

**TOWN OF POMFRET
BOARD OF FINANCE - MINUTES
PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED BUDGETS FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2015/2016
TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2015 AT 7:00 PM
POMFRET COMMUNITY SCHOOL CAFETERIA**

In Attendance: Board of Finance Members Ken Kristal, Carolyn Gerrity, Margie Huoppi, Michael Baum, Jorge Martinez, Alyson Aleman. Also present: Board of Selectmen, Board of Education, members of PCS and Town staff, and approximately 20 citizens and interested parties.

- I. **Open Session** – K. Kristal opened Hearing at 7:00 PM. He stated that a review would be given of the proposed General Government and Board of Education budgets. The overall increase of proposed budgets is currently at \$ 180,000. Appropriations are covered by estimated revenues, funding available from the State, with a remaining gap of about \$77,000.

- II. **General Government – Fiscal Year 2015/2016 Budget Review and Public Comment and Questions** – Maureen Nicholson, First Selectman, provided an overview of the General Government budget as proposed. Some recent savings in auditor fees and health insurance has allowed the Board of Selectmen to reduce their originally proposed budget by \$10,000. This brings the total budget to \$2,562,088. There is already money set aside for the PCS capital projects budgeted by the Town and some of the open-space bond payment totaling \$ 78,465. These are therefore funds that will not need to be raised by taxation. It leaves the overall increase to the Town at \$18,043. She stated that the largest increase to the budget was in added services at the Public Library and the Senior Center and described what some of these added services would be. One woman stated that she mostly felt the budget was a conservative one. She wondered about added services/raised taxes at this time. She was concerned with State funding. M. Nicholson stated the Town was in good fiscal health and should not be put in jeopardy with regard to State budget. Charlie Tracy asked about the differences between the General Fund, Fund Balance, and Designated/Undesignated Balances. One citizens stated that he was happy to see the increase in services. Richard Galante asked about the potential mil increase and what that would mean in dollars. Something as small as the \$2.00 per month mentioned would not cause a property foreclosure. He would like to see the added services.

III. Board of Education – Fiscal Year 2015/2016 Budget Review and Public Comments and Questions – Richard Schad, Board of Education Chair, stated that he has never presented a lower increase than this proposed \$83,798. He provided an overview of the Boards budgeting process. He welcomed the savings in auditing services which will likely be absorbed by additional kindergarten enrollment. The past week has seen enough additional enrollment to require three sections. This will be accomplished without any raise in the proposed budget. He then provided a summary of the larger increases and decreases to the budget. Walter Hinchman asked about monies returned by the BOE in past years and where that goes. He also asked about the Minimum Budget Requirement as mandated by the State. Returned monies go into a designated BOE Fund if approved by the Board of Finance. The minimum budget requirement does not allow BOE budgets to be decreased from year to year but must maintain current funding.

Ken Kristal asked if there were any other general comments or questions from the audience. He stated that the Board of Finance still needed to determine how much, if any, fund balance will be used to balance the budgets and how that would effect the mil rate. Survey results seemed to indicate that most of those responding were happy with the budgets as proposed. Considerable discussion continued with regard to use of fund balance monies, how that could effect next year’s budget and how it could effect the mil rate. A poll of the Board of Finance indicated that most members were in favor of some amount of modest use of the fund balance to bridge the estimated \$77,000 gap, with the remaining gap to come from taxation. M. Huoppi stated for the record that she was in favor of no tax increase and taking the \$77,000 from the fund balance. A poll of the audience regarding some of these scenarios resulted in 11 hands raised for a mix of fund balance/taxation, 18 hands for just use of fund balance, and 0 for monies to all come from taxation. Continued discussion.

IV. Adjournment – Motion made and duly seconded to adjourn. Public Hearing adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Ryan, clerk

Date approved _____