



TOWN OF PLAINFIELD
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

Received For Record At Plainfield CT

On APR 26 2022 @ 9:53 AM

Attest: Cynthia J. Mattion
Town Clerk

The Board of Finance for the Town of Plainfield held a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, April 20, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. at the Plainfield Town Hall. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Gorman at 6:30 p.m.

Members present: Dean Gorman, Don Kivela, Tom Sinkewicz, Gary Stalaboin, Ted Dumaine, and Adrian Ferrari, Linda Fedor (alternate).

Members absent: Keith Sheeley (alternate)

Also present: Kevin Cunningham, First Selectman; Art Gagne, Selectman; Kelly Vachon, Finance Director, and Plainfield Department and Board of Education representatives.

Acceptance of minutes from April 13, 2022 meeting.

Don Kivela motioned to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2022 meeting. Gary Stalaboin seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

New Business:

a. Discuss and act on FY 2022/23 Budget Proposals (Town and BOE).

Dean Gorman stated that he spoke with residents to get feedback about the budget, and they stated inflation is high, on fixed income, can't afford taxes. Others stated we need to keep the town moving forward. We have been working together the last few weeks and would like to hear from the Board.

Gary Stalaboin discussed the fund balance and the 1.3 million on that section is high, he would like to move everything from that except for Dow Road Bridge and 300,000 for road construction, keep the 172,000 and 300,000 in there.

Tom Sinkewicz stated he can see the benefit of what he said, but we also need to pay the bills in an emergency and but not to deplete the fund balance and discuss how to replenish it in the future.

Don Kivela stated they should cut sidewalks out of fund balance they spent down a lot in the past year and getting dangerously close.

Ted Dumaine stated he spoke with the Chief of Police and the Assistant Chief and asked about manpower and is disappointed they are not asking for help. The Plainfield Police Chief stated they are at 19 and he put in for another position to get to 20. Ted Dumaine also commented that DPW is at 10 and should be 13. Adrian Ferrari stated he thought they said the department is at 10 but have been as high as 13 and not sure they needed more staff.

Kevin Cunningham stated if intent is to minimize what is there for fund balance, he understands the concerns but that means you will do away with police evidence building, town hall garage, Lyons Park solar light, new boiler, community center improvements, Shephard Hill and Lathrop Road sidewalk engineering costs, and IT upgrade for cyber security, and Quinebaug Valley trail. The sidewalks are ready to go and if removed, then we will have to come back and ask for these things individually according to the Charter it would have to go to Town meeting and referendum. Gary Stalaboin said you can group them and looking at CIP he would take those projects before sidewalks. Kevin Cunningham said the sidewalks are a safety issue. He can remove some, but safety is most important; to only keep 472,000 is difficult. Don Kivela recommended coming up with a dollar amount instead and let the First Selectman decide because he sees the day-to-day operations. Chief of Police discussed storage that is needed, evidence storage is needed due to liability. We are doubled up a new garage to protect vehicles that are considered evidence. Right now, the mechanic can't work in bay if an evidence vehicle is in there. The mechanic duties were discussed between the police and DPW, both under highway one does trucks and other does vehicles. The vehicle mechanic was out and the other mechanic helped out. Adrian Ferrari stated we need to reach out to residents about mill rate and instead of moving projects out of fund balance come up with a number.

Dean Gorman asked what the fund balance percentage is now and if this is incorporated into the budget where are we at. Kelly Vachon stated it is 12.8%. The current mill rate of 28.33 was discussed, five years ago it was 29.92 and last three years it has been 28.33. If budget is approved as is, it will go to 28.57. Ted Dumaine stated it is a real good budget as is and is ready to vote yes. Dean Gorman stated it is a good budget but would like to keep mill rate the same. We need to fix what we need to fix in a timely basis and if student body is at 50% below poverty level and increase of inflation, we need to find 251,000 to trim from budget as presented.

Don Kivela agrees to keep mill rate the same.

