

TOWN OF STONINGTON
BOARD OF FINANCE
Stonington Police Department Meeting Room
Wednesday, November 03, 2021
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, Lynn Young, Michael Fauerbach, Bob Statchen, and Deb Norman.

Chairman O'Brien called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm

Mr. O'Brien asked for a motion to move the request for the bid waiver from the Stonington Harbor management commission up to right after the discussion of the 2022 regular meeting schedule. Mr. Statchen made the motion, Ms. Young seconded. Mr. O'Brien called for discussion, there was none. Mr. O'Brien called for the vote; motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments: None

Previous Minutes: Ms. Young motioned, to approve the September 1st regular meeting minutes, the September 15th Public Hearing minutes, and the September 15^h Special Meeting minutes, at which funding for proposed ARPA grant fund projects was discussed and voted on. Ms. Norman seconded. The Chairman asked if any members had any corrections or edits to the minutes. Mr. Fauerbach noted that his name was misspelled once in one of the minutes. Mr. Statchen noted that he didn't review the minutes because he never received the meeting packet because his Stonington email isn't working. Because only three members were willing to vote on the minutes, the Chairman asked the Ms. Young to withdraw her motion, she did and minutes were tabled until next meeting.

Discussion of 2022 Regular Meeting Schedule: There was discussion of what day and time to set the BOF regular meeting schedule for 2022. Consensus was reached that the meeting day and time would remain the same as 2021, the first Wednesday of every month, at 7:15pm, at the Police Department Community room. Ms. Young made a motion to set the day and time to the first Wednesday of every month, at 7:15pm, at the Police Department Community room, Ms. Norman seconded. Mr. O'Brien called for a vote; motion passed unanimously. However, due to the fact that the BOF Secretary was not available to sign the resolution setting time and date, signing of the resolution will be put off until next meeting when a new Secretary would be appointed.

Request for bid waiver: Stonington Harbor management commission is requesting a bid waiver for the purchase of a boat for \$32,945.95 from Romarine. The Chairman asked for a motion to approve this bid waiver request. Ms. Young made the motion, Mr. Fauerbach seconded. The Chairman asked for discussion.

Jay Spalding, the Commission Chairman explained why a bid waiver was necessary to purchase the boat. He explained that the boat would be highly customized and that going through a bid process would be unwieldy because of the amount of customization required. He explained that they looked at several makes of boats and determined the chosen model would best meet the commissions need, and that they would be trading in their old boat for a \$1,500 credit towards the new boat. Mr. Fauerbach noted that the engine on the old boat was relatively new and asked if that would be swapped onto the new boat, Mr. Spalding confirmed that the old motor has a lot of life left in it and would be swapped onto the new boat.

Mr. Statchen asked if the Commission considered any local dealers. The Chairman responded that the Commission is working directly with the manufacturer and that there are no local manufacturers in Stonington, and that Romarine of Bristol RI is the closet manufacturer.

Mr. Fauerbach asked if whether the Commission had the funds for the boat, the Chairman responded that the Commission has its own funds available to make the purchase.

Mr. O'Brian asked for a vote on the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Line-Item Transfers for fiscal 20/21:

1) Mr. O'Brien requested a motion to approve the request from the solid waste manager for line-item transfers of \$24,494 to Commercial Collections, and to SCRRA Receptacles of \$14,956.00, from Disposal Fees account in the amount of \$39,450.00 to cover deficits in those two line-items. Ms. Young made the motion, Mr. Statchen seconded. The Chairman asked the Finance Director if he could explain the request. Mr. Sullivan responded that he knew that Solid Waste had run out of receptables (yellow bags, but could not explain by Commercial Collections went over, while Disposal fees declined. Mr. Sullivan indicated he would inquire of the Solid Waste Manager and follow up with the Board via email.

Several Members noted that Mr. Phetteplace, the Solid Waste Manager, runs a really sound operation and that they trust that he knows what he's doing. The Chairman called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

2) Roger Kizer, the IT manager requested \$2,000.00 line-item transfer from another department to cover an overall deficit in IT's 20/21 budget. The Finance Director suggested taking it from legal in the BOF budget. The Chairman asked for a motion to approve that request. Mr. Fauerbach made the motion, Ms. Young seconded. The Chairman asked for discussion. Ms. Norman asked for what fiscal year this was, Finance Director explained it was for 20/21 which ended 06/30/21. The Chairman asked for a vote, motion passed unanimously.

Bid Waiver Request from Police Department: Lt. Schneider asked for a bid waiver to purchase the 21/22 fiscal police car allotment from MHQ, off the State bid list. He presented two quotes, one, for three marked cars for a total of \$112,897.50, and the second for a Ford F150 Police Responder for \$37,317.50. The Chairman asked for a motion to approve bid waiver request for the police department to purchase the vehicles from MHQ for \$150,215. Ms. Young made the two-line motion which was seconded by Mr. Fauerbach. The Chairman called for discussion; the members asked several questions of Lt. Schneider.

Several members asked why a pickup, the Lt. explained that there are lots of times when a truck is needed to pick up items at the roadside like bikes, canoes, etc., or move equipment to accident scenes or events. He stated that it would be replacing the current truck which is at end of life. Ms. Young asked if there are enough funds in the line item for the vehicles and the upfits, the Lt. responded that he would make the budget work. He also noted that there is currently a 24-week lead time for vehicle delivery.

There was a short discussion between the Members and the Lt. about possibly purchasing electric vehicles in the future. The Lt. responded that he is already looking in to it.

