BOARD OF FINANCE – TOWN OF HARWINTON
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 10, 2017

MEMBERS PRESENT
Peter Thierry
George Nashe
Edwin "Chip" Booth
Margaret Arigoni
Sandy Davis

MEMBER ABSENT
Tim Bobroske

OTHER PARTICIPANTS
Evan Brunetti, Selectman

Chairman Thierry called meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

MINUTES OF JULY 10, 2017

A motion was made by Mr. Booth, seconded by Ms. Davis to approve minutes as submitted. All in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

A motion was made by Ms. Davis, seconded by Mr. Nashe to authorize additional expenditure of $2580 in line 1084, Community Hall for the extra roofing expenses, in the 2017-2018 fiscal year. All in favor.

Senior Center damage estimated at $38,000 by CIRMA. Repair work to begin.

NEW BUSINESS

A motion was made by Mr. Nashe, seconded by Ms. Davis to approve expending $3950.85 from line 1084, Community Hall, for the repair of the 2nd floor ceiling. Mr. Nashe- Yes, Ms. Davis- Yes, Ms. Arigoni- Yes, Mr. Booth- No. Motion passes.

SUPPLEMENTALS

None

INVOICES

None

CORRESPONDENCE

Statement by Mr. Booth.

I just have a few comments to make. After 20 years, I earned a few minutes of your time. The Board of Finance in Harwinton has always been a non-partisan Board comprised of Democratic, Republican, and Unaffiliated citizens working together for the present and future taxpayers of our town. Apparently, that is changing.

In my 67 years, I have never been so disrespected. I do not really care that the Republicans did not endorse me. However, the fact no one had the courtesy to tell me until caucus day, even though they knew since February, is inexcusable. Obviously, I knew they were not endorsing me because they never called to see if I was interested in running again. However, I deserved a timely explanation. The reason for not endorsing me is very disturbing as well. Apparently, I was responsible for higher taxes because I did not vote to use surplus to alleviate a mill rate increase.

Fact #1: Hopefully, we are all intelligent enough on this Board to do our own due diligence and have our own opinions. Those opinions may not be all the same which is healthy. That's what democracy is all about.

Fact #2: In my opinion, using surplus for tax purposes does not help the taxpayer long term. The budget increase would have to be covered the next year. I do not understand why that is so hard to comprehend.

Fact #3: Twice in the last five years our part of the Region 10 budget was up over $400,000. In fact, in 14-15, with the census shift, it was up over $600,000. We never know what Region 10 will bring. If we used surplus for tax purposes one year and get saddled with one of those high school increases the next, you have even more of a burden on the taxpayer.

Fact #4: Since Frank was First Selectman, we have been talking about the state mess and how it could hurt us someday. A healthy surplus was and is necessary.

Fact #5: All budgets voted on the past several years warranted a tax increase. If you want no tax increase, total budgets should have no increase or a slight increase.

Fact #6: To be attacked verbally in public twice and blamed for tax increases is beyond belief. Really!! How uninformed or brainwashed can some people be!

Fact #7: It is a good thing we did not tap the surplus last year or the year before. It looks like we are going to need some of it.

You certainly cannot say I was not a qualified candidate. I am a numbers person. My experience on Finance Committees is extensive. I was Audit Committee Chairman for 10 years for a bank with one of the lowest expense ratios and highest capital ratios in the country. I am Chairman of the Board of that bank now and still on the Audit Committee. I have been told by several seasoned members of the Charlotte Hungerford Hospital Board that I can analyze a financial statement better than anyone they ever saw. I am on their Finance/Audit Committee. I am Treasurer and Finance Committee member of two other non-profits, on the Finance Committee of another non-profit, and a member of the Torrington Water Co. Board, where a financial background helps. Four of the six organizations have budgets, one of which I prepare and present to the Executive Committee.

I have had a roller coaster ride of emotions the last couple of weeks. I was angry for obvious reasons. I was hurt for obvious reasons. But most of all I was disgusted to think our small town is no better than Hartford or Washington. When you have to vote a certain way to be a loyal soldier to your Party or get thrown under the bus, it is not healthy. Whatever happened to individual due diligence and analysis, one's integrity, constructive intellectual debate, compromise and mutual respect. No wonder qualified people do not want to get involved in public service. It is a sad state of affairs.

Right now I am content. I am satisfied with my tenure. I was conscientious and did my homework. You cannot ask for anything more. I was honored to be asked to run as an unaffiliated candidate on the Democratic ticket. I thought long and hard about it but decided my time is up. I may regret that decision. I am confident I would have won again.

It was an honor to serve on this Board. Over the years, it was a privilege to work with so many great members under Peter's leadership. I think we have done a damn good job---a dedicated group of Republican, Democratic, and Unaffiliated men and women working together for taxpayers of our great town. I will miss you all.

In closing, just a few comments. Mike Chadwick could very well be the next new member of the Board. I knew him a little from church years ago. He is an investment guy, and I think when he studies the numbers he will have integrity enough to vote his mind. I hope I am not being too optimistic.

Mike, if I might, I would like to give you some constructive suggestions from somebody who has been around the block a few more times than you. You are a hard worker and a good First Selectman, but.....

!. Do not be afraid to get advice. You do not have all the answers yet.

2. Be consistent with your stories. Do not tell one person one thing and another something else. Being considered 2-faced is not an admirable quality.

3. Do not get too caught up in politics B.S. Nobody in Harwinton wants higher taxes. The Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance work for the town. It is your job to keep taxes reasonable but also to maintain town roads, facilities, and schools. We all have to work together for our citizens--- not any personal agenda.

4. Please do not embarrass yourself and your Party with your campaign flyers this fall. Tell the truth. It works better than false or misleading statements. Someone may call you out on things this year.

5. In the paper last week you were quoted as saying Region 10 was 80% of our budget. It is only 70.29% of our budget. You have made that mistake quite often over the years.

Mike, I wish you luck and the town all the best.

Thanks for this opportunity to speak.

Edwin G Booth, Jr.

A motion was made by Ms. Arigoni, seconded by Mr. Booth to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 p.m. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter B. Thierry

RECEIVED FOR RECORD AT HARWINTON CT
ON 08|14|17 AT 8:30AM
ATTEST NANCY E. ELDRIDGE TOWN CLERK