

TOWN OF SOMERS
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2009

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting was called to order by Chairman James Persano, at 7:02pm. Members present were James Persano, George Warner, Michael Parker, Tom Mazzoli, and Steve Krasinski. Also present were Selectman Lisa Pellegrini, Board of Education representatives Tim Potrikus and Joan Formeister, and Finance Director Greg Simmons.

II. BOARD OF SELECTMEN UPDATE

Selectman Pelligrini said she has followed up with Steve Jacobs and Representative Bacchiochi regarding the Sunset Drive water main project. At this time this issue is still not on the State agenda. Mr. Jacobs has assured her that once the funding is in place the project is ready to go forward. She gave the floor to the Fire Chief Ed Pagani Jr. to update the Board about the ambulance.

Chief Pagani explained that the Town has two ambulances and one is extremely old. He asked for the Board to allow the purchase of a new ambulance and explained how this could be done without costing the Town any additional money.

He said that if purchased today, a new 2009 ambulance with a 500 lb. power stretcher and updated radios would be \$183,000. In 2010, an ambulance will cost between \$214,000-\$221,000. The increase is due in part to new emission standards.

\$105,000 of the fees collected yearly for ambulance service goes directly into the General Fund with any additional fees collected going to a Special Revenue Ambulance Fund. Currently there is \$122,000 in this fund. The Chief proposes using the money in the Ambulance Fund for the next 5 years to pay for the new ambulance. He said the ambulance could be self supporting and still put \$105,000 into the General Fund.

The old ambulance is needed for about 40 to 45 calls per year. It is 10 years old, has about 100,000 miles on it and is used for emergencies only. The alternative to using this ambulance is to receive mutual aid from Ellington or West Stafford. Commercial services such as ASM are paramedic services and will only transport if a mutual aid ambulance is unavailable.

The ambulance that Chief Pagani has negotiated for is a demo model with full warranties. Although replacement of the ambulance is on the Capital Expenditures list for 2010, \$38,000 could be saved if it is purchased now. The dealer has offered \$18,000 as a trade in price for the old ambulance. Somers' newer ambulance is 5 years old with about \$43,000 miles on it and should be good for another 5 years.

Chief Pagani was unable to provide an estimate on the cost to refurbish the old ambulance to tip-top condition. However, Deputy Fire Chief Frank Falcone, Jr. explained that the front end and springs on the old ambulance are shot. It also has transmission leaks and suspension problems. He explained that an ambulance is driven very hard, making its 100,000 miles equivalent to 200,000 on a regular car. The Board stressed that if there is a question of safety this type of issue must be brought to Capital Expenditures right away.

This issue has been heard by the Fire Commission and the BOS. The BOS recommended that Chief Pagani get a price on a 2009 ambulance and then put it before the BOF.

Chairman Persano suggested that this issue be reviewed by Capital Expenditures. Mr. Mazzoli said he would get the Capital Expenditures team together however he explained that currently the only way this purchase could be entertained is as the Chief proposes. Capital Expenditures are frozen at \$359,000.

Mr. Mazzoli summed up by stating the 3 issues that have been presented:

1. Should an ambulance be purchased because there is a discount that will save the Town money?
2. What would repairing the vehicle cost?
3. How safe should Somers' ambulance be?

The Board discussed the issues and determined that the BOS and Capital Equipment would need to come to the BOF with a recommendation on what is needed.

III. BOARD OF EDUCATION UP DATE

Tim Potrikus reported that there has been no fundamental change on State funding since last month's report.

He discussed the long-range plan that was circulated to the BOF. This information included forecasts for the budgets of 2010-11 to 2014-15. Items included in these forecasts were: Staffing, textbooks, programs, facilities/Capital Planning and equipment/technology. The High School roof project estimate of \$590,000 to \$1,155,000 was also included.

The BOF reviewed the information and asked Mr. Potrikus about various items. The need for a Social Worker in the schools was questioned. Ms. Formeister addressed this stating that many children come to school unprepared to learn. One reason is that a large transient population has come to Somers because they have exhausted benefits in other Towns and these children need special help.

IV. 2010 MEETING SCHEDULE

Chairman. Persano agreed to changing the BOF meetings to the third Monday of every month to accommodate a citizen request. This will enable citizens to attend both the BOF and BOE meetings.

The 2010 meeting days will be as follows:

January 25, February 22, March 15, April 26, May 17, June 21, July 19, September 20, October 18, November 15, and December 20.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Krasinski and unanimously voted to accept the meeting dates.

MINUTES APPROVAL – October 26, 2009 Regular Meeting

The minutes of October 26, 2009 are to be corrected as follows:

Page 2, paragraph 3, change: "the Slader's"

To: "Mr. Slater's"

Page 3, paragraph 6, change: "A motion was made by Mr. Parker; seconded by Mr. Mazzoli"

To: "A motion was made by Mr. Mazzoli; seconded by Ms. Provonost".

A motion was made by Mr. Krasinski; seconded by Mr. Mazzoli and unanimously voted to accept the minutes of the October 26, 2009 regular meeting as amended.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE – There was none

VI. BILLS, TRANSFERS AND APPROPRIATIONS

A motion was made by Mr. Parker; seconded by Mr. Warner and unanimously voted to approve the following transfer:

<i>Dept.</i>	<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>Amount</i>
		10/26/2009 #8	
<i>Public Works</i>	<i>Road Maintenance</i>	<i>Capital Equipment</i>	<i>\$18,000.00</i>

VIII. OTHER

It was pointed out that issues like the ambulance issue should be vetted by the BOS before presenting to the BOF. In this case, the need for the ambulance, the alternatives to purchasing a new one and affordability should have been assessed and decided upon by the BOS. After this is done it is then the job of the BOF to figure out how the issue can be funded.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Mazzoli; seconded by Mr. Parker and unanimously voted to adjourn the November 23, 2009 meeting of the Board of Finance at 8:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Reed, Recording Secretary

MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVAL AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING.