

**Preston Board of Finance
Special Meeting
Thursday, May 19, 2022
Cafeteria - Preston Plains Middle School**

Call to Order - Bob Congdon called the meeting to order at 7:35 P.M.

1. Roll Call

Members

Alternates

John Moulson - Chairman - arrived at 7:55 PM

Robert Congdon - Vice Chairman

Stacey Becker

Andy Depta -excused

Denise Beale - excused

Zachary Maurice

Andrew Sawyer - seated for Andy Depta

Kayla Thompson - Clerk - seated for Denise Beale

Also Present

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier - Selectwoman

Ken Zachem - Selectman

Cindy Varricchio - Finance Director

Dr. Seitsinger - Superintendent of Schools

Keith Wucik - Fire Chief

2 members of the public

2. Public Comment

3. Correspondence

4. 2022-2023 Proposed Budgets - Education and Town

● **Revenue**

The Board members first discussed the Local Revenue projections provided by Cindy Varricchio, who had updated the numbers from the previous night's numbers. There was a short discussion on whether the Interest & Liens Fee should stay at \$65,000.

Stacey Becker motioned to increase Interest & Lien Fees by \$10,000 to a total of \$75,000. Andrew Sawyer seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Next, the Board members discussed MERS, which is a fee collected when real estate transactions are filed. It was decided to leave the number as presented.

There was a lengthy discussion on whether to use 98% or 98.5% of the Grand List to calculate the projected Property Taxes - Current Year line. It was asked if calculating at the higher amount, 98.5%, affects the Town's ability to pursue and obtain loans and grants. It was stated that the Town has an excellent record of collecting yearly and outstanding taxes and that would be considered more heavily than the percentage of the Grand List calculation.

Andrew Sawyer motioned to use 98.5% of the Grand List (the recommended standard) when calculating the proposed Property Tax line. Kayla Thompson seconded the motion. John Moulson, Stacey Becker, Zach Maurice, Andrew Sawyer, and Kayla Thompson were in favor of the motion. Bob Congdon was against the motion. The motion carried 5 to 1.

Andrew Sawyer motioned to approve the Local Revenues as amended. Kayla Thompson seconded the motion. John Moulson, Stacey Becker, Zach Maurice, Andrew Sawyer, and Kayla Thompson were in favor of the motion. Bob Congdon was against the motion. The motion carried 5 to 1.

At the completion of discussing the Local Revenues, John Moulson took over as Chairman.

The Board members reviewed the proposed State Revenue Budget. It was discussed that LoCIP is a reimbursable grant, and therefore should not be listed as revenue, but put in a separate account and tracked the income and expenditures as they occur.

Stacey Becker motioned to net out LoCIP and place the funds in a separate account. Andrew Sawyer seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

The OPM funds of \$90,000 and \$100,000 generated from the sales tax were briefly discussed. Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated again that the State is warning towns not to use the funds when determining their budgets. It will be a cushion if the funds come through.

Andrew Sawyer motioned to accept the State Revenue Budget as amended, without LoCIP funds. Stacey Becker seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

- **Expenditures**

Stacey Becker motioned to reduce Technology Support by \$5,000. Bob Congdon seconded the motion. After the discussion and justification of the increase, the motion was withdrawn.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier explained the increases were needed to add laptops, to replace desktops, Infinite Vision modules that will be added to meet the needs of the Town for better reporting, Starr Computers fees, cyber security, and that all the increases have come from vendors.

Zach Maurice motioned to take the Board of Education and the Board of Selectmen Budgets as presented to a Public Hearing on Thursday, May 26, 2022, at 7:30 P.M. at Preston Veterans

Memorial School. Kayla Thompson seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Next, the Board discussed the mil rate. Looking at the data:

Local Revenue - \$488,136
State Revenue - \$4,384,778
Total Expenditures - \$18,783,119

The current mil rate is 26.94, the new mil rate would be 29.8, a 2.86 increase.

The Board then discussed how much to take from the Undesignated Fund Balance to offset the budget to reduce the mil rate increase. Members seem to agree that an increase in the mil rate is needed, but not nearly 3 mils. They discussed past practices and that often times the amount pulled from the Undesignated account has not been used at all or very little. Without the audit completed the amount in the fund is not definitive however there is a substantial amount, enough to support the possible \$850,000.

Andrew Sawyer motioned to use \$850,000 from the Undesignated Fund Balance to offset the budget; making the mil rate 27.99, a 1.05 increase. Zach Maurice seconded the motion. John Moulson, Stacey Becker, Zach Maurice, Andrew Sawyer, and Kayla Thompson voted in favor of the motion. Bob Congdon opposed the motion. The motion carried 5 to 1.

5. Public Comment -

Susan Strader, 463 Route 164, thanked the Board for bringing the Budgets forward to a Public Hearing. She also stated that she feels it's important to share the average increase of taxes that each homeowner could expect to pay. She also agreed that the Unassigned Funds need to be used especially in these trying financial times.

6. Adjournment -

Andrew Sawyer motioned to adjourn at 8:53 P.M. Bob Congdon seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Lang

Recording Secretary

