

**Preston Board of Finance  
Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, April 19, 2023  
Preston Plains Cafeteria**

1. **Call to Order** - John Moulson called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M.

**Roll Call**

**Members**

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

**Alternates**

Robert Castronova  
Andrew Sawyer

***Also Present***

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier - First Selectwoman  
Jerry Grabarek - Selectman  
Ken Zachem - Selectman  
Cindy Varricchio - Finance Director  
Dr. Seitsinger - Superintendent of Schools  
Sean Nugent - Chairman of the Board of Education  
Jim Corley - Public Works Manager  
Keith Wucik - Fire Marshal  
Kimberly Lang - Recording Secretary

**Members of the Public - 9**

2. **Public Comment**

Jill Keith, 26 Tanglewood Dr., stated as the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education continue to develop their policies and procedures that they seek guidance; and hopes that they work together to engage citizens in the budget process in an equitable manner going forward.

3. **Correspondence**

- Email: Transfer Enterprises, dated April 18, 2023 regarding office furniture purchases
- Email: Angela M. Flebotte, dated April 10, 2023 regarding municipal leasing
- Email: Flagship Networks, dated April 10, 2023 regarding products and services

- Email: Transfer Enterprises, dated April 6, 2023 regarding refurbished office furniture purchases
- Email: The Collins Center, dated April 11, 2023 regarding hiring opportunities

#### **4. Approval of Minutes**

##### **a. Regular Meeting Minutes for March 15, 2023**

*Denise Beale motioned to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for March 15, 2023 as presented. Stacey Becker seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

##### **b. Special Meeting Minutes for March 29, 2023**

*Kayla Thompson motioned to approve the Special Meeting Minutes for March 29, 2023 as presented. Stacey Becker seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

##### **c. Special Meeting Minutes for March 30, 2023**

*Denise Beale motioned to approve the Special Meeting Minutes for March 30, 2023 as presented. Stacey Becker seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

##### **d. Subcommittee Meeting Minutes for March 30, 2023**

It was stated that these were approved at the Subcommittee Meeting.

*Kayla Thompson made the motion to move number 8a., 2023-2024 Proposed Budgets Town Government and Education, forward on the agenda. Denise Beale seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

##### **a. 2023-2024 Proposed Budgets Town Government and Education**

The Board was given a variety of spreadsheets and documents to help with their decision making process. The following items were noted, clarified, or discussed:

- Prior Year Tax Collection last year was \$120,000 and that has been dropped to \$75,000.
- Projections that were made were very conservative.
- The Town doesn't have a diversified revenue source at this time therefore the burden of the budget falls heavily on the homeowners.
- The Board is seeking a reason for the \$2,279 increase during 2021-2022 Audit in Senior Housing PILOT on the Revenue Estimate Spreadsheet.
- It was noted that the \$900,000 budgeted from the Fund Balance to offset last year's budget would only use \$471,273. The rest would remain in the account.
- The Board reviewed spreadsheets on Tax Collection and Mil Rate Information for the past 8 years.

- The Unassigned Fund Balance History that shows even though it has been used to offset the budget over the years it has still continued to grow.
- The CCM Governor's Proposed FY24 State Budget Municipal Aid for Preston was shared, noting that the ECS will see a \$96,897 reduction in the coming year.
- The Board discussed the Mil Rate Scenario spreadsheet showing the effects on the mil rate by using various amounts from the Fund Balance with either 98.5% or 99% tax collection rate.
- The HR Study and the roughly \$73,000 that is in the budget to cover pending salary increases was discussed and clarified.

