

TOWN OF STONINGTON
BOARD OF FINANCE MEETING
Stonington Police Department Meeting Room
Wednesday, October 5th, 2022
7:15 PM

A meeting of the Board of Finance was held on this date at the Stonington Police Department Meeting Room. Members present were Chairman Tim O'Brien, Michael Fauerbach, Deborah Norman, Lynn Young, Brian Bentz and Chris Johnson.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm.

Public Comments: None.

The Chairman requested a motion to add a bid waiver request from the Solid Waste department, following the WPCA bid waiver request as reflected in the meeting agenda. Ms. Norman made the motion, which was seconded by Ms. Young. The Chairman called for discussion, there was none, and the motion was passed unanimously.

The Chairman called for a motion to add a line-item transfer to the agenda, which the Director of Finance requested on behalf of the IT Manager Roger Kizer, after the bid waiver requests on the meeting agenda. Mr. Fauerbach motioned, which was seconded by Mr. Johnson. The Chairman called for discussion and there was none. The motion unanimously passed.

Previous Minutes: The Chairman asked for a motion to approve the September 7th meeting minutes. Ms. Young motioned, with Ms. Norman seconding the motion. The Chairman asked for any corrections or addenda to the minutes from Board Members, and there were none. The Chairman called for a vote on the motion to approve the minutes, and the motion unanimously carried.

Bid Waiver Request from Stonington Police Department (upfit of 2022/2023 police car allocation): Lieutenant Schneider from the Police Department requested a bid waiver for Strobes N' More, at a proposed cost of \$46,234.02, to upfit the 2022/2023 police car allocation, with the funding already approved in the budget. The Chairman requested a motion to approve the bid waiver request: Mr. Fauerbach motioned, with Ms. Young seconding the motion. The Chairman asked Lieutenant Schneider to summarize the request.

Lieutenant Schneider stated that the bid waiver request is similar to past requests for the vehicle upfits from Strobes N' More. The department wishes to continue using Strobes N' More due to its comparable pricing to MHQ for equipment and labor, and the excellent service they provide. Lieutenant Schneider continued, noting Strobes N' More's Westerly service shop offers a closer

alternative to MHQ, the state-bid list approved equipment vendor based in Middletown, CT. Lieutenant Schneider described to Board Members the purchasing and scheduling process for upfitting department cruisers, and the burden it places on PD staff, noting having the work done in Westerly would save many PD man hours.

The Chairman called for questions from Board Members. The Members asked Lieutenant Schneider questions about the condition of current police vehicles, the trade-in value of retired vehicles, and how supply chain issues affect the lead time to upfit the new vehicles. The Board Members and Lieutenant Schneider discussed the difference in labor and equipment costs between Strobes N' More and MHQ. Lieutenant Schneider reported an occasional 10-15% equipment price increase from Strobes N' More, but noted that scheduling challenges and the travel time ultimately make MHQ a pricier, less efficient option.

The Chairman called for a vote on the bid waiver request, and the motion passed unanimously.

Bid Waiver Request from Board of Education (HVAC unit repairs at Stonington Middle School):

The BOE Facilities Director Peter Anderson requested a bid waiver for EMCOR Services to repair the RTU5 unit at SMS, at a proposed cost of \$53,090.00. The Chairman called for a motion to approve the bid waiver request: Ms. Young motioned, and Mr. Johnson seconded it. The Chairman asked Mr. Anderson to summarize his request. Mr. Anderson reported the RTU5 roof-top unit above the SMS offices needs to be replaced, citing severe rust and corrosion issues. Mr. Anderson described the damaging effects from the corrosion, leading to water intrusion in the building through the newly renovated SMS roof. Mr. Anderson recommended the complete replacement of the RTU5 unit as fast as possible to prevent more water damage from incurring, after consulting with EMCOR.

Mr. Fauerbach asked Mr. Anderson for a timeline on the RTU5 replacement, citing a 32-week order lead time shown in the EMCOR estimate. Mr. Anderson outlined a plan to install an open-air housing cover over the RTU5 unit, to prevent further water intrusion. Board Members asked Mr. Anderson several questions about the status of other roof units, how inflation has affected the replacement unit costs, and the implementation of the RTU5 rooftop housing.

