

**TOWN OF SOMERS
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2008**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting was called to order by Chairman James Persano at 7:01 pm. Members present were Steve Krasinski, George Warner, Mike Parker, Tom Mazzoli, Marilyn Provonost and James Persano. Also present were Finance Director Greg Simmons, Board of Education representative Bill Boutwell and Selectmen David Pinney and Kathy Devlin.

II. BOARD OF EDUCATION UPDATE

Mr. Boutwell reminded the Board that for the November meeting a presentation will be made regarding the update to the long range plan. The BOF had received a packet of information from the BOE for this evenings meeting that had provoked a question about the “transition program”. Mr. Boutwell explained that this program brings Somers students who are currently receiving expensive out-of-District services back into the District. The Somers system had been cited unfavorably by the Federal agency for not mainstreaming these students. Mr. Boutwell had no other changes to report and the BOF had no questions.

III. MINUTES APPROVAL – September 22, 2008

A motion was made by Mr. Warner; seconded by Mr. Parker and unanimously voted to approve the minutes of September 22, 2008 as written.

IV. CORRESPONDENCE

An opinion had been rendered by Atty. Atherton B. Ryan of William G. Reveley & Associates, LLC. on the following question: Can the Board of Selectmen adopt an ordinance that affects property assessments without referring the proposal to the Board of Finance? Atty. Ryan found that there is no requirement of the BOS to refer any proposed ordinance to the BOF.

In referring this question for a legal opinion, the BOF was looking for reference to statutory authorization. Concern was expressed that the opinion was superficial in that it considered one Somers Ordinance and did not consider the State statutes on Town activities or the Somers Charter. The State requires that notice be published 10 days prior to a Public Hearing. It appears that the ordinance was initiated on June 11, 2008, discussed at Public Hearing on June 16, 2008 and then adopted on June 18, 2008. Since there are less than 10 days between the stated initiation date and the Public Hearing, this requirement could not have been met. Furthermore, §4.4 of the Somers Charter states that an ordinance can be enacted on any matter that the general statutes or this Charter authorizes to be legislated by ordinance. The question evoked by this clause is: What general statute authorizes this vote on the ordinance in question? The BOF believes that Atty. Ryan should have stated which statute authorized the tax abatement. Board members said that when giving legal opinion one is expected to give the legal basis for that opinion. Since, this was not done the BOF will follow up with a letter to the attorney requesting what is needed from him.

V. BILLS, TRANSFERS, AND APPROPRIATIONS

After looking over the requested transfers and appropriations the BOF discussed the appropriateness of Fund #16, which was described as a slush fund. The Board asked Mr. Simmons to provide a listing of all

accounts like Fund #16 to be reviewed by the BOF. The Board realizes that ad hoc and volunteer collaboration on little Town projects could be impeded if a separate 501(c)(3) had to be set up for each project and wants to avoid this.

A motion was made by Mr. Mazzoli, seconded by Mr. Parker and unanimously voted to approve the following transfers:

By the WPCA for reimbursement appropriations of \$4,785.12 to the Food Inspector (40-19-508.2), \$675.50 from (60-10-383.0) to the General Fund, \$144.75 from (62-10-383.0) to the General Fund and \$145.63 from (66-10-383.0) to the General Fund.

By the Town Clerk for a transfer of \$173.15 from Historic Monies (Fund #20) to Supplies (10-12-520.1).

By the Library for a transfer of \$500.00 from to Automated Services (50-21-609.1) to Services (50-21-611.1).

By the Town Clerk for a transfer of \$2,700.00 from Historic Monies (Fund #20) to Supplies (10-12-520.1).

A motion was made by Mr. Mazzoli and seconded by Ms. Provonost to accept the Selectmen's request for a transfer of \$5,850.00 from Recreation Self Support (Fund #16) to Recreation Field Improvement (68-10-765.4). The motion was voted as follows: Mr. Persano – For, Ms. Provonost – For, Mr. Mazzoli – For, Mr. Warner – Against, Mr. Parker – Against, Mr. Krasinski – Against. The motion failed.

VI. OTHER – Board of Selectmen's Update

Selectmen Pinney discussed some Social Service personnel changes the BOS are considering and gave an update on variable budget items. He distributed three spreadsheets on the areas to be discussed.

The Selectmen have spoken with recreation Coordinator Jennifer Charrette about expanding her position to cover the Social Service and Municipal Agent's responsibilities. The Hartford Foundation would contribute \$105,000 in grants over 3 years to fund the establishment of that full-time position.

Mr. Pinney explained the budget impact of this personnel change as illustrated in the spreadsheet provided. The Selectmen's proposed budget for senior programs would increase from the current \$5,000 to \$25,000. This is because the Foundation looks for the Town's commitment to fund senior programs. The Social Service Director's salary would be \$45,000. However, one of the functions of this Director would be to seek and obtain grant monies, so it is possible that the necessity for Town fund may be reduced.

A discussion ensued regarding the individuals in the Social Service and Municipal Agent positions, the hours they work and the feasibility of having one person do all of this within a 40 hour week. The Selectmen explained that ACCESS, a Willimantic agency, can do the intake function at no cost to the Town. It may also be possible to assign some of the duties performed in these three positions to other Town employees. The BOF stated the concern that one person may not be able to handle these three positions and that in time another person will need to be hired and the BOF does not want this to happen.

Mr. Pinney discussed the major variations expected in fiscal year 08-09 per the spreadsheet so titled. Expenses for heat, vehicle fuel, tipping fees, fire protection and unemployment are all expected to be over-budget. Health insurance and property/liability insurance will cost less than

anticipated. Between all of these variables it is anticipated that the Town will be \$12,356 under-budget.

The cost savings of reducing the Town work week to 4 days was briefly discussed. It is not believed that this would be very effective in Somers.

Selectman Devlin said that the Town Directors have been asked to review their budgets closely for areas where cost savings can be made in light of anticipated cuts in State monies. The governor has stated that this year the State will be able to meet its obligations without tapping into municipal aid. However, the Pequot Fund will be down and in the coming year there are no guarantees.

There are maintenance issues that must be addressed at the Firehouse, to the foundation of Town Hall and to the roof of Piedmont Hal. A consulting engineer has evaluated the boiler work that needs to be done at the Firehouse. It is expected to cost about \$10,000 to fix the leak in the boiler and to reconfigure the system to operate more efficiently. The cost of the engineer will be about \$7,000.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 p.m. was made by Tom Mazzoli and seconded by Steve Krasinski; the motion carried by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Reed, Recording Secretary

MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVAL AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING