

**Preston Board of Finance
Special Meeting
Wednesday January 3, 2018
Preston Town Hall
7:00 pm**

1. Call to Order

M. Lennon called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

Roll Call

Members

Melissa Lennon – Chair
Stacey Becker
Dan Duprey
Jerry Grabarek – arrived at 7:20 pm
Keith Wucik
Ken Zachem - excused

Alternates

Ian Stammel – seated until arrival of J. Grabarek
Lennie Spencer - seated

Also Present

1st Selectman Robert Congdon
John Spang, Finance Director
Superintendent Roy Seitsinger
Fire Chief Tom Casey

2. Review Current FY2018 Budget Estimates

M. Lennon asked members to review information included in their packets;

- June 2017 BoF approvals
- October 2017 updated revenues from approved State Budget
- November 2017 added hold backs from Governor Malloy

3. FY2018 Capital Projects

M. Lennon noted that the BoF had approved guidelines on August 2nd

For General:

- Bonding should be used for expenses related to the purchase of high cost assets expected to have a long service life. Examples included land, buildings, machinery, roof and/or heating repair or replacement.
- Bonding could also be used to pay high costs that have little or no service life, but are non-recurring. Examples include payment of a court judgment, costs of environmental cleanup.
- Total bonding package should be no more than 15% than the prior year's budget
- Capital expense is an item/asset that has a service life of five years or more worth \$20,000 or more.
- Bonding may be used for any expenses deemed appropriate by the BoF.

M. Lennon went over the items previously approved by the BoF that then went to a Town Referendum but did not pass, and noted that these items need to be re-addressed.

L. Spencer noted that the uncertainty of the State Budget probably contributed to it failing and we still

do have some of that uncertainty.

M. Lennon agreed and noted that a back hoe has already been purchased so that amount has been removed from the budget.

S. Becker asked if the total is still 3.652 million.

1st Selectman Congdon stated that what went to Referendum was 3.7

Preston Fire Department Chief Tom Casey

1993 Tanker – listed in budget for \$400,000 - will purchase identical tanker that was purchased in 2016 for \$336,286.00. A cost increase is anticipated.

Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)

New Requirements:

1 SCBA for every riding position in a vehicle

There are 25 riding positions

each air pack is \$6,000 a piece for a total of \$148,618.00

As a part of the new standard some requirements have changed:

new air tanks \$47,000

new masks \$10,617.00

voice amplifier \$13,860.00

Total of purchases in order to comply with the new standards \$219,706.35

T. Casey noted that if these purchases are spread out over four years, the fire department will be non compliant for at least 4 years, the prices will have gone up, and we are still \$59,706.00 short of the replacement costs at today's price.

That is our urgent need, because the life line of a firefighter is the breathing apparatus.

1989 E1 Pumper – 21 years old – in the budget for \$600,000

The last pumper that was purchased in 2015 for \$450,000

New diesel requirements will increase cost. An exact cost can't be given until it goes out to bid.

2004 First Responder – \$56,473.00

Crucial piece of equipment – responds to all calls

BoF cut it to \$40,000 and the fire department will find a way to get the cost down to \$40,000 by re-using radios and emergency lighting from the old service truck.

K Wucik recommended reducing the SCBA's by 2 for the service truck because it is not considered a first line apparatus without a pump or a tank.

T. Casey agreed and noted that would be a ~\$15,000 reduction.

D. Duprey stated that he is trying to think about what the goal is. We are trying to get this approved and we are guessing it didn't originally get approved because of the uncertain State Budget and the total picture to the Town; how much they have to pay every year to support this budget.

M. Lennon explained that Norm Gauthier presented good information at the Town Meeting. He explained that the impact of this 5 year bond wasn't all that significant to the taxpayer. Everything would stay status quo except for 1 time where it peaked just a little bit and then came right back down.

1st Selectman Congdon explained that the Town has two bonds that go away in 2019. 1 for 4.5 million dollars for the new school and then then the first 5 year Capital Plan. If this bond package as originally

presented was approved, there would be 1 year where the debt service would go up around \$100,000. Other than that over the term of the 15 years debt service, it would be a reduction every year of debt service cost to the Town of Preston. The goal is to look at the budget for something listed that is not needed.

D. Duprey noted that he was at that meeting and everything looked good, but then it got voted down. So how much do we have to pull out so it gets passed this time.

M. Lennon stated that there is also the argument that the BoF did a lousy job of communicating and the turn out for voting was horrible.

1st Selectman Congdon noted there were 2 reasons; the information was poorly communicated and at that time the Town was looking at getting cut 2 million dollars from the State. Voters on social media were saying that we would be cut by 2 million and the voters of Preston were being asked to pay 3 million.

I. Stammel noted that the voters see that 3.6 million, but don't see it spread out over 15 years.

1st Selectman Congdon noted that time is of the essence. We are at a point where we have to have new school buses because they are breaking down.

Following BoF discussion D. Duprey noted that there is now a \$45,000 reduction in the Fire Department's budget.

A motion was made by J. Grabarek and seconded by D. Duprey that the BoF approve the Fire Department Capital Projects Budget for the amount discussed and agreed upon at this meeting.

Discussion:

M. Lennon noted the costs agreed upon;

\$360,000 – tanker truck

\$550,000 – pumper

\$205,000 – SCBA

\$40,000 – first responder service truck

No further discussion

All in favor. Motion carries.

Board of Education

Superintendent Roy Seitsinger

The Board of Education has discussed basic priorities like safety and well being. The Board of Ed asked not to just give a list of capital improvements, but to prioritize the list based on some standard and some scale that will help going forward.

