

**Preston Board of Finance
Special Meeting
Thursday, April 27, 2023
Preston Veterans Memorial School Gymnasium and Library**

1. **Call to Order** - John Moulson called the meeting to order at 7:38 P.M.
2. **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
Cindy Varricchio - Finance Director
Dr. Seitsinger - Superintendent of Schools
Kimberly Lang - Recording Secretary

Members of the Public - 53

3. **Public Hearing - See Minutes**
4. **Reconvene Board of Finance Special Meeting (Library)**

The Board reconvened in the Library at 9:34 P.M.

5. Discussion of Public Comments and Questions from the Public Hearing

Denise Beale shared her personal concerns with the budget increases and what those increases mean to her personal household. She also feels that the whole Town will feel the growing pains of the Town until the Hospital is developed and that may not have as big an impact as people are expecting.

Andrew Sawyer shared that it will be hard to cut anything without going into the bone.

Bob Congdon stated that he felt that the Town could sustain 1.2 million use of the Fund Balance for the 2-3 years it takes the Hospital to be developed.

Stacey Becker shared that if the Hospital were to come on the Grand List it still would only cover a portion of the gap.

The Board discussed possible solutions, one of which was to cut the Library to save \$235,000. The Town could share Library services with another Town and then that space could possibly be used to house the Board of Education's Central Office that they will lose this September due to classroom needs. The Board was cautioned on this idea because of Unemployment Insurance and the lease with the Library.

Bob Congdon motioned to move the budgets forward and in the interim have a meeting to discuss possible cuts if it fails. The motion was seconded by Zach Maurice. Bob Congdon, Zach Maurice, and John Moulson voted in favor of the motion; while Kayla Thompson, Stacey Becker, and Denise Beale voted against the motion. The motion failed.

Stacey Becker motioned to delay the Town Meeting and Referendum to give time to thoroughly review the budget to make adjustments with the help of the Board of Selectmen and the board of Education. Denise Beale seconded the motion. After a discussion, Stacey Becker withdrew her motion.

The Board engaged in further discussion about what direction to pursue and the possibility of keeping to the publicized calendar of the Town Meeting on May 11, 2023 and the Referendum on May 25, 2023.

Kayla Thompson motioned to have a Special Board of Finance Meeting Tuesday May 2, 2023 at 7:00P.M. at Preston Plains Middle School for the purpose of discussing the Budget. Stacey Becker seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

The Board requested that both the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education look for possible savings in their budgets. It was decided that the General Government reduce their budget by \$100,000 and the Board of Education reduce theirs by \$300,000.

- 6. Act on Proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Board of Education Budget**
- 7. Act on Proposed Fiscal Year 2024 General Government Budget**
- 8. Act on Proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Revenue Budget**
- 9. Public Comment**

Andy Depta, 6 Young Court, questioned that the budget was moving forward unadjusted. He then stated that he felt that the Public Hearing was all for not because the Board of finance didn't listen to the public.

BoB Congdon stated that the Board of Finance will hold a meeting on May 2nd in order to adjust the budget so that they can keep to the established and published budget calendar.

Jill Keith, 26 Tanglewood Dr., complimented the Board for making decisions in the best interest of the townspeople. She feels it's reasonable to make reductions to both budgets based on what was heard this evening. She also shared that she heard others talking about the tax calculation page and wished it had been distributed before this evening, we need to remember not everyone has the internet.

Andrew Biledeau, 99 Lakeview Drive, stated that he felt the Board's deliberations this evening were not enough to take the budget forward and that the Town will just eat the cost of another Referendum when it possibly comes.

10. Adjournment

Bob Congdon motioned to adjourn at 10:28 P.M. Kayla Thompson seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Lang

Recording Secretary

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Jill Keith
PRESTON TOWN CLERK