



Board of Finance Special Meeting

Monday, March 6, 2023

Meeting Room -Town Hall 7:00 p.m.

Approved

Attendance

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Board of Finance Members Present: Chairman Kevin Houlihan, Vice Chairman James Leahy, Kevin Moffett, Kevin McNabola, Joseph Nuzzo, and Ajeet Jain

Staff: John Cifarelli, Finance Director; Deborah Satonick, Recording Secretary

Guests: Dr. Scarpetti, Superintendent of Orange Elementary Schools; Mr. Gray, Director of Business and Operations; Paul Davis, Chairman of the Amity Board of Education

1. Call to Order & Introduction

- Chairman Houlihan called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. Introductions

- Chairman Houlihan asked the Board of Finance members to introduce themselves.

3. Public Dialogue

- Mr. Paul Davis, 335 Smith Farm Road, spoke on the proposed Amity 2023-2024 budget. He is the Chairman of the Amity Board of Education but advised that he was speaking as a citizen of the Town of Orange. He questioned why the Orange Board of Finance made a motion to approve up to a 0.46% increase in this budget. He commented that this vote was not on the Board of Finance Budget Workshop Agenda and that it was an unintentional and procedural error that should be corrected. He also stated that such a request was both unrealistic and unachievable. He mentioned that he disapproved of the many newspaper articles printed recently, claiming that these articles could have biased readers not to vote for the Amity budget simply because Amity was “not spending enough of their money” and had surpluses.

Mr. Davis recommended that the Amity surplus be used toward next year’s budget rather than be returned to the respective towns. He felt that this money has been earmarked for educational purposes and should be used as such, saving the taxpayers money in the

following year. He concluded by stating that the Amity Finance Committee voted on no more than a 2.25% increase for Amity's 2023-2024 budget.

4. Orange Board of Education – Dr. Scarpetti

- Dr. Scarpetti acknowledged and thanked the Board of Education members and his administrative staff in the audience for all the work that they have done. He touched on the negative effect of the COVID pandemic on student learning and the impact it has had on the budget.
- Dr. Scarpetti spoke on student enrollment, noting that the budgeted number of students generally increases by the start of school. He also noted that last year they had 61 pre-K students and currently 67 students for this coming year. The 2023-2024 has a 3.37% increase this year, which in dollars is \$763,325. Budget drivers for this increase include salaries, support staff, technology, curriculum software, utilities, transportation, gasoline, building repairs and maintenance, and furniture. Major drivers for decreases in the proposed budget include health insurance and Special Education tuition and transportation.
- Considering that the Firelite and Smith Farm apartment complexes are under construction, Dr. Scarpetti discussed possible increases in student enrollment, specifically at Peck Place School. To handle this possible influx of students, he felt that any discussion about class size and/or teachers was not recommended at this time.
- Dr. Scarpetti reviewed each individual line item with the members of the Orange Board of Finance. He mentioned a 12.38% budget increase in security officers, \$30k consulting fee to determine the feasibility of air-conditioning in the schools, and new furniture for four classrooms. District permanent substitutes will be increased from seven to eight people. Mr. Gray noted that the Parks and Recreation Department help with lawn maintenance, but an extra \$5k is requested to reline the parking lots and to address some trees bordering the properties.

(Mr. McNabola arrived at 7:48 p.m.)

- Mr. McNabola noted that their health insurance decreased by \$535k as their claims went down. Mr. Cifarelli explained that their claims went down from 7.2 million to 7 million. The Board of Finance members thanked Dr. Scarpetti and Mr. Gray for their presentation of the 2023-2024 OBOE budget.

Mr. McNabola made a motion for a five-minute recess, seconded by Mr. Moffett. All were in favor and the motion PASSED.

5. Budget Discussion

- Mr. Cifarelli reported that the Orange Board of Finance approved the Clerical Workers Contract, so he updated the BOF Budget book with new materials reflecting this change. He noted that he made some cuts, adjustments, and increases to the proposed budget and

explained each revision in detail. He also reviewed both expenditures and revenues to date.

- Mr. Leahy used a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate the Grand List increase of 2.83%. Chairman Houlihan suggested that Mr. Cifarelli look at the Fund Balance projections, prioritize the Capital Requests, and determine the money currently available to fund these Capital projects. He suggested that Mr. Cifarelli then meet with the First Selectman to help better determine whether the mill rate should be decreased or remain the same to help fund some of these Capital items.

6. Discuss and Approval of Minutes – February 27, 2023 Regular Meeting

- The Board of Finance members reviewed the minutes and made revisions and corrections.

Mr. McNabola made a motion to approve the amended February 27, 2023 minutes, seconded by Mr. Moffett. All were in favor and the motion PASSED.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Moffett made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:19 p.m., seconded by Mr. Jain. All were in favor and the motion PASSED.

Respectfully Submitted,
Deborah Satonick
Recording Secretary