



## **TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY**

*Board of Finance  
1212 Whittemore Road  
Middlebury, CT 06762*

### **Public Hearing Meeting Minutes Tuesday April 8, 2020 Town Hall Board Room via Zoom**

Present: William Stowell, Chairman  
Rita H Smith, Board Member  
Vincent Cipriano, Board Member  
Joseph Drauss, Board Member  
Stephen Ruccio, Board Member

Absent: Keli-Ann Bollard, Alternate  
Dawn Albizu-Calabrese, Board Member

Also Present: Edward B. St. John, First Selectman  
Robin Stanziale, CFO  
Elaine Strobel, Selectman  
Ralph Barra, Alternate  
Rachel Primus, Recording Clerk

William Stowell opened the public hearing at 6:34 PM via the Zoom meeting application. Mr. Stowell reviewed the proposed 2020-2021 Budget which would be \$11,546,825, or a 2.71% increase which does not include the Region #15 estimated cost of \$25,056,109.00. Bill reviewed the expenses: administrative costs are \$2,123,347 or 18.4%, fire department is \$312,741 or 2.7%, police department is \$1,894,917 or 16.4%, contingency is \$95,000 or 0.8%, debt service cost is \$750,000 or 6.5%, park and recreation is \$448,269 or 3.9%, elderly and social services is \$156,991 or 1.4%, library is \$432,954 or 3.7%, public works is \$2,669,604 or 23.1%, and employee benefits is \$2,313,002 or 20% of the budget. Mr. Stowell then reviewed the revenue. He explained that the BOE had a hearing last night. They started with a 3.59% increase, but eventually got it down to 2.96%. They started looking at savings they may have because of the COVID 19 virus shutting the schools down. He said they have asked them to hold off on setting their budget, which they agreed to delay it until April 27<sup>th</sup>. Bill explained to them that the BOF will be holding off until mid to late May, and asked them to do the same. Bill reviewed the information from the Governor stating all school employees and bus drivers are to be paid by the school during this shut down. Vincent Cipriano commented that this board is always trying to figure how to do more with less. He noted this situation requires the region to think about things differently. He said he doesn't understand why the number of students are down, but the budget continues to increase. He said this budget requires people to think differently in order to save money. Bill said this did come up in the discussion last night. Because children are out of school and not in classrooms, getting training is going to make things

even harder. A discussion ensued regarding teachers and budget increases. Bill said he emailed the BOE a list of questions, but they did not address them at their meeting.

Vincent Cipriano discussed the Economic Development budget. He explained that it is one of the most important boards, especially now, and brings business to the town. He asked if there was a way we could give them additional money towards their budget. Bill said they will look into it.

Ed St John said that both Bill and Robin spent a lot of time coming up with the questions for the BOE, they submitted them yesterday, and he patiently waited for them to address them at the meeting, but they didn't. Bill said that they did receive their answers this morning.

Ed said this is an interesting time for the town, and they have never encountered anything like this. He said they have concerns regarding the two major tax payers in town that are suffering due to being shut down. He said that if there is no revenue coming in, then they won't be able to pay their taxes. Ed said he is suggesting switching to a 4 payment system in order to reduce those payments. He plans on bringing this idea before the Board of Selectman. He said he is also hoping to work something out with the Region.

There was no public comment.

Bill Stowell closed the public hearing at 7:28 PM

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rachel Primus, Recording Clerk