

**Special Meeting: Preston Board of Finance  
Special Meeting: Preston Board of Education  
Special Meeting: Preston Board of Selectman  
Tuesday, June 19, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.  
Preston Town Hall – Lower Level**

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Melissa Lennon, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

**Roll Call**

**Members**

Melissa Lennon – Chair  
Jerry Grabarek – Vice Chairman  
Stacey Becker – Clerk  
Dan Duprey – excused  
Keith Wucik – excused  
Ken Zachem

**Alternates**

Ian Stammel – seated for K. Wucik  
Lennie Spencer – excused

**Also Present**

First Selectman Robert Congdon  
John Spang, Financial Director  
Roy Seitsinger, Superintendent  
Christine Cocheo, Recording Secretary  
Thomas Turner  
Ed Gauthier  
Cindy Luty  
Deborah Burke-Grabarek  
Mike Sinko  
Lynwood Crary

2. Public Comment (per posted Town Ordinance)

- a. M. Lennon read an email from A. Depta regarding suggested changes in budgets and use of surplus to FY18-19 budgets. More budget cuts should be made and BoF should not use additional surplus.
- b. M. Lennon read a letter from Jill Keith detailing her disagreement with the proposed budget. Encouraged Boards to focus on saving more money.
- c. Andy Biladou agreed with J. Keith and A. Depta
- d. Susan Strader disagreed with previous comments. She asked that the BoF take more from surplus to reduce the mil rate with no additional cuts to the budgets. She stated that the public stated at the previous town meeting they did not want big cuts and that people seemed to support both budgets for the most part. She noted the Board has surplus to work with due to unexpected revenue. She encouraged citizens to come in and see the schools. She added that Board

- members should not take to social media in a negative way and that people heard many inaccurate statements after the town meeting from social media.
- e. Bill Legler disagreed with the two emails read. Also disagreed that the town meeting supercedes referendum. Encouraged Board to take it seriously that voters want more cuts. Suggested using all of surplus and for down the road items using the supplementary tax bill to lessen the impact of a tax burden now. Suggested using the bulk of surplus.
  - f. Jack Smallwood noted that almost 1.2 mils has been done by the school and that 1 mil is in debt payment. Suggested putting  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{1}{4}$  mil into a Capital Project Fund and plan for the future. Noted that teachers are having to pay out of pocket for healthcare, etc.
  - g. Gail Smith noted that some of the previous comments are from people on the outside looking into the school and that she is on the inside looking around. She stated that people have money they use elsewhere they could put toward taxes and that she felt as though disagreements are about something other than money.
  - h. Jill Charron said her kids are the future and to tell them they are not worth it and their schools are not worth it and to cut more from the budget is not right and makes families like hers reconsider Preston as their home.
  - i. Mark Phelps noted that Preston does not have a lot (in terms of police force, volunteer fire department, infrastructure) but it does have a school system which is why his family chose Preston as home, and that the bulk of our spending should go to BoE. He said the bigger question is why we are not communicating adequately what the BoE budget is giving to the school system. The Board needs to communicate the value of expenditures.
  - j. Mike Clancy noted that everyone on the Boards are taxpayers. Wanted to know how much of an increase in taxes there would be. Does not think at this time it would be a good idea to get rid of the second state trooper because of child safety in schools. Expressed support of budget. Would like BoF to put money toward lowering the mil rate.
  - k. Jill Keith stated that her motive is fiscal responsibility so that children have the best education possible and to find a balance between that and taxpayers.
  - l. Sandra Gauthier noted that many people seemed supportive at the town meeting but the referendum failed both budgets and that it was unfortunate that only 20% of voters turned out.
  - m. Heather Helwig agreed with proposed budget. Said we need to find a way to get more people to vote and suggested having the vote at school. Suggested putting more surplus toward the budget.
  - n. Nick Vegliante said cutting the budget too much will have a negative impact and families will leave as the school brought people into this community.
  - o. Linda Congdon discussed that she raised 3 children and saw the success of the school system. She supports the budget and taking from surplus to cut the mil rate. Discussed seeing changes in the psychological and emotional health of children over the years.

