

## Board of Finance Special Meeting Minutes

July 8, 2021 at 6:00 pm

(via remote conference)

**Call to order:** Board of Finance Chairman Steve Ezzes Called the meeting to order at 6.01pm, also in attendance were Board of Finance members Rone Baldwin, Jeff Farr, Amy Gare, Dick Bochinski, Allan Grauberd, Town Administrator Jonathan Luiz, Finance Director Rick Darling, WPS Finance Director Phil Cross, Weston Schools Superintendent Lisa Wolak, Facilities Optimization Committee members Gayle Weinstein and Rick Bertasi, Police Chief Ed Henion, Board of Police Commissioners Chair Beth Gralnick, Captain of Police Matt Brodacki and Town residents participating.

Mr. Ezzes announced the resignation of Allan Grauberd and thanked him for all of his time and contributions to the Board of Finance.

- 1. Discussion regarding the Board of Education's financial update. Phil Cross, Director of Finance and Operations:** Mr. Cross updated the Board of Finance with the current numbers. He said that they will end the fiscal year with the Internal Services Fund Balance at around \$800k. He asked that the Board of Finance consider reinstating the non-lapsing account using the funds from the Internal Services Fund. Mr. Ezzes welcomed Lisa Wolak and congratulated her on her recent appointment as School Superintendent.
- 2. Discussion/decision regarding the Tax Collector's proposed suspense list. Cathy Neblett, Tax Collector:** Mr. Darling explained the Ms. Neblett was unable to attend the meeting; saying that this was a yearly transaction and this year \$11,934.24 is proposed to be transferred. Mr. Grauberd asked about the American Rescue Plan Funds? Mr. Luiz responded and said that this will be a topic for the next Board of Finance meeting; the amounts being approximately \$3m to the Town and \$500k to the School District. He also mentioned that he had just received a comprehensive report on how and where the money can be spent and that First Selectman Spaulding had some ideas on where this money can be used. Mr. Bochinski moved to transfer \$11,934.24 from tax collector suspense list. Mr. Grauberd seconded this. The motion carried unanimously.
- 3. Discussion regarding the results of the recent tax lien sale. Cathy Neblett, Tax Collector:** Mr. Darling went over the recent tax sale, saying that all properties that were on the list have been sold. These ended up totaling \$1 080,910.00. He also mentioned an additional sale at 7 Meadowbrook for \$250k – both of which will go towards back tax collections.
- 4. Discussion regarding an update on the Town's general fund investment portfolio. Rick Darling, Finance Director/Treasurer:** Mr. Darling provided a detailed update on the general fund investment portfolio saying that our earnings are down due to the decline in yields, and the net unrealized losses are just over \$130k which follows two years of net unrealized gains. He mentioned being well under budget but mentioned positive numbers in other non-tax revenue areas. Mr. Bochinski mentioned the Fund balance at 20% of net budget and that we are in great shape.
- 5. Discussion/decision regarding the Town's financial update, and proposed transfers to special funds. Jonathan Luiz, Town Administrator, Rick Darling, Finance Director:** Mr. Darling summarized the highlights of how things have changed since the budget deliberation meetings in April which had forecasted to be budget neutral, since then, collections have been strong in April and May. Current tax collections and delinquent taxes are now at

\$1.4m above budget. Town clerk collections remain strong. BOE forecast \$220k better than in April; public safety complex just received their final \$250k contribution from the volunteer fire department. The balance is now at \$15,812,802 which is \$861k higher than what we had in April. The operating portions of some of the enterprise funds have been carrying negative numbers and it would be good to clear out the deficits. Mr. Bochinski moved to transfer \$55,548 to Ravenwood Water System Enterprise Fund and \$36,129 to the Recycling and Transfer station. Mr. Baldwin seconded this. The motion carried unanimously.

- 6. Discussion/decision on a request for a supplemental appropriation from the Facilities Optimization Committee (FOC) in the amount of \$95,000 for the purpose of completing an FOC project. Members of the FOC:** Mr. Ezzes introduced Mr. Rick Bertasi and Gayle Weinstein from the Facilities Optimization Committee in order to present the details on the FOC project. Mr. Bertasi went over a summary of the process they followed, the analysis and how they got to their recommendation. Mr. Ezzes asked Ms. Weinstein to go into further detail on the process of consideration, she went on to explain that there were many factors to take into account, but that Techton was best suited given their previous experience and expertise as well as the way they described working through the project. There was much discussion between the Board of Finance members with Mr. Bertasi and Ms. Weinstein going into detail on the various factors that went into the committee's recommendation.

Mr. Ezzes opened the meeting up to public comment:

1. Margaret Wirtenberg: Southport, CT - expressed her support for the plan

Mr. Grauberd moved to approve a \$95,000 for fiscal year 2020-21 supplemental appropriation for the Facilities Optimization Committee. Mr. Bochinski seconded this. The motion carried unanimously.

- 7. Discussion/decision on a request for a supplemental appropriation from the Police Commission in the amount of \$259,703 for the purchase of body cameras. Members of the Police Department and Police Commission:** Mr. Ezzes introduced Board of Police Commissioners Chairperson Beth Gralnick, Chief of Police, Ed Henion and Captain Matt Brodacki. Ms. Gralnick mentioned the Police Accountability Bill saying that Body Cameras are being mandated. She went through the reasons for the Board of Police Commissioners selection of Axon saying that in looking at all the other vendors, Axon met all of their requirements. The Board of Finance asked a number of questions with regards to the technology, costs and compliance which Chief Henion answered in detail.

Mr. Ezzes opened the meeting up to the public for comment:

1. Jess DiPasqual, Vice Chair of Board of Police Commissioners: explained his reasoning for the selection and support of Axon
2. Keith Johnson: asked a question on the viable financial future of the vendor.
3. Margaret Wirtenberg: Southport, CT expressed her support

Mr. Grauberd moved to approve a request for a fiscal year 2020-2 supplemental appropriation from the Police Commission in the amount of \$259,703 for the purchase of body cameras. Mr. Farr seconded this. The motion carried unanimously.

- 8. Discussion/decision on a request for a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$10,000 for a part-time Document Coordinator. Jonathan Luiz, Town Administrator:** Mr. Luiz mentioned that the Board of Selectmen has already approved this based on the increase in requests for FOIA documentation. This would be a part time position with no benefits, but that there may be more requests for supplemental appropriations based on the sheer volume of work required. The Board of Finance members expressed their support for this position. Mr.

Bochinski moved to request a fiscal year 2021-22 supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$10,000 for a part-time Document Coordinator. Mr. Grauberd seconded this. The motion carried unanimously.

- 9. Approval of minutes from the May 6<sup>th</sup> special meeting:** Mr. Bochinski moved to approve the minutes as submitted for the May 6<sup>th</sup> special meeting. Mr. Farr seconded this. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Ezzes mentioned that the state will permit Zoom meetings through April 2022; he asked if the Board of Finance would prefer to move forward with Zoom meetings. The Board expressed unanimous support for continued Zoom meetings.

- 10. Adjournment:** Mr. Bochinski moved to adjourn at 8.16pm. Mr. Grauberd seconded this. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes submitted by: Sara Beer, Executive Administrative Assistant.