

TOWN OF BOZRAH
PUBLIC HEARING
BOARD OF FINANCE
FMS MULTIPURPOSE ROOM
April 20, 2022

Chairman Mike O'Connor called the Public Hearing to order in the FMS Multipurpose Room on April 20, 2022 at 7:10p.m. The purpose of this hearing is to receive comments on the proposed Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Town of Bozrah General Government, Capital, and Education Budgets. Residents and taxpayers shall have the opportunity to provide written and verbal comments on the Boards' proposals.

Members Present: Chairman Mike O'Connor, Raymond Barber, Michel Leask, Phil Lavalley, Evan Gilman, Steve Seder

1. M. O'Connor introduced the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education to present their proposed budgets. He noted the townspeople would be able to comment and ask questions following the presentation of each budget.
2. First Selectman Glenn Pianka presented the Board of Selectmen's proposed budget. G. Pianka noted the total capital proposed is \$735,496, the total general government proposed is \$2,012,222, making the total general combined \$2,747,718.

G. Pianka noted:

- a. Item 51050 Assistant to the First Selectman has increased by about \$7,000 because of a transfer of funds from the salary of the Assessor Clerk Salary as it is a shared position.
- b. Item 53083 Phone/Mileage has been restored to \$1,200.
- c. All items under 102 Employee Benefits have increased.
- d. Item 52025 Re-valuation Account has \$38,000 budgeted.
- e. Under item 109 Legal Fees - Town Counsel the data center consultant line has been emptied.
- f. Item 112 Auditor is budgeted \$33,000, but may change as the Board of Finance hires the new auditor.
- g. Item 53013 IT Support has increased to \$23,412.
- h. Item 53016 Building Maintenance has increased due to the maintenance needed in the buildings throughout town.
- i. Item 52043 SECCOG Planner has increased due to planning and zoning issues as well as Item 52043IW SECCOG Planner due to increased inland wetland issues.
- j. Item 53072 Uncas Health District has increased after many years at a stagnant budget.
- k. Item 53016MF Maples Farm Park General Maintenance and Material has decreased to \$2,000 due to a transfer from this line to the senior center line for building maintenance needed.
- l. Funds were transferred from Item 53081 Sand and Item 53080 Salt to Item 53055 Catch Basin Cleaning for replacements to catch basins in town.

- m. Item 52030 Trash Tipping Fees and Item 52032 Hauling Fees have increased by 5%.
- n. Item 54161 Summer Program has been restored.
- o. Item 52081 Overlay Town Roads has been increased to \$195,000
- p. Item 54065 DPW Equipment has increased due to the cost of equipment as a new mower was purchased.
- q. Item 55009 IT Capital increased significantly to \$19,100 for updated security systems at town buildings.

3. Comments on the First Selectmen's Budget

- a. Steve Seder commented on the pavilion planned for Maples Farm Park. G. Pianka noted the funds come from the Maples Farm Park Commission budget and the American Rescue Plan grant. S. Seder also commented on the Transfer Station fees. S. Seder commented on creating a canoe launch area connected to the pond.
- b. Carolyn Dziengiel, Bashon Hill Road, commented on the supply line items throughout the budget questioning how that is categorized. G. Pianka explained that all supplies purchased are absolutely necessary for town operations.
- c. A member of the public commented on the payroll services increase.

4. Superintendent Portia Bonner presented the Board of Education's proposed budget.

P. Bonner noted:

- a. Student Services Coordinator salary has increased.
- b. The amount of paraprofessionals has decreased and 4 current employed paraprofessionals have taken training to become Registered Behavioral Technicians (RBT)
- c. They have instituted the Preschool program for morning and afternoon.
- d. The total number of students in Bozrah is 281 with 170 in the elementary grades and 111 in the highschool grades.
- e. There will be a 2.15% increase in salaries for all certified staff and a 2% increase in salaries for non-certified staff.
- f. The Superintendent salary has increased by 2.15%. The Board is in the process of hiring a new permanent Superintendent.
- g. A request has been made for a full time building substitute teacher.
- h. NFA tuition is increasing by 2%.
- i. An increase for materials due to textbooks, physical education equipment and online textbooks.
- j. Increase for health insurance and benefits as more staff will be receiving them in the new fiscal year.

5. Comments on the Board of Education's Budget

- a. Bill Ballinger, Lake Road, commented that the rate of increase in the BOE budget in the past years is not sustainable.

- b. Mary Elizabeth Lang, Gifford Lane, commented the salary increases and staff increases allows the special education students in Fields Memorial School rather than be outplaced at a higher cost.
- c. Steve Seder commented on the paraprofessionals' transition to Registered Behavior Technicians.
- d. Ian Polun, Principal, commented on the library funding noting extra funds from the Scholastic Book Fairs are used for the library.
- e. Jeanne Goulart, Bishop Road, commented on the importance of keeping the special education students in town for services due to the cost of outsourcing.

M. O'Connor closed the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted for the Board,

Heather Provost
Recording Secretary