

FINANCE AND LONG RANGE BUDGET PLANNING COMMITTEE  
MINUTES – MEETING OF MARCH 15, 2010

In attendance:

Committee: Thomas Reinboth; Mark Miller; Michael Hartline

Board: Kati Driban; Betty Huf; Andrew Pollock (8:45 pm)

Staff: Timothy Vail; Thomas Turnbaugh; Jennifer Foight-Cressman; Eileen Poroszok; Michael Stanford; Kelley O’Leary; Donna Dunar; Susan Klyman; Denise Wettstein; Keely Mahan; Wayne Robinson; Sewell Wallace; Khalid Mumin; Bob Schrader; Bucky Clark; Vic Lasher; bob Reed

Public: Barbara Loftus; Joseph Faust; Robert Schaffer

Press: None

Call to Order:

Mr. Reinboth called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the February 17, 2010 meeting as submitted by Mr. Miller. Second by Mr. Hartline. Motion Carried 3-0.

Installment Payments – Real Estate Taxes

Mr. Vail reported that per discussion at the February 17, 2010 Finance Committee meeting, it was determined that further discussion on this issue should occur at this evening’s meeting. To this end the Committee directed that Administration survey the other Bucks County districts to determine how (or if) they are compensating their elected tax collectors for collecting installment payments as well as an estimate of what percentage of taxpayers in each district have opted, on average, to pay under the installment option. Copies of the original memo on this issue that appeared in the February 17 agenda as well as the requested summary of district survey results is attached to this evening’s agenda. He also noted that, per Committee directive, all three elected tax collectors had been invited to attend tonight’s meeting. Mr. Reinboth indicated that the information provided with this evening’s agenda seems to indicate that a maximum of 5% of those eligible to pay under the installment option are doing so in neighboring districts and indicated that all districts have limited the number of installment payments to 3. He indicated he favors the September 1, October 15, November 30 scenario in use by Bristol Borough as it gives taxpayers an additional month to pay the last installment due on their school tax without penalty. Mrs. Loftus indicated this could be problematic for the tax collectors as final notices, required by law, cannot go out to those taxpayers who opt for the installment option until after the final payment due date is over. She indicated that the late notice is for all three taxes (county, school and township) being collected and with a final collection deadline date of December 15 a November 30 cutoff for the last installment payment would give taxpayers very little time between receipt of the final notice and the cut off date of December 15 to make the penalty payment. Mrs. Loftus stated she would prefer the last installment payment be due on October 31 but not later than November 15. Discussion focused on the logistics of getting these final notices out to taxpayers vs. the concern with giving the installment taxpayer the maximum break possible on payment of their taxes without penalty. The Committee also discussed the timing of bringing this item forward for Board action. Mrs. Loftus indicated that time is of the essence for Board approval as she will need to work with her forms printer to get formats set up and the forms printed and delivered by June. The issue of compensation was also discussed. Mr. Reinboth indicated that the survey results from other districts in Bucks County range from no additional compensation up to \$6.25 per bill. Mrs. Loftus was asked for her thoughts in the matter, but she indicated that she was not really prepared to address that issue at this time. After some discussion Mrs. Loftus was asked to get her recommendation into the business office by

March 23. Motion by Mr. Miller to recommend that the Board set the installment payments dates as September 1, October 15 and November 30 and that the matter be moved forward for Board consideration at the April 13 meeting with the resolution to include a recommendation on tax collector compensation in consultation with the elected tax collectors. Second by Mr. Hartline. Motion carried 3-0.

#### Planetarium Issue

Mr. Miller indicated that he would like to speak to the issue of the planetarium design recently authorized by the Board. He indicated that he had information about a portable unit now available on the market that could potentially be used and eliminate the need to construct a permanent facility. He indicated that this item could be purchased for under \$50,000 and if we could use our existing projector the actual cost would be in the neighborhood of \$20,000. Time is of the essence here as the architect has begun design work and would need to be directed to stop before any additional funds are expended. Discussion focused on the logistics of moving a portable unit from location to location and the safety issues involved. Dr. Turnbaugh indicated that it is not appropriate to have discussion on this matter here this evening. Mr. Lasher indicated that he is not in favor of slowing down the design of the new structure. Mr. Reinboth agreed that the discussion needs to occur sooner rather than later, but not this evening. He directed that Administration investigate the viability of the portable unit as well as the logistics of slowing down or stopping the design work on the permanent facility. He indicated that once accomplished a date for this discussion needs to be set up in consultation with the Board President.

#### 2010-2011 Proposed Budget - Review

Mr. Reinboth indicated that, per Committee directive at the February 17, 2010 meeting, Administration has provided an itemized listing of items that potentially could be removed from the 2010-2011 budget per input from all building and department administrators. He indicated that the Committee had directed that the Administration come back with approximately \$1.7 million in budget cuts. Attached to this evening's agenda are two lists of recommended potential cuts divided into "regular" budget cuts and those associated with staffing. Each item has been assigned a rank number by the building administrator/department head from lowest to highest recommended cut. Dr. Turnbaugh indicated that the items associated with staffing would be discussed in executive session as they have potential impacts on existing personnel. He indicated that it was not possible to come up with \$1.7 million in cuts without impacting on staffing and programs. He acknowledged and thanked the administrative team, most of whom are in attendance this evening, and indicated that the goal of this exercise was to have everyone potentially impacted by budget cuts be part of the dialogue and recommendation. He stated that his request is that the Committee and the Board permit Administration to come up with the cuts. This should not be a Board decision. Dr. Turnbaugh then took Committee and Board members present through the list of potential cuts. Discussion focused on specific items on the list as well as comments on the overall effort that had gone into this exercise. Dr. Turnbaugh indicated that picking apart the list is counter productive as these are administrative recommendations. Mr. Reinboth noted that was of concern but, having said that, there are items on the list that he personally would not support cutting. He indicated that all Board members would probably feel the same way as they went through the list in detail. Committee consensus was that the list should be submitted to each Board member by Administration within the next week with the request that items they could not support cutting be identified. The input from each Board member will then be summarized and discussed at the April meeting. Mr. Reinboth thanked everyone in attendance from administration and indicated that the staffing cuts being recommended would be reviewed and discussed in the executive session to follow adjournment.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy E. Vail