

**TOWN OF STONINGTON**  
**BOARD OF FINANCE MEETING**  
**Stonington Police Department Meeting Room**  
**Wednesday, November 2nd, 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, Bryan Bentz, Bob Statchen and Chris Johnson.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:16 pm.

Public Comments: None.

Previous Minutes: The Chairman requested a motion to approve the October 5th meeting minutes. Mr. Bentz put forth the motion, and Ms. Young seconded it. The Chairman asked for any corrections to the minutes from Board Members. Ms. Young addressed a typo on the second page, regarding the Board of Education bid waiver request for the SMS HVAC unit repairs.

The Chairman called for a vote on the motion to approve the minutes as corrected. The motion passed six to zero, with Mr. Statchen abstaining as he was not present for the October 5<sup>th</sup> BOF regular meeting.

Members of the Public Present: The Chairman did a head count of attendees at this evening's meeting, there was no one present from the public.

Bid Waiver Request from Public Works Department (purchase of road salt): Barbara McKrell, the Director of Public Works, requested a bid waiver for an existing CRCOG contract to procure road salt for winter operations, at a cost of \$95.58 per ton. The Chairman asked for a motion to approve the bid waiver request. Ms. Norman made the motion, and Ms. Young seconded it. Ms. Young asked what the previous year's cost of salt was. The Highway Supervisor, Tom Curioso, reported the CRCOG contracted rate for prior year was \$77.33 per ton, a sizeable increase from last year. Mr. Curioso offered additional details pertaining to the vendor, Morton Salt Inc., and discussed supply chain and inflation issues with the Board Members.

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

Additional Appropriation Requests in fiscal 2022/2023: The Director of Finance stated there were no changes in appropriation requests to report since the prior BOF meeting. Mr. Sullivan noted several departments will be requesting extra funding come January, referring Board Members to the latest additional appropriation request schedule.

### ARPA Grand Budget Transfers

- 1) The Director of Public Works presented a request to transfer \$85,425.00 in ARPA funds from the Town Hall drainage/parking lot line-item to the Salt Dome line-item, to offset a deficit in funding for the salt dome project. The Chairman requested a motion to approve the line-item transfer request from Ms. McKrell: Mr. Fauerbach motioned, and Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. Ms. McKrell summarized, that when the salt dome project went out to bid, four contractors issued bids for consideration, with Suchocki & Son, Inc. offering the lowest bid. Ms. McKrell noted Suchocki & Son has previously done excellent work for the Town, and they proposed a project that adheres to the salt dome plans and specifications. Ms. McKrell and Mr. Curioso provided further detail to Board Members about several engineering and environmental considerations pertaining to the salt dome project.

Ms. Young asked what the final cost of the salt dome project cost will be, and Ms. McKrell quoted a total cost of \$962,425.00 for the project. Ms. McKrell fielded questions from the Board, and outlined operational benefits the new salt dome location will provide, regarding the delivery and loading of trucks. Ms. Young asked Ms. McKrell why the initial \$600,000.00 estimate for the project was low. Ms. McKrell explained the estimate was an approximation based on what other municipalities had spent on their salt dome projects, that had been built within the last five years.

The Chairman called for a vote approving the transfer, and the vote passed unanimously.

The Chairman also took the opportunity to acknowledge Ms. McKrell's pending separation from the Town, and expressed the utmost gratitude from the BOF, for her great work and her dedication to the Town during her tenure as Director of Public works.

- 2) Danielle Chesebrough, the First Selectman, requested a transfer of \$100,000.00 in ARPA funds from the SMS HVAC project line-item to the Town Hall HVAC project line-item. The Chairman asked for a motion to approve the line-item transfer request. Ms. Young called for a motion, and Ms. Norman seconded it. The Chairman explained to the rest of the board, that the Town couldn't possibly fund the SMS HVAC project at this time, and after consulting with the Board of Education, the decided best course of action was to move funds from the SMS HVAC project line-item to the Town Hall HVAC line-item, to help ensure that at least the Town HVAC project will be fully funded. The Chairman asked for questions pertaining to the transfer, and Mr. Statchen asked the BOE Finance Director, Alisha Stripling, if she supported the transfer of funds. Ms. Stripling confirmed she supported to the transfer. The Chairman requested a vote to approve the transfer, and the vote passed unanimously.
- 3) The First Selectman requested a line-item transfer of \$340,000.00 in ARPA funds from the Human Services HVAC project line-item to the Town Hall HVAC line-item, as funding for the Human Service HVAC project was no longer possible at this time. The Chairman asked for a motion approving the line-item transfer request: Ms. Young motioned, and Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. The Chairman called for questions, before reiterating to the Board that costs are too high for both HVAC projects to be feasible, and thus the Town Hall HVAC line-item transfer will pay to repair the Town

Hall heating system.

