

**Preston Board of Finance  
Special Meeting  
Wednesday, October 19, 2022  
Preston Plains Cafeteria**

**Call to Order** - John Moulson called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M.

**1. Roll Call**

**Members**

John Moulson - Chairman  
Robert Congdon - V. Chairman  
Kayla Thompson - Clerk  
Stacey Becker - excused  
Denise Beale  
Zachary Maurice - excused

**Alternates**

Andrew Sawyer - excused  
Vacancy

***Also Present***

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier - Selectwoman  
Jerry Grabarek - Selectman  
Cindy Varricchio - Finance Director  
Nick Vegliante - Democratic Town Committee Chair  
Jill S. Keith - vacancy candidate  
Robert Castronova - vacancy candidate

Denise Beale stated that when she was interviewed it was a closed interview, the Board sat with each person and interviewed them individually.

John Moulson stated that he did not believe that was legal.

Denise Beale then stated that she felt that because it was such an important decision that it should be tabled until more members were present.

***Denise Beale made a motion to table the interviews until the next meeting. Kayla Thompson seconded the motion. Denise Beale and Kayla Thompson voted in favor of the motion. John Moulson and Bob Congdon voted against the motion. The motion failed.***

John Moulson stated that he felt that they should proceed. At this point Robert Castronova stepped out of the room so that Jill S. Kieth could be interviewed.

**The Jill Keith interview.**

*Question: Why would you like to be on the Board?*

Jill Keith stated that she has always been active in town and feels that the Board of Finance is an important part of the Town's government. She has related skills from running her own business, budgeting and financing. She would like to contribute to the Town and the Board as it moves forward with various new and more efficient means of recording revenues and expenditures.

*Question: What would your goals be as a member of this Board?*

As an Alternate, I can learn from the sitting members of the Board by watching you proceed and modeling your actions. Being an alternate allows the opportunity to experience the Board first hand. So learning more about the role of being a member of the Board of Finance, I could become a valuable member of the Board.

*Question: What experience, skills, and qualifications do you have to help you in this position?*

Ms. Keith stated that she is a retired school district administrator in the State of Connecticut, and as such would bring to the Board that experience when dealing with the Board of Education - dealing with encumbrances; and have used Infinite Vision and understand its capabilities. She also stated owning her own business has given her experience in budgeting and expenditures. She is very active in the community as a parent and a taxpayer and this would be a way to continue being involved with the Town.

*Question: Do you see any consistent conflicts that would limit your ability to attend the Board of Finance meetings?*

The answer was absolutely not. It was stated that she frequently attends various Board and Committee meetings throughout the year.

*Question: Are you willing to or interested in attending training pertinent to this position?*

Absolutely. Gaining tools to make information more understandable that would better help the Board and myself are important.

*Question: What past involvement and participation in the budget and process in Town finances do you have?*

Jill stated that she has been active by attending meetings of both the Board of Education and the Board of Finance and just as an observer from this side of the table as an interested taxpayer. As an Alternate, it would be a great opportunity to learn more and be more active in the process.

*Question: Historical issue with NFA and the board of Education concerning your children's education. Would that affect your ability to be able to serve fairly on the Board of Finance?*

Ms. Keith stated that her past dealings would actually enhance her ability to work as an impartial community member on the Board; and that through her efforts new strategies and skills sets are available to all parents in order to help their children with educational issues.

With no other questions Ms. Keith left the room and Robert Castronova entered.

**The Robert Castronova interview.**

*Question: Why would you like to be on the Board?*

Robert Castronova stated that it's important for people to be involved in governing their town; it's especially important in small towns like Preston where the budget is smaller than other municipalities and spending money has a greater impact on the citizens. It's important that we all need to participate in the civic process.

*Question: What would your goals be as a member of this Board?*

My goal would be to work with the other members of the Board to put together a fair and equitable budget for the citizens of Preston by keeping spending down yet not eliminating important programs that the citizens depend on. The Board needs to listen to citizens, but at the same time use the taxpayers money wisely to get the most for our dollars.

*Question: What experience, skills, and qualifications do you have to help you in this position?*

Mr. Castronova stated that he had worked for the federal government for 30 plus years and ran programs that required hiring, buying goods, and dealing with contractors. In doing the job I had to stay within the budget given and get the job done. I had to be open and honest and transparent with all aspects of the project when sending taxpayers' money. Now I serve as the Purchasing Agent and Risk Management Officer for the City of Norwich which requires me to help put together their budget for a variety of projects that need to be completed. Working in Norwich under the Controller has given me experience to understand the challenges of completing projects and work within a budget and to get quality work done. I've worked through the bidding process multiple times and understand the need to move quickly at times to acquire the best outcome for the taxpayer and the town. I think I have the unique experience to help run a municipality.

*Question: Do you see any consistent conflicts that would limit your ability to attend the Board of Finance meetings?*

No, I don't volunteer or commit to things I can't follow through on.

*Question: Are you willing to or interested in attending training pertinent to this position?*

Yes, I would be willing to go to any training to allow me to be a better member of the Board. I don't think you can ever stop learning.

*Question: What past involvement and participation in the budget and process in Town finances do you have?*

Not in Preston, but as previously stated Robert has worked with Norwich on their budget process and with all the Department heads to ensure reasonable budgets are formed for their different projects; which requires coming up with good estimates for what they want to do in the coming year. Projects such as a bridge project, a road project, a playground project, and others; those estimates are what the budget is then built on.

*With no other question the interviews were closed.*

***Denise Beale motioned to fill the vacancy position with Robert Castronova. Kayla Thompson seconded the motion.***

***Bob Congdon motioned to fill the vacancy position with Jill Keith. John Moulson seconded the motion.***

***Those in favor of Jill Keith? Bob Congdon and John Moulson voted in favor.***

***Those in favor of Robert Castronova? Denise Beale and Kayla Thompson voted in favor.***

***The motions failed.***

There was a brief discussion as to when to hold the next Special Meeting to decide the vacancy. It was decided that both the Special Meeting and the Regular Meeting would occur on Wednesday, November 16, 2022 at 7:30 P.M.

#### **4. Public Comment**

Jill Keith, 26 Tanglewood Drive, thanked the Board for the opportunity to be interviewed and for the nomination.

John Moulson stated it was nice to have two candidates.

Bob Congdon thanked both candidates for their willingness to serve.

#### **5. Adjournment**

***Kayla Thompson motioned to adjourn at 7:30 P.M. Bob Congdon seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.***

Respectfully Submitted,

*Kimberly Lang*

Recording Secretary