

Woodstock Board of Finance Minutes

Ad Hoc Planning Subcommittee

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

5:30 pm

Town Hall Room A

1. **Call to order:** Michele Woz called meeting to order at 5:30 pm

2. **Roll Call**

- a. **Members Present:** Michele Woz (Chair)
David Fortin
Kate McDonald
Charlene Cutler
Sonia Greene
Hans Frankhouser

Members Absent: None

- b. **Others Present:** Ray and Pam Morgan, Jessica Weaver Boose, Recording Secretary Amy Monahan.
c. Sonia Greene made a ***Motion** to amend the agenda by adding approval of minutes from May 30, 2023. ***Seconded** by Dave Fortin. ***The motion passed unanimously.**

3. **Approve Minutes from the May 30, 2023 Meeting**

- a. Kate McDonald made a ***Motion** to approve the minutes from May 30, 2023 as amended. ***Seconded** by Sonia Greene. ***The motion passed** with one abstention (Frankhouser).
i. Kate McDonald noted that the date of next meeting should read Wednesday, June 14, 2023.

4. **Old Business**

- a. Mission Statement & Official Name of Subcommittee
i. Dave Fortin would like the name to represent community and sustainability and not tie into fiscal actions. It was noted that the committee is a study group or advisory/exploratory committee. After some discussion, it was decided by the group to use the current name of "Board of Finance Ad Hoc Planning Subcommittee"
ii. Draft of mission statement from previous meeting: To assist the Boards of Selectmen, Finance and Education in meeting the future needs of the Town of Woodstock and its residents by gathering data, information and ideas and preparing a comprehensive report on the following topics: (1) the future funding needs of the town; (2) special taxing jurisdictions; (3) available tax relief programs; (4) potential revenue expansion, including tax base expansion through economic development, charging admissions fees, and identifying areas of the town and education budgets that may become self-sustaining; (5) grant funding; and (6) explore regional and town-to-town partnerships.
- b. Establish list of Topics to Discuss
i. Michele Woz would like members to send topics to her to be compiled into one master list. The list would then be prioritized and tackled accordingly.
ii. Charlene Perkins Cutler has distributed a chart to the group with possible revenue types available to the town with their advantages, challenges and possible next steps.
iii. Charlene Perkins Cutler brought up the possibility of revenue from town owned land including possible leasing options to farmers or timber harvesting. Dave Fortin noted that our role would be to point out this possibility to the appropriate boards to take action. Charlene Perkins Cutler further noted that the process to evaluate these properties could receive grant funding for the reports and evaluations.

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5. New Business

- a. Tax Relief Programs
 - i. Su Connor has done research on Senior Tax Option and shared her research with Michele Woz. That information has been distributed to committee members for reference.
 - ii. Michele Woz distributed a packet with all current tax programs currently offered from the Assessor's Office and state statutes surrounding tax programs. The task at hand is to research which programs are still being utilized, the amount of tax relief and how many participate in each program. The committee was asked to review the packet and decide what information needs to be further researched.
 - iii. Kate McDonald asked if other tax options (low income for example) could be instituted by the Town. The impact of state statute and additional federal programs on individuals/demographics was discussed to determine what groups could qualify for tax assistance.
 - iv. Hans Frankhouser inquired the logistics of our recommendations. It was discussed that this group would report to the Board of Finance and the Board of Finance would recommend actions to the Board of Selectmen.
 - v. Michele Woz will send out information requests to appropriate offices and compile needed information to move forward with tax relief programs.
- b. Special Taxing Jurisdictions
 - i. Michele Woz distributed a history of Tax Jurisdictions in Connecticut document for the committee members to reference. Woodstock currently has lake tax districts. Michele needs to determine if any one area can be issued more than one additional tax jurisdiction.
 - ii. The group discussed how tax districts would impact the overall government budget and the residents. It was found to be a complex option that needs further research on how funds would be handled if additional tax districts were proposed. Dave Fortin noted that a fire tax was proposed and rejected in the past and that information should be reviewed (Dave Fortin will ask Michael Dougherty for the past information).

6. Public Comment

- a. Ray Morgan asked if the town owned land list is available to the public. It was noted that a list can be pulled from the Town GIS system and created by anyone.
- b. Pam Morgan noted the Fire Tax District in Cromwell may be helpful to research as the town has merged from our current situation into one Fire Department System.
- c. Pam Morgan suggested researching the ISO rating for Woodstock and investigating possible insurance savings that are based on that rating number.

7. Other From Subcommittee

- a. None

8. Correspondence & Announcements

- a. The next Board of Finance Ad Hoc Planning Subcommittee Meeting will be July 12, 2023 at 6 pm.

9. Adjournment

- a. Kate McDonald made a ***Motion to Adjourn. *Seconded** by Hans Frankhouser. ***The Motion Passed Unanimously.** Meeting Adjourned at 6:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Amy Monahan, Recording Secretary. DISCLAIMER: These minutes have not yet been approved by the Board of Finance. Please refer to next month's meeting for approval/amendments.