

**Board of Selectmen  
Special Meeting  
March 28, 2013  
Meeting Room A  
Essex Town Hall**

Present: First Selectman Norman Needleman  
Selectmen Stacia Libby, Joel Marzi

Norman Needleman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Held jointly with the Board of Finance regarding 2013-2014 Budget

Others present (Board of Finance Members): Chairman, James Francis  
Keith Crehan  
Fred Vollono  
Lee Rowley  
Jeffrey Woods  
Campbell Hudson  
Treasurer, Robert Dixon  
Finance Director, Kelly Sterner  
Yvonne Roziak, Recording Secretary

**2013-2014 Board of Selectmen Proposed Budget:**

Norman Needleman reported that the Board of Selectmen have made the final changes to its 2013-2014 budget proposal and is presenting it to the Board of Finance tonight for review. The selectmen's proposal represents an increase of 1.82 percent when compared to the present budget. It does not include the education budgets, which are considered separate. Mr. Needleman said the education budgets account for approximately 70% of the town's total budget. The Essex share of the Region 4 budget shows the largest increase, because the number of Essex students in the two regional schools continues to increase.

After a series of workshops with department heads, commission chairs, and the public, the board endorsed a proposal that provides a 2.5% salary increase for all elected and non-union employees (with the current exception of the Selectmen themselves), however, the Board of Selectmen are requesting that the Board of Finance look at this to reinstate the increase to include them. There has been no increase for them since 2009. There are no new positions proposed in this budget.

The 2013-2014 proposed budget also includes expected savings from a planned bond refinancing, a \$15,000 capital reserve fund for a future cruiser purchase, and a \$15,000 capital fund for a future wastewater treatment study.

Mr. Needleman indicated he cut \$504,000 from the original request before passing this proposed budget onto the full Board of Selectmen. Workshops trimmed further and with a unanimous vote, the selectmen recommended a town operations budget with an increase of 1.82%.

Mr. Needleman then asked the two selectmen if they have any comments. Selectman Joel Marzi indicated that there was a bit more in spending and had some correspondence from citizens regarding the Town Report should contain capital spending at that time.

\*Discussion continues below with Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen regarding proposed 2013-2014 Budget.

*Motion made by Norman Needleman to adjourn Board of Selectmen Special Meeting at 8:17 p.m. Seconded by Stacia Libby and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.*

**Board of Finance  
Regular Meeting  
March 28, 2013  
Meeting Room A  
Essex Town Hall**

Present: James Francis, Chairman, Fred Vollono, Lee Rowley, Jeffrey Woods, Campbell Hudson.

Others present: Robert Dixon, Treasurer  
Kelly Sterner, Finance Director  
Yvonne Roziak, Recording Secretary

Meeting was call to order by James Francis, Chairman at 7:00 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

James Francis recommended the following changes be made to the agenda with regards to Item #4. Change wording of Budget Workshop to read "Presentation of Budget to Board of Finance."

Jeffrey Woods asked for the following change as to his name being listed as seconding a motion under the approval of the agenda from the Board of Finance meeting on 03/21/12 and to change it to Keith Crehan as the person who seconded the motion.

*Motion was made by Lee Rowley to accept and approve the amended agenda with regards to these items. Fred Vollono seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

*Motion was made by Jeffrey Woods to approve the minutes of March 21, 2013, seconded by Campbell Hudson and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.*

\*Discussion continued on proposed budget from Board of Selectmen.

Jeffrey Woods inquired about certain salaries and using part-timers versus full time staff an paying them overtime/double time. Example: Police personnel doing harbor boat patrolling, the costs seem excessive.

Norman Needleman responded with there is an obligation of having the right police personnel working these types of patrols as well as having obligatory police coverage for two shifts. Police overtime is billed quarterly; however, there is sometimes a lag that comes up at the end of the year with the costs being higher.

James Francis inquired as to when the last time the Board of Selectmen received a pay increase. Norman Needleman indicated it had been quite a few years and they did not ask for a raise increase this year. He indicated they would discuss this with the Board of Finance members after the Board of Selectmen Special Meeting adjourns.

A question regarding the sinking fund reduction for open space came up and it was agreed to be done as a one-time payment for Foxboro. Current balance is \$220,000 (\$100,000) came from Foxboro). Campbell Hudson requested that Kelly Sterner send him the current Ordinance for Open Space.

Additional discussions took place with regards to the Town Sanitarian, Head of Parks & Recreation and Treasurer's positions.

Jeffrey Wood's inquired about the \$60,000 cost for the Town's VNA services and why is it part of the Town's responsibility to provide. Mr. Needleman responded that some items remain grandfathered as the agencies are very grateful for what they ask for and what we give them.

Lee Rowley inquired about the difference between highway department budget versus Town's Park & Rec budget. Kelly Sterner responded that it is a "gray" spending area and we need to look at it in aggregate. Certain Accounting changes have offset certain numbers and we'll need to look at producing income and expense reports for each department.

The Tax Collector is currently targeting back taxes and specifically looking at a \$30,000 back tax bill.

Campbell Hudson suggested we have a one page preliminary projection of revenue numbers available for the Public Hearing.

Current property assessments have gone down; however, some have gone up leading to a 2.58% mill rate increase if this budget passes.

***James Francis made a motion to alter the current budget increasing the First Selectman's and Selectmen's salaries by 2.5%, seconded by Lee Rowley. One abstention from Campbell Hudson. Motion carried.***

***Motion was made by Fred Vollono to submit for discussion the 2013-2014 Board of Selectmen's Budget at Public Hearing, seconded by Campbell Hudson. Unanimously approved. Motion carried.***

***Keith Crehan made a motion to adjourn the Board of Finance Meeting at 8:36 p.m. seconded by Jeffrey Woods. Unanimously approved. Motion carried.***

Respectfully submitted,

Yvonne Roziak