

TOWN OF BOZRAH
PUBLIC HEARING
FIELDS MEMORIAL SCHOOL
April 18, 2018

Chairman of the Board of Finance Mike O'Connor called the Public Hearing to order at 7:04 p.m.

Members Present: Michael O'Connor, Michel Leask, Raymond Barber, Evan Gilman, Ann Chambers, Phil Lavallee

Others Present: 40 townspeople in the audience

1. Chairman Mike O'Connor discussed the current state of the budget.
2. First Selectman Glenn Pianka presented the Board of Selectmen's budget. He highlighted specific changes from last years budget. The items he noted are below:
 - a. Page 1, line item 100 Board of Selectmen – 7% increase for the First Selectman
 - b. Page 3, line item 106 Assessor's Office – 42% decrease
 - c. Page 4, line item 108 Tax Collector – increase for when the tax collector is absent so they can pay who assists.
 - d. Page 5, line item 113 Office Equipment – increase due to agreement made with IT Support. It will now be one monthly fee, which will be more cost effective.
 - e. Page 5, line item 115 Building Official – increase due to the addition of a building official support staff that is necessary due to added requirements.
 - f. Page 6, line item 120 Fire Department – increase due to EMT positions.
 - g. Page 7, line item 121 Fire Marshal – increase due to added duties for the Fire Inspector.
 - h. Page 7, line item 125 Animal Control – 14% decrease.
 - i. Page 8, line item 130 General Highway – increase due to DPW Foreman Stipend.
 - j. Page 9, line item 137 Transfer Site – decrease of 6% because PAYT bags will not need to be purchased.
 - k. Page 12, line item 190 General Government Capital Projects – increase due to necessary improvements to roads, ambulance replacement, outfitting and training, mandatory tire replacement, guard rail replacement and roadside mower.
3. Public questions on the Board of Selectmen budget
 - a. Diane Lavallee, Caroline Road, questioned why the First Selectman is receiving a 7% pay increase. Glenn Pianka noted he has

- increased duties, does not receive take health insurance through the town and uses his own vehicle. Diane Lavalley also asked if the Tax Collector was given too many vacation days. Glenn Pianka noted the Tax Collector is a salary position and they had not previously budgeted for her relief when she was out.
- b. Robin Barry, Bishop Road, asked if some positions at the town hall were over-lapping. Glenn Pianka responded that a different person holds each position.
 - c. John Hibbard, Caroline Road, questioned the commission made by Maples Farm Park for the market and the building. Glenn Pianka noted the report he received from the commission was not good and \$1,500 income was reported. He discussed with the commission the need for a better report.
 - d. Jenn Reid, Cedar Lane, questioned the status of the roof replacement. Glenn Pianka noted 66.28% of the cost will be covered by grants and then the town will pay \$500,000. Jenn Reid also asked if the town still uses microfilm. Glenn Pianka noted it is likely digitized now but it is still called microfilm in the budget.
4. Second Selectman Bill Ballinger discussed the need for part-time/per-diem fire fighters/ EMTs. Current volunteers aren't available to attend fire and ambulance calls Monday through Friday 7am to 5 pm. The department can not hire their own volunteers so they will need outside people who will need gear and training. They are looking to hire 12 to 15 people and have 2 people on each shift. This would be through a one-year contract.
 5. Public questions on the part-time/per-diem fire fighter/EMT.
 - a. Nancy Taylor, Salem Turnpike, questioned if Bozrah could work together with other towns in the area. Ray Barber noted that some surrounding towns fire departments are paid and if we count on their mutual aid then we will be taking their paid services.
 - b. Fred Potter, Gager Road, asked if the Fire Department had considered any other options. Ray Barber noted they talked to American Ambulance and found it was expensive to maintain that service. Fred Potter also asked how many ambulance calls there were for 2017. Ryan Sholes noted 250 ambulance calls.
 - c. Jack Santo, South Road, asked if the department gets money for bringing out equipment to a fire/EMT call. Ryan Sholes noted only if you transport with an ambulance.
 6. Superintendent Jack Welch presented the Board of Education's budget. He noted they board may need to revisit initiatives due to obligations for a special education student. The points he highlighted are below:
 - a. Proposed additions
 - i. Addition of a Spanish teacher for Kindergarten – 8th grade
 - ii. Expansion of Professional Development for math
 - iii. Full-time school psychologist
 - iv. Para educator in Kindergarten

- v. Replace library carpeting
 - vi. Hire assistant basketball coach
 - vii. Refurbish 2 HVAC units
 - viii. Paint library and other classrooms
7. Public Questions on the Board of Education budget.
- a. Zeke Marillow, Caroline Road, asked why they are adding a Spanish teacher to the school. Jack Welch noted it was due to global economy.
 - b. Melissa Brady, Hickory Lane, asked if Spanish would be offered as a special. Jack Welch replied it would be incorporated as a special. Melissa Brady also questioned if Bozrah could work with other schools to hire occupational therapy services and share employees. Jack Welch noted that had not been considered and it was a good idea.
 - c. Diane Lavalley, Caroline Road, questioned the increase of pay for teachers. Jack Welch noted the teachers pay progresses for the amount of years they have taught.
 - d. Nancy Taylor, Salem Turnpike, asked about the incentives for teachers. Jack Welch noted teachers who are eligible to retire receive incentives; it has always been in the budget.
 - e. John Hibbard, Caroline Road, questioned if Franklin and Bozrah schools combine will the teachers have to re-apply. Jack Welch noted that a regional Board of Education would replace both towns Board of Educations and they would hire the staff.
 - f. Jack Santo, South Road, asked if there was a way to reduce operating costs. Jack Welch noted money is only spent on what is necessary and required.
 - g. Herb Nordgren, Rosemarie Lane, asked the percent of special needs students. Jack Welch noted 12% of the students are governed as special needs students by the state.
8. Public Comments on the proposed Board of Selectmen budget, the part-time/per-diem firefighter/ EMT agreement, and the Board of Education budget.
- a. Melissa Brady, Hickory Lane, commented that she supports the addition of Spanish and it should at least be part time.
 - b. Ev Brown, Fitchville Road, commented she supports the 1 year trial for the part-time/per-diem firefighter/ EMT agreement and she supports the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education budgets as presented.
 - c. Diane Lavalley, Caroline Road, commented that both budgets are too high and the salary increases are too much.
 - d. Herb Nordgren, Rosemarie Lane, commented the Board of Education should try to keep their expenses down.
 - e. Jeanne Caplet, Bozrah Street, commented that the Board of Education did well to keep within the 1.5 mil increase.

- f. Fred Potter, Gager Road, commented on the part-time/per-diem firefighter/ EMT agreement. He discussed other possible options.
9. The Public Hearing was adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted for the board,

Heather Barber
Recording Secretary