Adrian Ferrari thinks it is a good budget but keep it the mill rate the same. Dean Gorman stated the levy is 29,912,000 and if we trim it by 251,000, we can keep the mill rate the same.

Kevin Cunningham requested a recess for 5 minutes.

Gary Stalaboin motioned to take a 5-minute recess. Don Kivela seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

Don Kivela motioned to resume the meeting. Tom Sinkewicz seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

Meeting resumed at 7:08pm

Dean Gorman stated new information came to the Board regarding the Education Cost Share (ECS) goes up and revenue has increased, number just confirmed by Superintendent Paul Brenton by 350,000. This additional revenue reduces levy to 29,562,635 which drops mill rate to 28.23. This is great news. He also stated that some town personnel are inadequately compensated, and we need to take care of this; Kelly Vachon, Finance Director, and the First Selectman, Kevin Cunningham are under paid. Adrian Ferrari asked what dollar amount was being proposed and Dean Gorman did not have a number to give. Linda Fedor asked is any comp studies were done and these were presented to the Board. The Board reviewed studies from towns with comparable populations. Tom Sinkewicz stated that tonight may not be the time to decide this. The Board agreed to revisit at a separate meeting.

Don Kivela motioned to accept the new budget as proposed with a levy of 29,562,635 to go to a Town Hearing on 5/2/22 at 7pm. Ted Dumaine seconded. 2 (yes votes), 2 (no votes), 1 abstention. Motion did not carry.

Gary Stalaboin wants the mill rate to be 28.00 and asked how much needs to be cut. Kelly Vachon stated 240,837 would need to be cut from the budget. He stated going by ratio the BOE would cut 175,811 and the Town would cut 65,026.

Posting notice for the public hearing was discussed. Tom Sinkewicz stated we can send this forward for the public hearing but should have a better representation to the public for the hearing if a special meeting can be held before then adjustments can be made for the hearing.

Kevin Cunningham stated they can cut 65,000.

Paul Brenton stated they reduced the BOE budget already. Fixed costs are staff contracts and student transportation grants are used so 2024 budget when grants expire transportation will go up. We added pension contributions as asked, and 7% inflation including fuel costs. He stated that cutting 170,000 the BOE would have to have special meeting to review. It would impact students and programs and he also stated that the increase in ECS revenue is intended for tax relief, so the board will not be inclined to cut more. He asked the BOF to move forward with the budget as is.

The Board discussed moving forward with the budget as discussed to public hearing to get input from the residents. The BOF are scheduled to meet 5/3 to discuss further.

Don Kivela motioned to accept the new budget as proposed with a levy of 29,562,635 to go to a Town Hearing on 5/2/22 at 7pm. Adrian Ferrari seconded. 4 (yes votes), 1 (no vote), 1 abstention. Motion passed.

b. Discuss and act on proposed 5-year Capital Plan.

Kevin Cunningham reviewed the 5-year Capital Plan. Some items discussed was the HVAC system, moving maintenance department over to Town Hall and sewer department can use the garage also; Public Works 300,000 paving, backhoe for 220,000, police station 80,000 for two vehicles, animal control heater in bathroom, recreation equipment upgrades, community center flooring repairs, locker room renovations, Parson property trails, Shephard Hill construction, sidewalk construction and Dow Road bridge. This CIP budget of 1,547,150 also offers opportunity for adjustments.

Gary Stalaboin asked about building committee findings on this list, Kevin Cunningham stated some were already taken care of.

Gary Stalaboin motioned to accept the 5-year Capital Plan, seconded by Adrian Ferrari. All in favor, motion passed.

Citizens Participation

Paul Hopkins shared his calculations of the grand list, and that property tax increases average \$225 a year per household and by passing the budget as is would be difficult for residents.

Adjournment

Tom Sinkewicz motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 pm, seconded by Gary Stalaboin. All in favor, motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by,

*Suzanne Krodel
Recording Secretary*