3. Discuss FY19 BoE and General Government Budgets
  - a. M. Lennon mentioned she has received support from community members in taking out of surplus
  - b. B. Congdon stated the BoS budget is responsible, with a 1.3% increase from last year. Noted that BoF and BoS worked very hard to plan out long term bonding and try to minimize the impact and that there is virtually no increase in the mil rate due to Capital Projects. Also regarding BoE, Montville has 2 social workers, and they are needed today.
  - c. Reviewed BoE Expense Budget presented at Referendum including the \$120,000 cut
  - d. Reviewed General Government Budget presented at Referendum including the \$120,000 cut
  - e. The Board noted the last audited surplus was \$2.98 million
  - f. J. Spang discussed YTD versus budgeted revenues. It was a strong year for local revenue with about \$300,000 more than planned. \$427,000 expected next week from Mashantucket grant. Currently a shortfall in revenue of about \$898,000 which will drop to about \$470,000 after the grant money comes in
  - g. J. Spang discussed Government Funds Balance sheet from June 30, 2017. \$375,000 committed to lower the tax levy and 9.5% budget set aside for emergencies.
  - h. R. Seitsinger discussed the need to plan for the future. Emphasized the impact of having 2 state troopers. Addressed that he is willing to go anywhere and talk to anybody to improve communication. Noted that the school board reduced \$136,000 to budget, with a total of about \$256,000 reduced and that out of 10 budget categories, 6 were reduced. NFA tuition increased 40% so they wrote a letter to NFA requesting negotiations. Projected student population to go up ~50 in the next 5 years.
  - i. M. Lennon discussed a flat budget as a comparison, not as something she supports. The mil rate would be 25.8 for a completely flat budget. Mil rate presented at referendum was 26.97
  - j. S. Becker noted she was unsure if people are against budgets or using surplus. Also historically in the town voter turnout is poor and it is hard to determine what the town wants with only 20% voting
  - k. M. Lennon stated the need to find middle ground and what is best for the town
  - l. S. Becker discussed it is hard to plan surplus because it is not known until the audit
  - m. M. Lennon noted it is the BoF's job to make sure the town is fiscally sound, though the state is not fiscally sound
  - n. I. Stammel noted the BoE budget seems to be the biggest contention. Also that if we go below the minimum budget requirement we lose grant funds
  - o. M. Lennon discussed the idea of \$498,000 out of surplus to bring the mil rate to 26.

- p. B. Congdon suggest cutting BoS budget \$10,000, BoE budget \$20,000 and taking a total of \$511,000 out of surplus for a mil rate of 26.07
  - q. J. Grabarek suggested cutting BoS budget \$20,000, BoE budget \$75,000 and taking \$375,000 out of surplus for a mil rate of 26.24
  - r. M. Lennon noted we can only negotiate future tuition so BoE cuts only impact Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Also that BoF may have more money in surplus than they thought 2 weeks ago
  - s. R. Seitsinger supported B. Congdon's recommendation and noted that there is a ripple effect to every dollar
  - t. K. Zachem suggested cutting BoS budget \$50,000, BoE budget \$100,000 and taking \$100,000 out of surplus for a mil rate of 26.61
  - u. S. Becker suggested cutting BoS budget \$20,000, BoE budget \$30,000 and taking about \$424,000 out of surplus for a mil rate of 26.23
  - v. J. Grabarek proposed cutting BoS budget \$10,000, BoE budget \$40,000 and taking \$400,000 out of surplus
  - w. I. Stammel suggested altering B. Congdon's suggestion and taking \$450,000 out of surplus
  - x. M. Lennon noted if too much is taken from surplus, we open ourselves to a huge risk down the road
  - y. BoE suggested cutting BoS and BoE \$5,000 each and taking \$725,000 out of surplus
  - z. S. Becker suggested cutting an additional \$2,000 out of BoS from BoF for a mil rate of 26.21
4. Board of Finance
- a. Act on the FY19 BoE and General Government Budgets
    - **A motion was made by I. Stammel and seconded by S. Becker to decrease the BoS budget by \$12,000 and to decrease the BoE budget by \$20,000.**  
**In favor: I. Stammel, S. Becker, M. Lennon.**  
**Opposed: K. Zachem, J. Grabarek.**  
**Motion carries 3-2.**
  - b. Discuss the use of Surplus to balance the FY19 budgets
    - **A motion was made by K. Zachem to take no more than \$350,000 out of Surplus.**  
**No second. Motion fails.**
    - **A motion was made by I. Stammel and seconded by J. Grabarek to take \$450,000 out of surplus.**  
**In favor: S. Becker, M. Lennon, I. Stammel, J. Grabarek.**  
**Opposed: K. Zachem.**  
**Motion carries 4-1.**
5. Adjourn

c. **A motion was made by I. Stammel and seconded by K. Zachem to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 pm.**

**All in favor. Motion carries.**

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Christine A. Cocheo', written in a cursive style.

Christine A. Cocheo  
Recording secretary

Revised  
Preston Board of Finance  
BoF Special Meeting  
Tuesday, June 19, 2018  
7:00 pm  
Preston Town Hall

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In favor: I. Stammel, S. Becker, M. Lennon.

Opposed: K. Zachem, J. Grabarek.

Motion carries 3-2.

A motion was made by K. Zachem to take no more than \$350,000 out of Surplus.

No second. Motion fails.

A motion was made by I. Stammel and seconded by J. Grabarek to take \$450,000 out of surplus.

In favor: S. Becker, M. Lennon, I. Stammel, J. Grabarek.

Opposed: K. Zachem.

Motion carries 4-1.

A motion was made by I. Stammel and seconded by K. Zachem to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 pm.

All in favor. Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Cocheo

Recorder