Mr. Fauerbach asked if the two transfers are enough to fully fund the Town Hall HVAC repairs. The Finance Director, responded that the Town Engineer received and estimate of probable costs from an engineering consultant, that should cover the anticipated HVAC project, but until the project is ultimately bid, nothing is carved in stone. The Chairman called for a vote approving the transfer, and the vote unanimously passed.

- 4) The Director of Finance requested to transfer \$24,566.00 in ARPA funds from the SECOG line-item to the Contingency line-item. The Chairman called for a motion approving the line-item transfer request: Ms. Young motioned, and Mr. Fauerbach seconded the motion. Mr. O'Brien stated that SECOG didn't need \$24,566.00 worth of ARPA funds, therefore the funds should be transferred to contingency. The Chairman asked for a vote approving the transfer of funds, and the vote was unanimously carried.

### Correspondence

The Chairman addressed a letter to the First Selectman from the Mason's Island Fire District, requesting CIP funding in the 2023/2024 budget for a feasibility study to protect Mason's Island Road and causeway, from frequent flooding and anticipated sea level rise. The Chairman opened the floor to Board Members.

After reviewing the correspondence, Mr. Bentz proposed an incremental approach for the causeway study and planning over the next few years, rather than a larger project that may be costlier and unnecessarily excessive. Ms. Young pointed out the challenges of using CIP funding to study Mason's Island causeway specifically, without addressing several other low-lying areas around Stonington. Mr. O'Brien expressed that currently, a study on the town's low-lying areas isn't feasible with Ms. McKrell's departure and current DPW staffing levels. The Chairman also noted the DPW, Town Engineer, and First Selectman, recommended postponing the Mason's Island Road study for now, due to capacity issues, and address it during the next budget cycle. Board Members continued to discuss the issue and other considerations for such a project. The Chairman concluded that he agreed with the sentiments shared during the discussion, and there were no further comments from Board Members.

Jay DelGrosso, the Chief of Police, was in attendance to answer questions about statistics the Board Members requested regarding officer staffing for Town events. Chief DelGrosso explained that officers regularly needing to report on their days off to help staff events, due to the 37 annual Town events, with seven additional events being proposed. Chief DelGrosso touched on a BOF question regarding comparable towns with similar PD event staffing challenges, and indicated he was unable to find an accurate comparison, after discussion with several other town PDs.

The Board Members discussed officer staffing and event coordination with Chief DelGrosso at length. Chief DelGrosso provided additional insight regarding hiring and retaining current officers, and offered solutions to officer staffing, such as hiring private security to assist with certain event aspects in the future.

## Liaison Reports

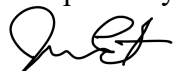
CIP Liaison report: Ms. Young reiterated that the 2023/2024 CIP budgeting process has begun.

WPCA Liaison report: Ms. Young reported that so far, the WPCA has found no significant additional infiltration sources that will create additional capacity for Mystic. Ms. Young continued, noting they are evaluating what it will cost to line several problematic pipe sections, and while the WPCA had hoped to find more point sources to free up capacity, it seems unlikely it will happen.

BOE Liaison report: Ms. Young reported after she had met with Ms. Stripling last month, the BOE labor contract has since been finalized, and Ms. Stripling is now free to discuss certain aspects of the contract. Ms. Young noted that teacher wages weren't competitive enough (for the area) to entice new teacher recruitment, and discussed aspects of the BOE contract negotiations, along with steps that were taken to make teacher salaries and benefits more competitive. The Board Members asked Ms. Stripling several questions pertaining to hiring staff, negotiated benefits and other BOE budgeting considerations. Ms. Young took a moment to once again, thank Ms. Stripling and her colleagues for being so transparent and attentive with the BOE finances.

The Chairman called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Young motioned, and Mr. Bentz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Justin Eckert

Board of Finance Recording Secretary