

Board of Finance Regular Meeting
February 10, 2022 06:00 PM
Meeting held remotely due to COVID

Board of Finance Chair Rone Baldwin called the meeting to order at 6.02pm. Also in attendance were Board of Finance members Dick Bochinski, Amy Gare, Michael Imber, Jamie Zeppernick, Steve Ezzes and Jeff Farr, Town Administrator Jonathan Luiz, Finance Director Rick Darling, First Selectwoman Samantha Nestor, WPS Finance Director Phil Cross, WPS Superintendent Lisa Wolak and Karen Paulson from Fiducient Advisors.

1. **Executive session regarding an update on collective bargaining with Town unions.** Mr. Bochinski moved to go into executive session at 6.03pm for an update on collective bargaining with Town Unions at 6.03pm. Ms Gare seconded this. The motion carried unanimously. Town Administrator Jonathan Luiz and Finance Director Rick Darling were invited to attend. The executive session ended at 6.30pm.
2. **Discussion/decision regarding a presentation of the OPEB trust fund, and any proposed change in investments or allocation strategy. Karen Paulson, Fiducient Advisors.** Mr. Baldwin introduced Karen Paulson from Fiducient Advisors to provide and update on the OPEB Trust Fund. Mr. Imber asked what the duration of the fixed income funds was and Ms. Paulson went into detail on each of the funds. The Board of Finance asked a number of questions regarding the allocations with Ms. Paulson answering all questions. She also said that this was a fully funded plan and the committee was comfortable going back to fixed income for a more conservative stance. Mr. Darling mentioned that the plan was over funded. There was a discussion around the portfolio and potential changes that could be made. The Board of Finance agreed to further discussions on this topic.
3. **Discussion regarding the Board of Education Financial update. Phil Cross, Director of Finance and Operations.** WPS Finance Director Phil Cross provided a financial update for the Board of Education. He explained that there will be a slight surplus of \$61k. One of the main drivers of change was in benefits, we budgeted more than needed and anticipating being \$ 117K less than what was budgeted. Mr. Farr asked about price increases. Mr. Cross said that they had seen some, but in general they have not been very significant.
4. **Discussion/decision regarding a request to expand the scope of the fiscal year 2021-22 capital project entitled Replace VCT Cafeteria Floor South House. Phil Cross, Director of Finance and Operations.** Mr. Cross explained that the repairs needed were not as extensive as anticipated. They are requesting to change the use of these remaining funds and expand this to some needed tiling work. Mr. Imber moved to expand the scope of the fiscal year 2021-22 capital project entitled Replace VCT Cafeteria Floor South House. Mr. Bochinski seconded this. The motion carried unanimously.
5. **Discussion/decision regarding an application for the Connecticut Communities Challenge Grant. Jonathan Luiz, Town Administrator; Samantha Nestor, First Selectman.** First Selectwoman Samantha Nestor gave a PowerPoint presentation on the application for the Connecticut Communities Challenge Grant. She went into details on Town matching and funding from the grant. Mr. Bochinski expressed his support for this grant and to use the ARPA money for the Town contribution as did Mr. Imber and Ms. Gare. Mr. Baldwin asked if they intended on connecting Hurlbutt to the Zenon Plant. First Selectwoman Nestor provided details on what this project would entail, and highlighted that the majority of this grant would be spent on the expansion of the Zenon plant which is currently at capacity.

- 6. Discussion regarding an update on the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) and the working group for the Town. Samantha Nestor, First Selectman.** First Selectwoman Nestor provided an update via PowerPoint Presentation on the ARPA funds. She went over the strategy and a timeline on how to spend the funding highlighting the fact that ARPA funding cannot be used to offset mill rate, pay down debt or pay off pensions etc. First Selectwoman Nestor said that she is open to the possibilities of what this can be used for and that the decisions, plan and timeline would be around June or July 2022. Special Town Meetings would be held to approve expenditures that exceed 2% of the total Town budget. There was a discussion about the potential uses for these funds.
- 7. Discussion regarding the Town financial update. Rick Darling, Finance Director.** Mr. Darling provided an update mentioning that tax Revenues are forecasted to be close to a \$1m higher than budgeted. He also mentioned a pending tax sale in the spring. The supplemental auto levy is much higher than budgeted due to additional vehicles being registered as well as the increase in car values. The Town Clerk's fees will exceed \$800k. Investment Income is expected to fall short of budget due to our fixed income portfolios. Mr. Darling also mentioned a FEMA reimbursement for the 2020 storm Isaias. He mentioned a deficit in legal expenses and at the Library. He mentioned that there had been four capital project supplemental appropriations this year totaling \$735k, a hit against our fund balance. He said they are forecasting a fund balance of \$15.5m or 19.5% of proposed 22-23 budget. There was a discussion on a couple of items that will need to go for supplemental appropriations and the 2% total budget cap.
- 8. Discussion/decision regarding approval of the January 13, 2022 meeting minutes.** Mr. Bochinski moved to approve the minutes from the meeting on January 13, 2022 as submitted. Ms. Gare seconded this. The motion carried unanimously.
- 9. Adjourn.** Mr. Bochinski moved to adjourn at 7.55pm. Mr. Ezzes seconded this. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes submitted by: Sara Beer, Executive Administrative Assistant.