Mr. Fauerbach asked Mr. Anderson how replacing the RTU5 unit now would affect the cost of the future SMS AC project. Mr. Anderson explained RTU5 would be one less unit in need of replacement during the upgrade, so the future cost would decrease by the cost of that one unit. Ms. Young asked Mr. Anderson if this replacement will be paid for with ARPA funds, and the BOE Director of Finance, Alisha Stripling, stated that it most likely would be funded with ARPA funds. Mr. Anderson presented several other rooftop maintenance strategies to the Board Members.

The Chairman requested a vote on the bid waiver request, and the motion unanimously passed.

Bid Waiver Request from WPCA (new vehicle purchase): The WPCA Director Daniel Smith requested a bid waiver for Gengras Ford, to purchase a 2022 Ford Explorer, at a proposed cost of \$34,433.60 from the State-approved bid list. The Chairman called for a motion to approve the bid waiver request for purchase. Ms. Young put forth the motion and Mr. Bentz seconded it.

Ms. Young, who is also a member of the WPCA commission, spoke on behalf of Mr. Smith's request as he was not present. Ms. Young summarized that the WPCA is in the process of hiring a new assistant director, and thus will require a new vehicle for the department. Ms. Young described purchasing the Explorer, rather than a pickup truck, as a more cost-effective option, and noted that the WPCA Director would likely get the new vehicle, freeing up the Director's current vehicle for the new Deputy Director.

Mr. Fauerbach asked if this purchase was addressed during the 2022/2023 budget presentation, and the Finance Director responded that it wasn't addressed at that time because the WPCA operations budget isn't included in either the General Fund or CIP budgets, and that the WPCA commission authorized using bond funds to purchase the vehicle. The Board Members discussed the details of the new WPCA position, the vehicle make and model, and potential vehicle shortage concerns.

Mr. Fauerbach commented he was curious how much WPCA has spent from the \$10M bond funds. Mr. Sullivan calculated approximately \$500,000.00 of the \$10M bond had been spent to date. Ms. Young continued, noting the \$500,000.00 figure will soon change, and she will elaborate later in the meeting. The Chairman called on the Board for further questions, and there were none.

The Chairman asked for a vote on the bid waiver request, and the motion unanimously passed.

Bid Waiver Request from Solid Waste (waste food collection services and supplies): Jill Senior, the Solid Waste Manager, requested a bid waiver for services and supplies pertaining to the curbside food collection pilot program, at a total cost of \$495,000.00. The Chairman requested a motion to approve the bid waiver request: Ms. Norman made the motion, and Ms. Young seconded it.

Ms. Senior presented an overview of the upcoming residential food waste collection pilot program, to be funded by a \$552,000.00 grant from CT DEEP, and explained the need for each of the four items in the bid waiver request.

The Chairman interjected, noting the first three items and respective vendors in the request are mandated by DEEP, and that the Town has no choice but to approve these vendors.

Ms. Young asked Ms. Senior about the \$30,000.00 discrepancy between the \$552,000.00 grant and the \$495,000.00 bid waiver request. Ms. Senior reported the \$30,000.00 is for roll-off containers, but the roll-off containers may not be needed, so she is holding off on requesting a bid waiver for them at this time. The Board Members discussed potential savings from the food collection pilot, the grant reimbursement timeline, and other Solid Waste strategies with Ms. Senior.

The Chairman requested a vote on the bid waiver request, and the motion was unanimously carried.

Line-Item Transfer Request for fiscal 2021/2022:

- 1) Mr. Sullivan presented a line-item transfer on behalf of the IT Manager, Roger Kizer, to transfer \$3,686.00 from account #10123-80345 "Unemployment", in the Human Resources budget to IT account #10122-80154 "Equipment and licensing" to fund the budget deficit in the IT Department's budget. The Director of Finance explained to the Members that there was roughly \$1,000.00 remaining in the IT budget, but an invoice for GIS Services from last December arrived and needs to be paid without going over budget. Mr. Bentz questioned how the unpaid invoice was unaccounted for by IT. Mr. Sullivan replied that the invoice was small enough that a PO wasn't executed, but hopefully this type of oversight will be prevented in the future after we implement a new electronic PO system that we hope to have in place for next fiscal year. The Chairman called for a motion to approve the line-item transfer request from the Director of Finance. Mr. Fauerbach motioned, and Ms. Young seconded the motion. The Chairman called for further discussion or questions about the transfer, and there were none. The motion was passed unanimously.

