

BOARD OF SELECTMEN REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday September 19, 2017 7:00pm

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held on Tuesday, September 19, 2017 in the selectmen's conference room.

Members present: First Selectman Michael Criss, Selectman Evan Brunetti, Selectwoman Nancy Schnyer, Absent

Attendees: Peter Thierry – Board of Finance

Call to Order

Mr. Criss called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Mr. Brunetti made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Criss seconded. Motion carries.

Appointments and Resignations

No appointments and resignations at this time.

Public Participation

No participation at this time.

New Business

Request for Tax Refunds – No requests for tax refunds at this time.

Update Harwinton House – Mr. Criss shared an update. Vincent Lee is the new person from DECD that is working with Mr. Criss to close the Harwinton House out. He is on his fourth request to fill out and submit the paperwork and the budget. Mr. Criss offered to go down there and do it with him because of the complexity of the procedure.

Budget Update – Under the Governor's Executive order, if that was to take effect on October 1st, we would roughly be down \$581,760; \$432,000 from ECS and \$148,000 of the teachers pensions. The teachers pensions are a big problem because it is \$148,000 this year, the full amount next year would be \$306,000 and then after that it escalates because of the retirements, so our portion would only grow after that. They did vote through the republican budget but the Governor felt to veto it so they have not submitted it yet, they are in meetings. They met yesterday and they met again today. The latest update is the teachers' pensions are going to be back in – that is a negotiating standpoint but ECS will remain whole at this point for this year. The proposal is to phase out ECS based on enrollment starting 2019. We would have to take a look at that right now; we would be on the hook for \$148,512. It wouldn't be a bad idea to figure the \$433,000 to be on the safe side for ECS (at least for half of that). We would like to get the tax bills out for October 1st. The State is not going to have a budget until the last week of September. Mr. Criss expressed wanting to have a meeting with the Board of Finance based on Atty. Michael Rybak's recommendation that both boards vote on a tax rate; either to keep the tax rate or to raise the tax rate on Thursday night at 7:30 p.m. this week. If we want a mill rate by October 1st, then we have to have a meeting by the end of this week. There have been previous discussions regarding how to handle the mill rate if the Governor's budget took effect. Mr. Thierry mentioned that the Executive Order means that we are looking at a possible 2 mill increase. Mr. Criss would like to pull together a meeting for Thursday night with the Board of Finance to finalize the mill rate and make adjustments if needed. Mr. Brunetti made a motion for a meeting on Thursday night, September 21st at 7:30 p.m. with the Board of Finance to set the mill rate. Mr. Criss seconded. Motion carries.

State Police Public Hearings – Mr. Criss sent a letter to let them know that we are not going to sign the original contract with even more increased costs. If the Budget goes through it will be 100%. The goal was by budgeting the 100% and changing the title of police services, it would allow us the ability to make the decision to either drop a trooper and start a constable program or just drop a trooper all together and see how it goes. It would be prudent of us to get public feedback to see how people want to proceed, if they want to pay 100% of the State Troopers which will be an escalated cost based on pensions or if we want to try to figure out another option. Mr. Brunetti made a motion to set up a public hearing at 6 p.m. before the next selectmen's meeting on October 3rd. Mr. Criss seconded. Motion carries.
Mr. Brunetti made a motion to go into Executive Session at 7:11. Mr. Criss seconded. Motion carries.

Executive Session – Mr. Brunetti made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 7:25 p.m. Mr. Criss seconded. Motion carried. Mr. Brunetti made a Conditional motion to proceed and recommend at the Board of Finance, at their Thursday Special Meeting, the possible purchase of the Thierry property pending Board of Selectmen, BOF approval, Planning 8-24 approval and State DEEP approval for a swap out of the Wilcox property and revenue to be used for purchase also to be placed on a town meeting and referendum.. Mr. Criss seconded. Motion carries.

First Selectman's Report – Region 10 did propose a \$1.5million cut which is a layoff of 26 teachers; they did not vote on it. They have a contingency that they moved \$500,000 into. Their worst case scenario is the \$1.5million if the Governor's Budget goes through. Mr. Criss is trying to find what is on the table to help make a decision on the mill rate Thursday night, September 21st, either way we are looking at a possible increase. In regards to the teacher's pensions, Mr. Criss explained that there is a lawyer in Simsbury that we can sign on with along with the other 21 communities in NWCOG and the eastern COG for a class action suit against the State of Connecticut for the teachers' pensions. The way the statute reads, we are not responsible for the teachers' pensions. Mr. Criss stated the only reason why the Governor wants the teachers' pensions is because he wants to get rid of the liability in order to get a better rating for moodies so he can get a better rate on his bonds for all his borrowing so that he can save some money that way, and use that money. Mr. Thierry mentioned that it should go to the teachers' pensions. Mr. Thierry also stated that the only ones that are showing any systematic change are the republicans. Mr. Criss stated that there are good pieces in both, if they were able to take those pieces and put them together, municipalities would be okay and they would still find the savings they need.

Mr. Criss said that the Town did really well this year, expenditure and revenue wise. Another key piece is that the Tax Collector brought in about \$200,000 of delinquent taxes and because of the spending freeze we underspent by about 200k on the budget. The structural changes we can make here is with the troopers; if we were to cut a trooper that would save us about \$176,000. This would free up money to start a constable program.

Correspondence – There is no correspondence at this time.

Adjournment – Mr. Brunetti made a motion to adjourn at 7:39pm. Mr. Criss seconded. Motion carries.

Minutes submitted by _____
Jen Minery

RECEIVED FOR RECORD AT HARWINTON CT
ON 09/27/17 AT 12:14 PM
ATTEST NANCY E. ELDRIDGE TOWN CLERK