

**MIDDLEFIELD BOARD OF FINANCE**  
**405 Main Street**  
**Middlefield, Connecticut 06455**

Revised Minutes of the December 5, 2017 Board of Finance Special Meeting

Attendance:

Members

Others

X	Irish, Jim	A	Bailey, Ed
X	Kowal, Melissa		
X	Lowry, David		
X	Malcolm, Alice		
X	Nick, Joel		
X	Wolak, Mary	X	Rusilowicz, Al

A=Absent

X=Present

Jim Irish called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Jim Irish welcomed both the newly-elected and re-elected members.

Approval of Agenda

Dave Lowry made a motion, seconded by Joel Nick, to approve the agenda, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Election of Officers

Alice Malcolm nominated Jim Irish for chairman and David Lowry for vice-chairman. Joel Nick seconded the nominations. Alice Malcolm nominated Joel Nick for secretary and Melissa Kowal seconded that motion. Hearing no further nominations, the Board of Finance officers were unanimously elected as follows: Jim Irish as chairman, David Lowry as vice-chairman and Joel Nick as secretary.

Public Comment

None.

### Approval of Minutes

Jeremy Renninghoff's name was misspelled on page 2 of the November 9, 2017 regular meeting minutes. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes dated November 9, 2017, as amended. Motion carried, with Melissa Kowal abstaining.

Jim Irish suggested rewording the motion that was made to approve the mill rate to read: Revised property tax bill for real and personal property tax will be for \$12,774,934 for completion of collection with the January 1, 2018 bill.

Mary Wolak made a motion, seconded by Joel Nick, to approve the minutes of the November 27, 2017 special meeting, as amended. Motion carried, with Dave Lowry abstaining.

### Review of Current-Year Spending

Al Rusilowicz provided a summary by line item for the Board to review. He explained that the accounting system, CCM and COST dues, Regional Planning dues have all been paid in full. Mr. Rusilowicz explained that negotiations will begin soon on both union contracts and they are also working with the attorney to update the personnel manual. The Public Works union has four members and Town Employee union includes all other town employees (roughly 10), both full-time and part-time. The only non-elected, non-union employees are Hannah Malcolm and Al Rusilowicz.

Alice Malcolm asked why the bargaining units mandate the Selectmen's wages but do not affect the Financial Director's salary. Al Rusilowicz explained that the raises for the bargaining units are contractual, but the raises for Selectmen would be up to the Board of Finance. He also explained that the benefits for elected officials mirror the benefits for both unions.

Mary Wolak asked about the Labor Counsel line item being high and Mr. Rusilowicz explained that the building inspector issue is ongoing and a meeting is scheduled for tomorrow with opposing legal counsel. The contingency line item had been increased in case this line item goes over. Al Rusilowicz also explained that he will rewrite the personnel manual to avoid increased legal costs.

Jim Irish asked if the rewrite of the manual will include transitional procedures or talk about evaluations. Al Rusilowicz explained that the hope is that elected officials, other than the First Selectman, will get an evaluation but he doesn't believe that that will actually happen. Mr. Rusilowicz stated that the current personnel manual says that there will be annual evaluations, but he does not believe that actually happens. He did remind the Board that an outstanding employee will still get the same increase as the poorest-performing employee. Generally everyone agreed that evaluations are important and personnel files should contain a complete history. Alice Malcolm felt that the bottom line is to protect the Town.

Al Rusilowicz also reported that, for the first three months of the year, the Town had been funding a position out of the Website line item that had not been budgeted. This line item will be over budget possibly by as much as \$1,500 to \$2,000.

There is typically no expenditure under Insurance Deductibles, but this year there was a deductible for the building inspector litigation.

The supplemental tax bill will be going out shortly and there appears to be about 250 refunds, totaling about \$30,000. The hope is to have all the refunds sent by the beginning of February. Al Rusilowicz explained that Ed Bailey is planning to include something in the tax bill explaining the time line and why a supplemental bill was being sent.

Mr. Rusilowicz explained that there are some homes on Cherry Hill Road and Miller Road that require water testing and water filters. This line item will be over budget because one of the systems failed, but it will not be significant.

