

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE NEXT
BOARD OF FINANCE MEETING
APRIL 27, 2016, 7:00PM
WESTBROOK MULVEY MUNICIPAL CENTER**

The Westbrook Board of Finance Town Meeting was held on Wednesday, April 27, 2016. In attendance were Chairman Paul Connelly, John Leake, Gary Gavigan, George Pytlik, Tony Cozza and Rick Westbrook. Also in attendance was Andrew Urban, Finance Director, Noel Bishop, First Selectman, John Hall, Selectman, Mary Labbadia, Selectwoman, Jane Butterworth, Treasurer, David Maiden, Building Official, Lew Boyd, Director of Westbrook Library, Pat Ciccone, Superintendent of Westbrook Schools, Lesley Wysocki, Westbrook Schools Business Manager and Kelley Frazier, Secretary to the Board. Absent:

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Connelly at 7:00pm.

PRESENTATION OF FY2014-15 TOWN BUDGET – A. URBAN

Mr. Urban presented the town budget for Fiscal Year 2016 – 2017.

Mr. Kriete asked what additional personnel have been hired? The Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance approved the hiring of a full time health director, environmental tech position and a part time health educator. Next year there are 2 part time administrative assistant positions in our land use department. Mr. Kriete asked about the 3 part time fire marshals? They have been hired until the end of the year and funds have been placed in the budget if needed for next year.

A resident asked about whether our revenue covers the expenses to have a town VNA? In the last three years the reimbursement rates have plummeted. We are looking at a shortfall next year. She asked that other options be considered to keep the mill rate lower.

Mike Susi had questions regarding the health insurance increase of 15.8%. Anthem is our administrative services organization. There are other costs such as federal taxes which we are not reimbursed in this category. We have had some serious medical claims in the past year. We received a lower rate than reflected in the presentation which the Board of Finance will be discussing after the meeting. Mr. Susi stated that the Non-departmental category was confusing and went up 12%. This includes all of the employee benefits, dues and contributions and capital contributions. He is concerned of the significant increase over the last four years. It was noted that the health care reserves were reduced. Mr. Urban will meet with Mr. Susi to discuss further details of the budget. He thanked the Board for their hard work.

Mr. Kriete asked about the portfolio eroding? We fully funded our pension. The market value is causing the erosion. Pensions are invested by a portfolio manager.

PRESENTATION OF FY2012-13 BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET

Pat Ciccone, Superintendent of Westbrook Schools, discussed the background of the Board of Education budget process. She presented the Board guidelines for developing the budget. Ms. Ciccone discussed the enrollment projections. Enrollment is declining.

Mr. Kriete noted that in 2006 we had more children and less staff. Due to declining enrollment this is 4 staff for each child. Ms. Ciccone noted that this is a slippery slope. We are required by state mandate to offer specialized education.

Bill Fish commended the Boards of Finance, Selectmen and Education for a fiscally responsible budget. He also commended them for the website updates. This year the BOE budget is up but lower than what was projected. He asked Ms. Ciccone if a 2% increase is sustainable or will we have to go back to 4 or 5 %? We budget for anticipated known needs. We are changing and our needs are changing so she is not able to predict what will happen in the future.

Mr. Bishop noted that the Superintendent hired a consultant and created a task force to form a consensus of what we want in our school system during this time of declining enrollment. He thanked the Superintendent and the task force for their work. .

Mr. Kriete noted that 20% of the homes in Westbrook are rented.

Mr. Susi commended the Board of Education (BOE) for a lower than anticipated health insurance budget. If the BOE is 60% of the town budget and they get at 2.8 increase he noted that there is a huge disconnect with the health insurance for the town. Mr. Urban noted that they are a younger, larger group. They have been able to offset their health costs. We currently use one agency. Mr. Susi noted that the purchased services were up \$140,000? Purchased Services includes the

movement of the Student Accident Insurance which was previously in another line item. He discussed regionalization. As an educator and parent he would like to have seen a survey go out to the families. There was a small group of people who made a decision. He discussed the decision to not have a referendum to vote on the budget. He does not feel that this allows the townspeople to vote and express their voice.

ADJOURMENT

Upon a motions duly made and seconded, the Westbrook Board of Finance Budget Hearing was adjourned at 8:50pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelley S. Frazier, Board Secretary