1st year – FY18

School buses – not buying them all at once is a good idea- staggering 2 or 3 a yer is much more feasible. When you buy them all at once – then they go bad all at once and you are hit with a large amount.

Science Lab – STEM and STEAM initiative and improving the learning environment in a science lab is a must. Presently, the science lab does not have any of the fundamental things required for high quality science instruction.

Playground – Safety issue

Gym Floor – Number 1 issue. Floor is bubbling and becoming a tripping hazard. There will come a

time when the gym will have to be closed.
Repaving bus lot – grading and drainage needed.
Wheel chair lift – crucial
9 passenger vans
FY19
buses -full size
FY20
locker replacement – reduced from 175 to 165
repave Preston Plains parking area
roofing

S. Becker stated that she has only been on this Board for 2 years she has seen that the BoF needs to plan way ahead for things and become proactive not reactive.

M. Lennon agreed and noted that for now we have to fix it with Capital, but that has been the discussion the last couple of meetings. Looking at a long term maintenance plan at the Board of Ed, the General Government and Public Works. We need to fix the trajectory we are on.

A motion was made by L. Spencer and seconded by D. Duprey that the BoF reduce the amount to be used for re-paving Preston Plains to \$110,000.

Yes

Stacey Becker
Dan Duprey
Jerry Grabarek
Keith Wucik
Lennie Spencer
Motion Carries

No

Melissa Lennon – Chair

K. Wucik asked if anyone has thought about leasing school buses.

1st Selectman Congdon explained that it appears to make sense, but then that lease payment is in the Operational Budget. There is something called the MBR (minimum budget requirement) and that drives the MBR up.

K. Wucik asked if bonds can be used for a lease.

M. Lennon answered yes.

L. Spencer asked if the current fleet of buses was bought in 2011.

M. Lennon answered they were purchased in 2006 and it was a “lemon year”

I. Stammel commented that the buses are now 11 years old and already at the end of life.

J. Grabarek noted that there are brake issues with the buses.

A motion was made by K. Wucik and seconded by L. Spencer that the BoF approve the Board of Education Capital Projects Budget for the amount discussed and agreed upon at this meeting.

Discussion:

M. Lennon noted the costs agreed upon;

28,500 – lockers

\$187,500 – roof repair

\$105,110 – science lab upgrade
\$118,000 – gym floor
\$46,771 – playground resurfacing
95,000 – buses and bus garage lot

No further discussion

All in favor. Motion carries.

General Budget, Public Works - 1st Selectman Congdon

1st Selectman Congdon stated that everything listed is needed.

Trash compactor - Currently the Town is leasing a trash compactor and it would be cost effective to purchase one however if a cut is needed it should be the compactor for \$25,000.

loader – 30 + years old

mower and snow plows – will be needed within this 5 year plan.

M. Lennon stated that the current bond amount is \$3,477,581.00

S. Becker noted that's down about \$280,000 from what went to Referendum last time.

A motion was made by J. Grabarek and seconded by S. Becker that the BoF approve the Public Works Capital Projects Budget for the amount discussed and agreed upon at this meeting.

Discussion:

M. Lennon noted the costs agreed upon;

\$65,000 – plow truck

\$156,000 – loader

\$65,000 – roadside mower

\$50,000 – roadside tractor

\$160,000 – sterling

\$469,000 – total

No further discussion

All in favor. Motion carries.

A motion was made by M. Lennon and seconded by K. Wucik that the Board of Finance recommends for approval the Capital Projects Budget of \$3,477,581.00 and recommends that the Board of Selectmen schedule a Town Meeting.

All in favor. Motion carries.

4. Recommendation of Appropriation for State Trooper

A motion was made by M. Lennon and seconded by S. Becker that the Board of Finance recommends the appropriation of \$61,000 for an additional Resident State Trooper for the remainder of the 2017-2018 fiscal year subject to the approval of the appropriation by vote by the Town of Preston at a meeting called for that purpose.

All in favor. Motion carries

5. 2018 BoF Meeting Schedule

A motion was made by K. Wucik and seconded by L. Spencer to approve changing two calendar dates for the 2018 BoF Meeting schedule as discussed tonight, meeting on the 10th in April and

the 19th in September.

All in favor. Motion carries

6. Auditor Contract Extension & RFP

John Spang explained that Sandra Wellwood said she will have to raise her price by \$2,000 if she has to submit an RFP when the BoF does their due diligence and requests proposals from auditors when her contract expires in a year.

M. Lennon asked members if they all agreed they should follow the original plan the BoF agreed on. BoF members agreed they should still do their due diligence by sending out an RFP for the Town's auditor.

7. Review draft of Board of Finance By-Laws

A motion was made by J. Grabarek and S. Becker to table the review of the Board of Finance by-laws.

All in favor. Motion carries.

8. Public Comment

Andy Depta, Preston resident suggested waiting until the first of June to see if using the surplus is necessary.

A. Depta asked if the BoF has a Town Dropbox.

The answer was yes.

A. Depta asked if there is a fee.

The answer was no.

A. Depta noted the PRA pays a fee.

1st Selectman Congdon began to explain why there is a fee.

A. Depta asked to be allowed to finish his question.

A. Depta noted there are several users on the BoF and that is why there is no fee.

S. Becker stated there is no fee because the BoF uses the free Dropbox because the extra memory and space are not needed.

1st Selectman Congdon stated quietly. . . exactly.

A. Depta stated that he was trying to clarify the BoF Dropbox and his question has been answered.

9. Adjournment

A Motion was made by D. Duprey and seconded by J. Grabarek to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 pm.

All in favor, Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Charpentier