion to approve the revised January twenty-eighth, 2019 Board of Finance meeting minutes. Mr. Moffett seconded the motion and all were in favor. The motion **PASSED**.*

##### February 1, 2019 Board of Finance Budget Workshop

- The Finance Director and Board members made revisions to the minutes.

*Mr. Shanley made a motion to approve the revised February first, 2019 Board of Finance meeting minutes. Mr. Nuzzo seconded the motion and all were in favor. The motion **PASSED**.*

#### 8. Review and Recommend to the Board of Selectman to Purchase Tyler Munis System

- Mr. Cifarelli explained that Power School will discontinue support and maintenance of the Phoenix system by July 1, 2020 and he recommended that the Town purchase the Tyler

Munis System. The cost is \$500k with an annual fee of \$65,376. The Fund Balance will be used to cover this cost.

**9. Approve Funding to Purchase Tyler Munis System, Subject to Board of Selectmen Approval**

*Mr. Leahy made a motion that the Orange Board of Finance recommend that the Board of Selectmen authorize the First Selectman to enter into a contract with Tyler Technologies for their Munis Government Accounting software for use by the Orange Board of Education and the Town Government to replace the current system in use. Mr. Moffett seconded the motion and all were in favor. The motion PASSED.*

*Mr. Moffett made a motion that the funds for the Munis Government Accounting software be appropriated from the Fund Balance in the amount of \$500k to cover training, conversion implantation, and travel cost. Mr. Nuzzo seconded the motion and all were in favor. The motion PASSED.*

**10. Review Revenue and Expenditure Reports for Fiscal Year 2018-2019**

- Mr. Cifarelli expressed some concern over tax collection, noting that is lower than last year at this time.

**11. Adjournment**

- Mr. Shanley paid tribute to Mr. Moffett on receiving the O'Sullivan Award and invited the Board members to attend the award ceremony on March twenty-first.

*Mr. Shanley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m., seconded by Mr. Moffett. All were in favor and the motion PASSED.*

Respectfully Submitted,

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Deborah Satonick  
Recording Secretary