

**BOARD OF FINANCE
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

The Regular Monthly Meeting of the Board of Finance in Sullivan Independence Hall, 725 Old Post Road, Fairfield CT on Wednesday evening, May 9, 2012 at 7:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Members of the Board of Finance present were, Thomas Flynn, Chairman Robert Bellitto, Jr., Vice Chairman. James Brown, Christopher DeWitt, Ken Brachfeld, Mary LeClerc Kevin Kiley (7:45) and Robert Stone.

ABSENT: Elaine Gaffney.

BOARD OF SELECTMAN

First Selectman Michael Tetreau

ALSO PRESENT

Paul Hiller, Chief Fiscal Officer

Chairman Flynn called the meeting to order at 7:30

1. To approve the Minutes of the following Meetings:

- January 25, 2012 Quarterly Meeting
- February 7, 2012 Regular Meeting
- February 16, 2012 Joint Board of Finance & Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting
- February 28, 2012 Joint Board of Finance & Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting
- March 1, 2012 Joint Board of Finance & Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting
- March 6, 2012 Joint Board of Finance & Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting
- March 8, 2012 Joint Board of Finance & Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting
- March 12, 2012 Joint Board of Finance & Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting
- March 14, 2012 Joint Board of Finance & Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting
- March 20, 2012 Joint Board of Finance & Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting
- March 28, 2012 Board of Finance Budget Meeting
- March 29, 2012 Board of Finance Budget Meeting

Robert Bellitto *moved* and Christopher DeWitt *seconded* to table the above minutes to June 5, 2012. *Motion passed unanimously.*

**Board of Finance Regular Meeting Minutes
May 9, 2012**

2. To hear, consider, and act upon a request from the Director of Public Works for an appropriation of \$210,000 from the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) Reserve Fund to provide the Town's local share for an Energy Reduction Project at the Treatment Plant. Furthermore, the First Selectman is authorized to execute any necessary agreements with the United Illuminating Co. to obtain grants and interest-free loans related to the project.

Robert Bellitto *moved* and Christopher DeWitt *seconded* to table the above item to June 5, 2012. *Motion passed unanimously.*

3. To hear, consider, and act upon the following resolution requested by the Riverfield School Building Committee: RESOLVED, that the Bond Appropriation entitled, "A Resolution Appropriating \$250,000 for the Costs Associated with the Improvement and Renovation of Riverfield Elementary School and Authorizing the Issuance of Bonds to Finance Such Appropriation" consisting of three pages, be, and hereby is, approved.

Robert Bellitto *moved* and Christopher DeWitt *seconded* to table the above item to June 5, 2012. *Motion passed unanimously.*

4. To appoint Auditors to conduct the Audit of the Town's financial records for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2012.

After discussion:

Robert Bellitto *moved* and Christopher DeWitt *seconded* to appoint JH Cohen, conduct the Audit of the Town's financial records for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2012. *Motion passed unanimously.*

5. To consider and set the Mill Rate for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2012 and ending June 30, 2013.

Mr. Hiller reviewed and discussed the handout with the Board regarding this item.

The Board asked Mr. Hiller how much has the RTM saved the average taxpayer by cutting the budget at \$1.1 million.

Mr. Hiller stated a taxpayer with a home assessed at \$435,000 (a market value of approximately \$621,500) will pay \$10,165 in FY13, \$391 more than the current year. The RTM's reduction to the budget passed by the Board of Finance will save that taxpayer \$57.

Board of Finance Regular Meeting Minutes May 9, 2012

Robert Bellitto noted the action taken by the RTM to cut the fund by \$850,000 puts the town's Triple A credit rating in jeopardy. He further noted there are five unresolved union contracts. Money that went into the contingency fund was specifically earmarked to take care of any retroactive salary increase for the same contracts.

Mr. Bellitto also noted, the Board worked at addressing specific areas that Moody's had flagged as reasons for giving the town a negative outlook. The RTM's action basically took that work and torpedoed it. He further noted the RTM could have found a million dollar's worth of cuts in places that would have been less damaging to the town's fiscal health, such as education, or contributions to non-profits.

Mr. Stone felt the RTM was playing Russian roulette with the town's credit rating. He noted the budgets that town managers put up to the Board were very fair. Most of them came in at zero or with very little increases. The increases were basically due to contracts and those are contracts the RTM, themselves, have to ratify. The Board of Finance does not ratify them, the RTM sets the mill rate in that sense.

PUBLIC COMMENT

RTM member Kenneth Lee, D-10, noted he empathized with residents looking to appeal their assessments. His taxes went up 24 percent, but felt there were two different issues to address: assessments, for which there is a process; and a budget that serves 60,000 residents. He also noted they need to separate these two issues and give them each the respect and consideration they deserve.

Michael Herley, Republican RTM member from District One, wanted to know what the Board of Finance could or would do about the high assessments for some taxpayers in his district.

Ann Stamler, 411 Stratfield Road, stated she is not in support of the contingency fund.

Chairman Flynn addressed the comments made regarding high assessments. He noted it would not be appropriate for the Board, who are not assessment professionals and given the fact of the circumstances, the background and the pending legal process which is underway, to comment on this matter without having a full range of understanding of the assessment process.

**Board of Finance Regular Meeting Minutes
May 9, 2012**

Thomas Flynn *moved* and Robert Bellitto *seconded* to set the Mill Rate for the Fiscal Year starting July 1, 2012 and Ending June 30, 2013 at 23.37 Mills. *Motion passed with a vote of 5 Yeas* (Flynn, Bellitto, Kiley, Brown, DeWitt, Brachfeld, LeClerc), *1 Nays* (Robert Stone).

6. To hear, consider, and act upon any communications.

None.

7. To hear, consider, and act upon any other business which shall properly come before this meeting.

None.

There being no further business to come before the Board Ken Brachfeld *moved* and Christopher DeWitt *seconded* to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. *Motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

Josephine M. Keogh