STATE OF CONNECTICUT • COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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BOARD OF FINANCE

ROBERT J. CLEMENTS
Chairman

RICHARD J. CLEARY
MARK A. JOYSE
BARRY C. PINTO
MICHAEL D. VARNEY
JOSEPH E. WEHR

SPECIAL MEETING
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2008

Board of Finance Members Present: Robert Clements-Chairman, Richard Cleary, Mark Joyse, Barry Pinto, Michael Varney, Joseph Wehr

Board of Selectmen Members Present: Michael Stupinski-First Selectman, Peter Charter, Anne Harford, Leo Miller, John Turner

Others Present: N. DiCorleto-Fin Off, P. Potamianos-Budget Advisory, P. Michaud-DPW Director, J. Gage-Conservation Commission, A. Littizzio-Dir Bus Svs BOE, D. Varney

Board of Finance Chairman Robert Clements opened the meeting at 7:37 pm.

Citizen's Forum – None

Capital Improvements

Michael Stupinski, First Selectmen, presented this year's proposed capital improvements budget for an amount of $3.1 million which is broken down $1.8 million in bonding and $1.4 million town funding. This is significantly higher than last year but this budget represents what is really needed and he feels it is justified. The funding for this budget has not kept up with growth. He passed out a sheet showing that the operating budgets increased approx. 62% since 1999 but that the capital improvements budget went down 16%. The population during this same period of time went up 17%.

Mr. Miller stated that he felt that the Old Crystal Lake Schoolhouse could be taken out of the budget at this time because there is not a full time use for it. He felt that there was no harm in letting it sit one more year. He also wanted to know if it fits into the 5 year plan. He stated that he felt the same way about the Town Hall rear vestibule and the painting of the Town Hall. He then stated that he felt the Town would not be wise to bond less than $5 million. He would like to see capital improvements funded on a cash basis with the exception of the pumper/aerial truck. He felt that this item should not be ignored as the present truck is 33 years old and needs extensive repair.

Mr. Stupinski stated that the outside of the Town Hall building should be painted because the water gets into the bricks where they are peeling off. He didn't feel that a new Town Hall would be in the five year plan. This is a maintenance item that should be done regardless of any future construction plans. The Old Crystal Lake School could be used by CLFD for a meeting area and for residents in that area.

Mr. Charter stated that bonding is good because purchases can be made now and the taxpayers are not hit all at once. Bonding money is coming off this year and this will replace it so there is no change in the budget. There will be bonding costs and that is dependent on the amount of money bonded.

Mr. Cleary asked if the new pumper/aerial truck would fit in the original firehouse and was told that it would because it is replacing two pieces of equipment and the rearranging of equipment.

Mr. Varney was in agreement that the Town needs to catch up on its capital expenditures but doesn't feel that bonding them all is a good way to fund. He feels that the Town needs to find the best way to fund.

Mr. Joyse felt that paying bond costs does not make fiscal sense. The Crystal Lake Schoolhouse is a new resource and it's not good timing to be investing in new resources. He feels that the Town should start with what is needed and not add any additional items. He felt that the Board of Selectmen needs to prioritize the list.

Mr. Wehr asked where the money is going to come from to fund this and how will it be approved by the taxpayers.

Mr. Stupinski stated that during budget deliberations, the list would be prioritized.

Mr. Cleary asked why the animal control building went from $240,000 to $260,000. Mr. Michaud stated that the $260,000 was hard costs received after the original document was done. He asked if the $132,500 for the Windermere dual boiler could stand alone without funding the additional that was originally requested. Mr. Littizzio told him yes. He also asked about the girl's softball field item and was told that the money for future years was for lighting of the field.

Mr. Pinto asked if the figure for the rear vestibule at the Town Hall was an accurate figure. Mr. Michaud stated that the original estimate was done 5 years ago and that 8-10% was added for inflation at the recommendation of Moser Pilon Nelson.

Mr. Clements stated that history has shown that budget cuts come from capital improvements and maybe this year the Town should spend more than in previous years to catch up. The amount cannot be an arbitrary number. The Board has to figure out how to pay for these items. Bonding for bricks and mortar is best, but the lease/purchase method for equipment is a good way to purchase large items. His initial response when he saw the EVFD truck was that it would be too large to fit in the garage. He went to see Chief Varney and was shown where it would fit and they showed him their need for the piece of equipment. Mr. Clements requested from Chief Varney a presentation on this subject and he has agreed to do it. Overall, his first inclination which was to cut this budget has evaporated. Instead he feels the need to come up with innovative ways to fund the items rather than cutting them. He feels he has a deeper appreciation for the items requested after doing some research on them.

Mr. Varney asked if the Dog Pound would be in the same location and asked if anyone looked into sharing with another town. Mr. Michaud told him that Animal Control would stay in the same location. He said that Windsor Locks and Suffield tried to share but the response time was not good and it didn't work out.

Mr. Turner stated that this is a large budget and asked that the Board research the items and not cut it right away. He feels that creative ways for financing needs to be done and the public needs to be informed.

Mr. Wehr asked if every member should sit with every department head to get a feel for each item. It was brought out that the Chairman typically gets that information and passes it on at deliberation time.

Mr. Cleary asked why the Kibbe Rd item was removed from the list as this item has gone up considerably since it was first put into the capital budget. Mr. Stupinski stated that the Cap. Improvements Subcommittee took it out because they felt there were more important things to fund. He also asked about the addition to the Pavilion. Mr. Miller stated that Mr. Tedford said he could live without it for another year. Mrs. Harford stated that they had looked into getting prices for several Kloter sheds for storage but that was not brought forward because the amount did not qualify for Capital Improvements. Mr. Charter stated that they would not stand up to vandalism. She stated that the Town of Vernon has been using them for years at their High School.

Mr. Gage, who is a member of the Conservation Commission, stated that the open space item is a self financing item. He directed the Board to a publication located in the Town Planner's office called the Economic Benefits of Land Conservation that explains how it is self financing.

Adjournment

MOTION (WEHR) SECONDED (CLEARY) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:55 PM.

Submitted by Lori Smith
Lori Smith, Clerk