Park and Rec expenses were budgeted only to include the software program and not minutes or a couple of other things, so this line item will be over budget but will be more accurate next year. It was generally agreed that it was a good idea to have recorded minutes. Mary Wolak also commented that it is money well-spent.

Animal Control expenses are a little above where they should be as there have been animals in the shelter. The State provides an estimate for the State Trooper, but two rather significant increases have been received in the fringe benefit rate. The Town now receives a bill every month for the State Trooper. There was also some discussion about pension contributions. Dave Lowry asked whether the Durham Fair Association reimburses the Town for State Trooper overtime and Al Rusilowicz explained that the Town gets reimbursed by Youth and Family Services because the overtime is for undercover drug activity, underage drinking, etc. which is part of the grant. Dave Lowry also asked if the Town has any control over overtime and Mr. Rusilowicz believes that the First Selectman is alerted before most overtime is completed. There is also some private duty work done by the Trooper at both Lymans and Powder Ridge and the Town hasn't always billed for reimbursement. Al Rusilowicz also explained that this year was the first time the Town billed the Durham Fair for the public works department overtime and that was paid promptly.

Al Rusilowicz summarized that, for the most part, expenses are right on track with the exception of Labor Counsel and Trooper Overtime. He also reported that the Town has received the first ECS payment from the State, just shy of \$500,000, a State PILOT payment of \$30 and the Stabilization grant.

#### Old Business

None.

#### New Business

A. Approve 2018 Meeting Dates

Jim Irish asked if the second Thursdays of the month continue to work for everyone and it was agreed that it does.

Mary Wolak made a motion, seconded by Jim Irish, to set Board of Finance meeting dates for 2018 as the second Thursday of each month, as follows: January 11, February 8, March 8, April 12, May 10, June 14, July 12, August 9, September 13, October 11, November 8 and December 13, 2018. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Resolution Regarding BOE Finance Committee

Jim Irish explained that a resolution was passed by the Board of Selectmen last night and they would like to have the Board of Finance consider the same resolution so that it can be communicated to the Board of Education that both the Board of Selectmen and Finance are in sync with regard to establishing a Finance Committee to assist the Board of Education in terms of budgetary matters. Mr. Irish had copies for everyone on the Board.

Joel Nick read the resolution into the record. Resolved that the Board of Finance of the Town of Middlefield hereby requests that the Board of Education of Regional School District 13 establish a Finance Committee in accordance with the State of Connecticut Public Act 17-2, section 156, attached, for the purpose of providing information to the Regional Board of Education concerning local town budget issues and any assistance requested by the Regional Board of Education in the preparation of a proposed budget. It is proposed that Middlefield and Durham, as member towns, each appoint two representatives to the aforementioned Finance Committee. This resolution is approved and executed this fifth day of December, 2017 by the Middlefield Board of Finance.

Al Rusilowicz explained that the State legislature established language that states that the Board of Ed “may” establish and, if they do, then the towns “shall” appoint. Ed Bailey, Bob Yamartino and probably the Town of Durham want this to happen. Jim Irish also stated that he believes that the local Board of Ed members from Middlefield would be the people who would nominate the two people for the Finance Committee.

The Board agreed they are unanimously resolved and will sign the resolution.

Jim Irish also reported that Bob Yamartino is trying to get a policy change that would have non-Board of Ed people be members of subcommittees of the Board of Ed.

Al Rusilowicz felt that this Finance Committee will likely happen because of the political pressure on the Board of Ed and that it is in their best interest. Mary Wolak also commented that they have been very supportive of the Board of Education and everyone wants quality education for the kids. Jim Irish also reported that nothing has been done about surveys being sent out to the townspeople. The next Board of Education meeting is on December 13 and hopefully someone will ask, under Public Comment, about progress on the survey. Discussion continued about what issues should be included on a survey and Jim Irish suggested that the proposed Finance Committee help guide the professional in creating the survey.

Dave Lowry commented that he felt that the Board of Education needs to come to terms with the fact that the State funding will continue to decrease until almost nothing. He mentioned that people are fleeing the state due to the taxes.

Adjournment

Melissa Kowal made a motion, seconded by Mary Wolak, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Debi Waz*

Debi Waz  
Alwaz First