

**BOARD OF FINANCE
PUBLIC HEARING
APRIL 12, 2011
TOWN HALL**

Present: Board of Finance, Selectmen, Education and Town Officials in addition to approximately 60 townspeople

The Public Hearing was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Board of Finance Chairman, David Hosmer, who made opening comments, thanking the group for attending, and explaining how the hearing would be conducted. He asked Atty Ed Higgins to act as a "moderator", fielding questions, so that everyone who wanted to speak would be heard.

Attorney Higgins took over the meeting and called upon Mr. Hosmer to present the Board of Finance's report, followed by First Selectman, Allan Walker, presenting the General Government 2011-12 Budget and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Francis Baran representing the Board of Education in explaining their 2011-12 requested budget.

Following these presentations, Mr. Higgins opened the floor for questions and comments from the public.

Many parents of school-aged children urged the finance members to reconsider the cuts made to the education budget and let the voters decide whether they are willing to fully fund it. There was concern about class sizes getting too large and our students falling behind.

A letter from the Municipal Agent for the Elderly was read stressing the financial strain on those who are retired and asking that the board be mindful of their situation. The Town Clerk spoke about the number of townspeople who are hurting, the increase in home foreclosures, rising fuel and medical costs and increased demands to TEEG for assistance.

Explanations regarding categorical education grants, the budgeting process, the effects of revaluation and proposition 46 on future budgets and concerns about reductions in municipal aid from Hartford were all discussed.

The Board of Education was urged not to cut sports and to honor the parents' wishes when choosing where the cuts should be made. Dr. Baran reported that Woodstock's test scores are up in spite of the fact that we are near the bottom of the list in per pupil spending.

The next Board of Finance meeting is scheduled for April 26, with the town meeting on May 10 and the budget referendum on May 17.

The hearing adjourned at 9:35 p.m.