

**Town of Colebrook
Board of Finance**

Minutes to the Meeting on March 11, 2015

Members Present

J. Millar, Chairman
R. Carfiro
T. Corvo
J. Dorazio
D. Johnstone
M. Neal

Absent

None

Others Present

J. Jones

The meeting was called to order at 6:57 p.m. by Chairman, J. Millar.

1. J. Jones addressed questions from the minutes of February 18 about the Board of Education's 2015-16 budget. Written answers to the same questions were submitted prior to the meeting by Superintendent J. Chittum. A zero increase budget could have been achieved by the retirement of a senior teacher; however, \$35,200 had to be added back for outplacement of a special needs child. Thus, the final proposed budget is \$1,885,266, an increase of 1.8% over 2014-15. Questions about the 2.5% increase for non-certified staff and additional hours for the bookkeeper also received significant discussion. The Board agreed that better coordination is needed between all parties to ensure that town employees are treated equitably and consistently, regardless of which board they work for. The Board agreed to follow up on this issue prior to the next budget season.
2. J. Millar noted that Colebrook's 9.8% share of the Region 7 budget next year is not only a significant decline from 2014-15, but well below the historical average of 11.3%. Nonetheless, R. Carmelich, Region 7's budget director, believes that the current low level may continue for several more years, based on current enrollment data.
3. Reviewed the 2015-16 capital plan, which is still in draft form and may not be complete in time for the budget hearing on April 9. A potential addition to the plan – replacing the septic system at the town garage – was also discussed.
4. Colebrook's tax assessor, M. Sloane, may require a supplemental appropriation of roughly \$15,000 to \$19,000 later this fiscal year, or early next, to appraise the taxable value of the wind turbines being built on Flagg Hill by BNE Energy.
5. Discussed several options to close a projected deficit of \$47,176 in the 2015-16 budget: increase the mill rate, reduce the capital appropriation, request the Boards of Selectmen and Education to reduce their budgets, and/or dip into reserves. The Board strongly supported a flat mill rate and was reluctant to reduce the capital appropriation. The preferred alternative is a budget reduction of \$20,000 split between the Selectmen and Board of Education (approximately 0.55% each), with the balance to come from reserves. Accordingly, J. Dorazio moved to reduce the 2015-16 proposed budgets for the Selectmen and the Board of Education by

- \$9,700 and \$10,300 respectively. Second, T. Corvo. The motion was approved by all Board member except J. Millar who voted no.
6. Discussed an e-mail from Colebrook's treasurer, A. Gardner, who wants to transfer the town's banking relationship from Bank of America to National Iron Bank. There were no objections to National Iron Bank, although D. Johnstone had several questions about other alternatives, which she may take up directly with A. Gardner. The Board agreed with J. Millar's interpretation that CGS 7-402 authorizes "any public official" (presumably including the treasurer) to "deposit public funds . . . in any qualified public depository."
 7. T. Corvo moved to approve the minutes of March 4, 2015. Second, D. Johnstone. Passed unanimously.
 8. M. Neal moved to adjourn. Second, R. Carfiro. Passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha F. Neal
Secretary