



# BOARD OF FINANCE

Clifford J. Hurgin Municipal Center, 1 School Street  
Bethel, Connecticut 06801 Telephone: (203) 794-8501

## MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, September 22, 2010 - 7:00 p.m.  
CJH Municipal Center – Meeting Room "A"

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TOWN OF BETHEL  
TOWN CLERK

**PRESENT:** J. Philip Gallagher, Chairman, John Dietter, William Kingston, William Slifkin, James Roden, Gary Regan and Timothy Draper. Also in attendance were Barry Bernabe, Financial Advisor from Webster Bank, Comptroller Robert Kozlowski, Town Engineer Andrew Morosky and the Board of Selectmen for a portion of the meeting.

**Call to order/Pledge of Allegiance:** J. Philip Gallagher called the Special Meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. in the General Purpose Room.

**Public Comments:** Robert Legnard, Donald Goodrich, David Stevenson, Sandra MacCauley, Mary O'Leary, Nancy Ryan, Rick Massman, and Eileen Goodrich all spoke in support of the Road Renewal Project.

### **Presentation/Consideration of Road Renewal Plan recommendation from the Board of Selectmen**

First Selectman Knickerbocker had presented the Board of Finance various funding scenarios that show we can borrow the funds to do 31 miles of our worst roadways at a cost of \$8,500,000 which would not raise the budget, would take advantage of the historic low interest rates and, most importantly, would get the roads done in a fast, efficient manner. He explained that the biggest complaint residents have – is the condition of the roads. First Selectman Knickerbocker noted that the typical road construction account could be reduced substantially; this would be helpful in the event that state revenues are reduced.

Mr. Slifkin and Mr. Roden offered that they do not think that the Board of Selectmen is proposing enough money to complete the project and do not feel that the estimates are accurate and do not include the proper amount of escalation. First Selectman Knickerbocker offered that he feels very comfortable with the numbers presented by Town Engineer Andrew Morosky and Asst. Director of Public Works Robert Dibble. Mr.

Morosky explained that while no one has the ability to precisely forecast paving costs, the cost estimate does contain an escalation factor to it. Mr. Morosky advised that the town currently takes advantage of the state bid prices for road construction but offered that we could bid it on our own to see if the cost could come in cheaper. The Selectman Szatkowski suggested looking into the feasibility of seeing if one contractor could bid on the project and complete it in one year or two years or escalate the project to have the paving done in less time. Town Engineer Andrew Morosky explained that, working with the town Highway Department crew, a contractor typically can pave 5-6 miles a year, depending on the extent of preparations needed. If the road plan is approved, there would be several more months of "paving" time each year because the money would be approved prior to the asphalt plants opening. This would allow for 7-8 miles or more of road to be completed each year. Mr. Morosky added that the Highway Department saves the road account money by performing a significant amount of the work on a typical road paving project without charging labor or machine time to the road account.

J. Philip Gallagher offered that he thought we should look into bonding only \$4,000,000, due to the potential lack of revenues from the state, he suggests just doing the worst main roads. He is very concerned over the potential lack of revenues from the state, no foreseeable increases to the grand list, etc. noting that the bulk of revenues would be generated by taxpayers. He thought that the parking lots proposed in the plan should be removed and funded through the regular budgeting process. His thought is that as our debt decreases, we could use that money to offset budget increases. He continued that he would like to take the parking lots and dead-end roads out of the road plan. First Selectman Knickerbocker explained that they (the parking lots) are included in the road renewal plan because it would be cheaper to bond them in the package than in the budget. Timothy Draper offered that residents who live on dead-end roads pay taxes as well.

There was discussion of not only funding the road project but wondering whether this would leave enough for other projects, i.e. future police station, Johnson/Rockwell schools.

First Selectman Knickerbocker presented an additional funding scenario which takes into consideration the road plan as well as a future police station and still leaves room in our bonding capacity for unforeseen items and reduces our debt. First Selectman Knickerbocker was very clear in his statement that just because he was presenting this scenario, he was not, nor was the Board of Selectmen, recommending a police station project. The scenario presented was for informational purposes only to show that we can

not only do the road project but also (*at a future point*) still have enough bonding capability to do other projects as well and, most importantly, our debt will still continue to go down.

John Dietter made a motion, which was seconded by William Kingston, to table the Road Renewal Plan until the October meeting. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

The Board of Selectmen adjourned their meeting at 8:10 p.m.

The Board of Finance reconvened in Meeting Room "A" at 8:15 p.m. John Dietter did not attend this portion of the meeting.

**Correspondence:** Letter addressed to First Selectman Knickerbocker from William Hillman.

**Minutes of July 21, 2010 Special Meeting:** William Kingston made a motion, which was seconded by William Slifkin, to approve the minutes as presented. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

**Minutes of August 2, 2010 Special Meeting:** William Slifkin made a motion, which was seconded by Gary Regan, to approve the minutes as presented. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

**Minutes of August 4, 2010 Special Meeting:** William Slifkin made a motion, which was seconded by William Kingston, to approve the minutes as presented. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

**Minutes of August 10, 2010 Regular Meeting:** William Slifkin made a motion, which was seconded by William Kingston, to approve the minutes as presented. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

**Chairman's Report:** J. Philip Gallagher advised that he has still not heard the disposition of the Library's fundraising and contribution to the film festival... James Roden offered that he heard Jane Bickford state that they made \$6,000 but they donated \$10,000 – net loss of \$4,000.

**Old Business**

## **1.) Report on prioritization of remaining capital items by Board of Selectmen**

Comptroller Robert Kozlowski offered that there is very little left in the capital non-recurring account – at this time, the Board of Finance did not act on the items that the Board of Selectmen had previously recommended for funding (dog pound, salt shed, and tennis courts).

## **2.) Consideration of pensions (previously tabled)**

William Kingston offered for discussion, the below listed resolution. Discussion ensued. Board of Finance understood that their proposal is just “their position or opinion” and has no binding effect. The Board of Selectmen is the trustee of the pension plan.

William Kingston made a motion, which was seconded by William Slifkin, to adopt the following resolution:

*It is the position of the Town of Bethel Board of Finance that from this time forward, all new Town of Bethel employees should not be offered Defined Benefit type pension plans as part of their compensation. Defined Contribution type pension plans could be offered, where appropriate, subject to contract negotiation.*

Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved with the exception of J. Philip Gallagher who recused himself from the vote.

## **New Business**

### **1.) Discussion of new revenue for the 2011-2012 budget and beyond**

J. Philip Gallagher offered that he is concerned that there really is no new revenues coming into Bethel; the grand list is not anticipated to grow, no new monies are coming in from the State or federal government, leaving the taxpayers to fund most of the budget or other financing projects.

As there was no further business on tonight’s agenda, J. Philip Gallagher made a motion, which was seconded by Gary Regan, to adjourn the Special Meeting at 9:05 p.m. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