***Kayla Thompson motioned to approve the budget using 1.2 million from the Unassigned Fund Balance using a 98.5% Tax Collection Rate. Denise Beale seconded the motion. Kayla Thompson, Denise Beale, and John Moulson voted in favor of the motion, while Bob Congdon, Stacey Becker, and Zach Maurice voted against the motion. With the vote 3 to 3, the motion failed.***

## **5. First Selectperson's Report**

### **a. Grant Update**

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier shared the following information with the Board:

- ★ Community Investment Fund for \$400,000 to further the Poquetanuck Village Project, is at the final step, which is approval by the Bond Commission.
- ★ DEEP Recreational Grant \$59,400 that will add to the Poquetanuck Village Project, by including 2 kayak launches and parking lot upgrades has been approved.
- ★ Courtney Community Project for \$279,000 that will be used for Town Garage upgrades has been recommended to be one of the final 15, and it's anticipated that it will move through the process to approval.
- ★ LOTCIP Grant is moving through the final formalities that are needed; it will be reviewed by CT DOT soon and then any issues will be addressed before it is finalized.
- ★ TRIP Grant - SCOGG has selected both North Stonington and Preston projects to move forward. It was noted that Preston's project has been selected #1 priority for our region due to the community connectivity of the project.
- ★ The Youth Services Bureau and the Recreation Department have applied for two Summer Enrichment Grants. Both grants are two year grants, one is for \$46,000 and the other is \$42,000. The funds will be used for programs/activities and day trips to reinforce making appropriate choices and dealing with conflict. They should know of the approval by May 1, 2023.

## **6. Board of Education Liaison Report**

Zach Maurice reported that there was no meeting in April.

## **7. Finance Director**

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier shared a Citizen's guide to the Board of Selectmen's Proposed Budget, complete with QR barcodes that work. It is one more communication tool.

### **a. Board of Education March 2023 Draft Expenditure Report**

Ms. Varricchio stated that there was nothing noteworthy in the report that was given. It was clarified that the program automatically recalculates encumbrances as data is inputted.

Roy Seitsinger, Superintendent of Schools, reported the following:

- Summer Support Mental Health and Wellness Grant has been received.
- Will be submitting two grants for Level 2 School Safety, one for reimbursement of past work and the other for new work. If these are approved it will help lower the Capital Improvement requested amount.
- The school has been awarded a reimbursement grant for HVAC work that was completed in the amount of a little over \$55,000. Those funds will be placed back in the ESSER account to complete other work and to further reduce the Capital Funds needed.

### **b. Town March 2023 Revenue and Expenditure Report**

Cindy Varricchio apologized for not having the Town's Year to Date Expenditure and Revenue Reports due to technical difficulties, so she was unable to access and print the reports, but they will be emailed to the Board members.

## **8. Old Business**

### **a. 2023-2024 Proposed Budgets Town Government and Education - see above**

## **9. New Business**

### **a. Invoice Approval - King, King, and Associates, CPAs**

*Bob Congdon motioned to approve the King, King, and Associates, CPAs invoice of \$4,865.00. Denise Beale seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

### **b. Tax Collector Suspense List**

*Bob Congdon motioned to approve the Tax Collectors Suspense List. Zach Maurice seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

## **10. Public Comment**

Jill Keith, 26 Tanglewood Dr., stated her concern that a meeting was scheduled for the BoF on Thursday, yet it wasn't posted.

She was given an agenda and it was clarified that it was posted that the meeting will take place if needed.

Ms. Keith then went on to thank the Board and their efforts with the budget and appreciated the discussions that look at the budget through the eyes of the taxpayers. She also stated that she hoped that the Board of Education will curtail their advocacy group's activities that seem to exclude some citizens.

Susan Strader, 463 Route 164, thanked the Board of Finance for their thoughtfulness and consideration with the budget. She also stated that the Fund Balance is her tax dollars that have been set aside to help her. And that it has grown over the years and with it just sitting there in an account, it's not helping her. It needs to be used to help her and other taxpayers, especially education which helps the town grow. Fund Balance has grown even when it's been used. Let's use it!

#### 5. Adjournment

*Kayla Thompson motioned to adjourn at 8:45 P.M. Denise Beale seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

Respectfully Submitted,

*Kimberly Lang*

Recording Secretary

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*Jill Keith*  
PRESTON TOWN CLERK