

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOARD OF FINANCE REGULAR MEETING
TOWN OF WESTBROOK BOARD OF FINANCE
BUDGET HEARING- SPECIAL MEETING
MULVEY MUNICIPAL CENTER – ROOM A
MARCH 10, 2015 6:30PM

The Westbrook Board of Finance Budget Hearing was held on Wednesday March 10, 2015. In attendance were Chairman Paul Connelly, George Pytlik, Gary Gavigan, John Leake, and Rick Westbrook. Also in attendance were Noel Bishop, First Selectman, Pam Fogarty, Assessor, Sonya Marino, Health Director, Courtney Burks, Senior Center Director, Deb Lovelette, Visiting Nurses Administrator, Elizabeth Carpenter, Social Services, Finance, Jill Brainerd, First Selectman's Office, Joan Angelini, Town Clerk, Kim Bratz, Tax Collector, Nancy Moore, Elections, Kelley Frazier, Clerk and Andrew Urban, Director of Finance Absent: Tony Cozza

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Connelly at 6:30p.m. Mr. Connelly led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Upon a motion made by Gary Gavigan and seconded by Rick Westbrook the Westbrook Board of Finance unanimously **VOTED** to move Item 3 to the beginning of the agenda.

DISCUSSION REGARDING REFERENDUM

Ms. Angelini represented town hall staff in requesting to not have a budget referendum and instead, to vote on the town budget at the Annual Town Meeting. She noted there has been a steady decline in the number of people who vote, as well as only a few absentee ballots. We need to save time and money to get the same results. The cost of a referendum is approximately \$5,000. Ms. Bratz and Ms. Fogarty said that there is a time concern that makes it difficult to get the tax bills out to meet state guidelines. It is also costly to have a referendum. If bills went out earlier, we could receive revenue for taxes in June which would be helpful. The Assessor is unable to process vehicle tax bills until the bill rate is set. Mr. Connelly noted the process has worked in the past. We have always worked closely with the town hall staff to make sure the mill rate was set to allow billing to happen in a timely manner. He noted that a referendum allows for transparency for the budget. Mr. Westbrook concurs with the concepts by the staff regarding declining participation. He is concerned that not providing an opportunity to have a referendum is denying residents the right to vote on the budget. Ms. Angelini stated that the Citizen's Guide could get the information to the general public by April 15th. The cost is \$700. If you distribute a Citizen's Guide, you legally cannot have a referendum. All tax payers or residents in the town of Westbrook would get the Citizen's Guide.

Mr. Connelly asked for Board members to state their opinion on this matter. Mr. Westbrook is willing to have a town meeting approach this year. Mr. Gavigan understands the residents who feel they are not able to vote. He also understands the town employee's point of view. He is okay with either decision. Mr. Leake agrees with the staff to have a town meeting vote. My Pytlik is in favor of a town meeting vote. Mr. Connelly feels that things are different than in previous years. He is in favor of a town meeting vote. Ms. Angelini said that the town has worked together to make the budget fiscally responsible. Everyone in town hall has managed their budgets well. This will be voted on at the next Board of Selectman meeting.

All motions made are for the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2016/2017.

DEPARTMENT 0510.5102 PUBLIC HEALTH:

Ms. Mario discussed her budget. Water testing will occur for the one public beach. Mosquito management will incur costs. She is requesting a site license to allow access to assessor information. Mr. Gavigan asked about being prepared for the Zika virus. Ms. Marino noted that it is currently too soon to predict what will need to be done. Things are going well. The new educator position is also an inspector. She noted that her department needs administrative help.

Upon a motion made by Rick Westbrook and seconded by George Pytlik it was:

RESOLVED: Unanimously to appropriate the sum of ONE HUNDRED FORTY ONE THOUSAND, SIX HUNDRED THIRTY THREE DOLLARS (\$141,633) for Department #0510.5102 Public Health.

Visiting Nurses 0510.5101

Mr. Westbrook noted that various line items have not used the funding which was budgeted in previous years. Ms. Lovelette noted that supplies for wound care have caused expenses to increase due to changes in Medicaid. She stated last year they returned approximately 3% of their budget. Mr. Pytlik noted that they are part of Emergency Services and it is difficult to predict expenses.

Upon a motion made by George Pytlik and seconded by Rick Westbrook it was:

RESOLVED: Unanimously to appropriate the sum of FOUR HUNDRED NINETY ONE THOUSAND, THREE HUNDRED SEVEN DOLLARS (\$491,307) for Visiting Nurses # 0510-5100.

Social Services 0515-5150

Ms. Carpenter noted that she is very busy. She is concerned about state reductions for social services. Mr. Bishop noted that the salary for the director will be negotiated with the union. She has generated \$31,000 in donations for fuel assistance and many other things. She also generates revenue for the town.

Upon a motion made by Rick Westbrook and seconded by George Pytlik it was:

RESOLVED: Unanimously to appropriate the sum of FORTY SIX THOUSAND, NINE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$46,900) for Social Services # 0515-5150.

Senior Center 0515-5152

Ms. Burks noted that the budget has not increased from last year. She does have a new kitchen coordinator. We have made capital improvements such as a new dishwasher, stove and refrigerator.

Upon a motion made by George Pytlik and seconded by Rick Westbrook it was:

RESOLVED: Unanimously to appropriate the sum of EIGHTY TWO THOUSAND, ONE HUNDRED TWELVE DOLLARS (\$82,112) for Senior Center # 0515-5152.

Mr. Bishop noted that in Westbrook the services for our elderly population is important. Mr. Gavigan and Mr. Bishop attended a meeting regarding affordable housing in Westbrook. Mr. Gavigan noted that we currently do not have enough affordable housing in town. This needs to be on our radar screen. The senior housing in our town may triple in the near future. Ms. Burks will be working with Ms. Carpenter and Ms. Lovelette to secure grants for our seniors in need. There will be a significant need in the next few years. Ms. Carpenter stated that 34 percent of the people who live in Westbrook cannot afford to live here.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT 0912

Mr. Annino noted that there was a staff change request to add an additional 4 hours to the Assistant Director's time. He has had to absorb additional work because volunteers are no longer doing the registration for sports. Mr. Westbrook voiced his concern regarding the possibility of overtime.

Upon a motion made by Rick Westbrook and seconded by George Pytlik it was:

RESOLVED: Unanimously to appropriate the sum of THREE HUNDRED EIGHTY NINE THOUSAND, SIX HUNDRED SIXTY TWO DOLLARS (\$389,662) for Department # 0912 Recreation.

DEBT SERVICE

Upon a motion made by Rick Westbrook and seconded by George Pytlik it was:

RESOLVED: Unanimously to appropriate the sum of TWO MILLION, SIX HUNDRED AND ELEVEN THOUSAND, EIGHT HUNDRED EIGHTY EIGHT DOLLARS (\$2,611,888) for Debt Service.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously **VOTED** to adjourn at 8:17pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Kelley S. Frazier, Board Clerk