Approved 2023 Board of Finance Regular Meeting Schedule: The Board Members discussed the monthly Board meeting schedule time, which currently occurs on the first Wednesday of every month at 7:15 pm. After a brief discussion, it was resolved to keep the same day and time for BOF meetings for calendar 2023.

Additional Appropriation Requests in fiscal 2022/2023: Mr. Sullivan noted there was no change in appropriation requests since the prior BOF meeting. Mr. Sullivan then addressed a question the Members had during the September meeting, about the effect on the PD's budget of the Police Department hiring of an experienced officer, at a higher salary, rather than a trainee, and the effect on the department's finance plan. Mr. Sullivan explained that as it stands now, there is little to no effect on the PD budget, because the PD had budgeted for two new trainees to start in September but were unable to fill either position. However, if the department hires another experienced officer later this year, then that may have a negative impact on the PD budget.

Discussion about WPCA grant funding from DEEP, and use of those funds: The Director of Finance requested guidance from the Board as to how to treat grant proceeds related to the Phase I and Phase II I&I projects. The cost of Phase I of the project was fully funded through CIP at \$300,000.00, but the Town will be receiving a \$165,000.00 reimbursement grant from CT DEEP to offset the cost of the project, and the Phase II project is being fully funded at \$333,000.00 with bond funds, and the Town may receive an additional \$233,000.00 CT DEEP grant for that project as well. The Director asked the Board Members if they preferred to use the grant money for other additional WPCA projects, or if they would prefer for the grant revenue to go into the General Fund fund balance. The Members responded that they would like the grant revenue to go into the General Fund fund balance.

The Board Members discussed the I&I projects, the \$10M bond, and future WPCA projects which may require funding through the CIP fund.

Discussion of the use of cloud service for Town Clerk's office and funding: The Director of Finance addressed security concerns that the Board Members raised at the last meeting pertaining to the proposed cloud-based SaaS system for the Town Clerk's office. After consulting with Mr. Kizer, the IT Manager, the Director of Finance reported that the vendor's cloud-based cyber storage facilities are all US or Canadian based, with redundant servers. Board Members asked Mr. Sullivan several questions about SaaS security and functionality, followed by discussion of the project cost and backup considerations. Mr. Sullivan provided Members with a timeline of the transition, noting Mr. Kizer will oversee its implementation.

Correspondence: None.

Liaison Reports

CIP Liaison report: Ms. Young noted that the 2023/2024 CIP budgeting process has started.

WPCA Liaison report: Ms. Young noted that the I&I Study in Mystic identified several at-risk sections of pipe, that will undergo a lining process once the projects are approved. Ms. Young explained the study was unable to find an infiltration source in the main collection system, which would have helped the overall capacity. Ms. Young anticipated the repairs along Route 27 will hopefully be completed (or at least started) by January, which will be paid for with bond funds. Ms. Young concluded with additional insight about repair methods and concerns, along with the intricacies of the collection system.

BOE Liaison report: Ms. Young described a meeting she had with Ms. Stripling, Mr. Anderson, and School Superintendent Mary Anne Butler, and expressed appreciation that everyone was so forthcoming and transparent regarding the financial matters of the BOE. Ms. Young outlined crucial feedback and suggestions discussed during the meeting, and touched on BOE financial concerns to be addressed with Ms. Stripling's aid going forward.

Other Liaison reports: Mr. Fauerbach reported on an update from the Town Tax Collector, Linda Camelio, regarding tax collection rates – real estate tax is at 54.3%, personal property tax at 53.2%, and motor vehicle tax at 94.5%, year to date.

The Chairman requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Young motioned, and Ms. Norman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 8:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justin Eckert', with a stylized, cursive script.

Justin Eckert

Board of Finance Recording Secretary