

## **Board of Apportionment & Taxation City of Ansonia**

The Board of Apportionment & Taxation of the City of Ansonia held a special meeting on Wednesday, May 11, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the Erlingheuser Room of Ansonia City Hall. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss 2011-2012 budget for the City of Ansonia and take appropriate action.

### **Members Present**

Boran  
Commune  
Confinante  
Kennedy  
Kohut  
Norman  
Smerznak  
Veillette  
Williams  
Sturges

### **Members Absent**

Banks  
Strumello

Chairman Sturges called the meeting to order. The record shows 10 members present.

Mr. Norman made a motion to accept the call of the meeting. Mr. Commune seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (10 yes)

Mr. Sturges opened the meeting stating the Board is here to discuss the 2011-2011 Budget following the public hearing on Monday May 9, 2011. The three issues of concern were an increase for the Rangers at the Nature Center, another, an increase for the Library and lastly an increase for the Board of Education.

### **Nature Center**

Let's address each Department individually beginning with the Nature Center. Ms. Lindgren was requested to come in with a zero increase budget, that is what was presented BOAT did not cut any funding from the department. I do not feel there is any action necessary to take.

Mr. Kohut questioned why we don't contact the local Boy Scouts Troops and seek volunteers as Rangers; this can be done in conjunction with earning their Eagle Scout Award. Also students at the High School or Friends of the Nature Center may be interested in volunteering.

The \$2,266 increase represents the Director and Assistant Director salary which went back to the salary resolution.

### **Library**

This Board has been asking the Library to change their schedule for the residence's needs for at least three years. We have asked them to do studies and were told they couldn't do

them, until the budget hearing when they presented facts and numbers going back to 2007.

The Board of Aldermen eliminated all the part-time help and one full time position.

Mr. Boran suggested we approve funding for 1 or 2 part-time positions that may be less expensive than keeping a full-time position. The Board explained that you can not eliminate any full-time position until all part-time positions are gone, that is governed by the union contract and that being said the Board agreed that the current budget should remain in tacked.

### **Board of Education**

They did have a lot of support in attendance, but they always have support when BOAT doesn't give them what they are looking for. Mr. Sturges commented on the Board of Education meetings he attends and that during their budget season no one shows up. These residences should talk to the BOE they are the ones that make the cuts to programs and positions.

Mr. Norman advised the Board of a letter went out to all the parents and there seems to be some misrepresentation there; one student and parent spoke of cuts to band those are not our decisions. Cutting all day kindergarten was not a decision of this Board. The brunt of this lays with the Board of Educations which is an elected Board, they don't want to negotiate with the unions. They refuse to talk to the unions and the unions refuse to talk to them. They make the cuts, they spend the money, they add the administrators this Board just takes the lumps for it. Mr. Norman will be going to a Board of Education meeting and speaking his mind, they are hiding behind BOAT with these cuts. The management of their budget is my big concern, they have the right to transfer funds, and they don't meet as a board to transfer funds it just happens from one account to the other. BOAT has no control over it the BOE does what they want.

Mr. Veillette added every year we get the report from the Auditors and everything comes up with the BOE Audit is never done properly for the last 4-5 years.

Mayor Della Volpe advised the Board that the Board of Education has agreed to meet with the City's Insurance Broker, if the BOE come in with the City there will be a significant savings. The savings realized would be a benefit to the BOE within their budget.

Just a note that Administrators, teachers and parents were in attendance Monday night there was not one Board of Education member present.

Mr. Williams questioned what the BOE surplus was last year? \$14.82 was given back to the City and \$900,000 was encumbered at year end to purchase supplies which was frozen throughout the year.

Do we have any idea what the cost of full day to half day kindergarten? The BOE would know but BOAT doesn't.

Mayor Della Volpe voiced his concern that the priority funding received from the State will be lost due to improvement make by the district. A total of \$1,200,000 reduction of \$300,000 the first year and the balance over the next 4 years.

If we decide to make up the \$300,000 it would be wise to put it into the Grant side of the budget and have the Board of Education come up with a plan on how they will maintain the programs put in place with the priority funding and report back to BOAT on their progress.

The restructuring of the schools was one of three options given by the State, they needed to implement certain programs, and data gathering and tutors all funded by the priority grant. The program was excellently led by the State.

Mr. Sturges suggested we need to answer the following questions:

- If we want to give them funding?
- How much?
- Where is it coming from?
- How do we handle funding the Board of Education?

If the Board approved the \$300,000 to the BOE it represents a 1.2% increase.

The Board of Education made claims that the following areas would be effected if additional funding was not received:

- Eliminate 3 tutors
- Eliminate 4 aids
- Eliminate 1 custodian
- Reduction in the Athletic Budget
- The vacant Asst. Principal would remain vacant
- Increase class sizes
- Eliminate all day kindergarten

How do we fund an increase of \$300,000 through tax increase? The Mayor suggested the City will be realizing approximately \$150,000 in health fund saving this year that will cover half the increase. Other suggestions were using the fund balance as revenue for \$100,000 and lastly increase the interest liens and warrants.

It should be noted that Seymour froze their BOE budget for 6 years, Shelton laid off a number of staff, Ansonia has always had increased in their budget.

Mr. Norman is disappointed in BOAT's Auditor other than the ARMS Audit we have not been really utilizing this position, in the year to come I would like to see more audits of departments.

The Mayor should have a sit down with the Board of Education and tell them not to let the full day kindergarten go, it would be the best benefit to the residences, send the right message that we support them and they need to do the right thing.

Mr. Norman made a motion to approve:\*\*

- 0851-19-880-0005 City Educational Fund for \$300,000
- Decrease Insurance Line Item 215-11-211-0001 by \$150,000 from 3,121,478 to 2,971,478
- Increase the fund balance as income from \$400,000 to \$500,000
- Increase the Revenue Interest Liens and Warrants from \$400,000 to \$448,475

As a result of these changes the mill rate will remain at 26.25 mills.

Mr. Kennedy seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (10 yes)

\*\* This is contingent that allocating the funds to the Grant Department is within the rights of the Board. The Board is awaiting a ruling from the Corporation Counsel.

Mr. Norman made a motion to have BOAT send a letter to the Board of Education informing them of the additional \$300,000 new line item and to advise that the recommendation from this Board would be to restore the all day kindergarten based on the comments from the public hearing of May 9, 2011.

Mr. Kohut seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (10 yes)

This letter will not go to the Board of Education until the secretary hears from the Corporation Counsel on his ruling for funding in the Grant Budget.

With no other business to come before the Board Mr. Boran made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Kennedy seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (10 yes)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Duclos  
Secretary Board of Apportionment & Taxation  
Tape on File