Ms. Young asked if the Town might be able to get a tax credit for purchasing electric vehicles, the Finance Director indicated that, that was not possible because the Town doesn't pay taxes.

Ms. Young asked the Lt. if there were electric police cars on the State bid list, the Lt. responded that he didn't think so. Also, discussed was the practicality of electric police vehicles at this point in time. Cost and maintenance issues were also discussed.

The chairman called for a vote on the motion, it passed unanimously.

Additional Appropriations YTD: It was noted that there are no YTD additional appropriations from the fund balance for fiscal 21/22.

Review of ending fund balance for fiscal 20/21: The Finance Director noted that fiscal 20/21 was closed and handed out a schedule that showed fund balance as of 06/30/21 was at \$17,466,000, with excess above the 2-month operating reserve of \$4,002,000.

Discussion of fiscal 22/23 budget calendar: The Finance Director had prepared a draft budget calendar for the BOF's consideration. The Finance Director noted that there was already one change to the version that was included with the meeting packets. The date of the Town Meeting has been changed from April 25 to April 13th. The BOF Chairman asked the Finance Director to add a third day of deliberations to the calendar. The Finance Director said he would make those changes and disseminate a revised schedule to the Board for consideration at the next BOF meeting in December.

Update on ARPA Grant Funded Programs: This update was to notify all that the date by which a referendum could be called by a taxpayer has expired, so all of the programs that were approved at the Town Meeting may proceed. Department heads have now had their funding released. Ms. Young asked if we actually have the funds in hand. The Finance Director responded that we have half, roughly \$2.5 million in hand.

Ms. Young inquired of the Chairman as to whether the BOF had ever considered having its own Facebook Page or some kind of communication device, so that it could disseminate correct information about the BOF's ongoing activities, particularly as it relates to ARPA project

funding. She commented that misrepresentations about different issues is a problem throughout Town. Mr. O'Brien indicated that it's been considered a few times over the last 10 years, but there is a concern about violating FOIA rules, because comments may provoke questions and answers among the public and Board Members which could constitute an unnoticed meeting. Its and issue we would need to give more thought to, going forward.

Ms. Young commented that anything we could do to keep the public engaged in Board of Finance activities, and throughout the budget process would be a good thing for the Town.

Correspondence:

1) The Chairman noted that the Board received one piece of correspondence from a resident, to add a detailed schedule of WPCA expenditures to the annual audited financial statements. The Chairman also noted that the WPCA operates, for the most part, independent of the Board of Finance, so he recommended that the Board pass the question to, Lynn Young the WPCA liaison.

Ms. Young, responded on behalf of the WPCA, that the WPCA would have no issue with adding that additional schedule to the audited financial statements, but indicated that she did not want to add to the Finance Departments burden. The Finance Director responded that, such a schedule could be added with little additional by the Finance department, and that he already discussed it with the auditor, who said they could add it to the annual financial statements at no additional charge

2) The Chairman noted that the Finance Director received an email from the Chairman of the Climate Change Taskforce, encouraging the police department to consider purchasing electric vehicles in the next budget cycle. The email noted that the Town of Westport has introduce electric vehicles to its police department fleet and is having a positive experience with them.

Liaison Reports:

WPCA Liaison, Lynn Young shared some good news, because of the Mystic to Borough diversion project, the WPCA was able to free up 50,000 gallons of flow to projects that were on hold because of the moratorium. She also noted that it will take some of the pressure off of us, but it's not a long-term solution. It will get us out of some development backlog, but there's not a ton more capacity at the borough plant, which now because of the diversion is actually operating better.

Also, the Infiltration and Inflow project discovered what we believe are a couple of significant infiltration sites, so some more flow might be available once those infiltration points are remedied. She also noted, that the smoke testing performed as part of the I&I study is extremely unpopular. If the study can identify some low-hanging fruit, we may get 50 to 100,000 gallons of reduced flow and we may be able let the moratorium go, for now.

Board of Ed liaison report, The Chairman reported that Dr. Riley has tendered his resignation and the new BOE that was voted in yesterday by the taxpayers will be establishing a committee to find the new Superintendent.

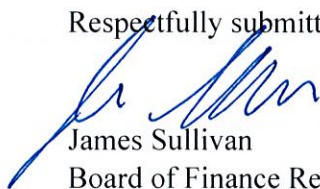
The Chairman noted that the BOE has two meetings per month and that the BOF should consider sending a liaison to both meetings. This would serve two purposes, the BOF would be better informed of the fiscal activities at the BOE, plus it would make an impression that we recognize this is the relationship that we have to build. Perhaps the BOF could appoint two BOE liaisons, so we can have two people who switch off the obligation of attending the 2 monthly BOE meetings.

There was some discussion amongst the Board as to the possibility of combining the Town and BOE's finance departments. The Chairman noted that there have been a couple of different proposals over the last 20 years to combine the two departments, they died fairly quickly. The Finance Director noted that Westerly combined both finance departments recently, but it didn't work out well and they reverted back to the two finance department system.

Public Works/CIP: The Finance Director informed the BOF that the Public Works Director requested to come before the BOF at the December meeting to preview her CIP budget request. The Chairman indicated that he thought it would be more appropriate for the Public Works Liaison to meet with the PWD in the interim, and then report back to the BOF at the December meeting. Lynn Young, and Deb Norman, the Public Works and CIP liaisons, respectively indicated that they would meet with the PWD in the interim and report back at the December BOF meeting.

The Chairman asked for a motion to adjourn, Lynn Young motioned, Deb Norman seconded, motion passed unanimously at 8:09PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Sullivan', is written over the printed name.

James Sullivan

Board of Finance Recording Secretary.