

TOWN OF STONINGTON
BOARD OF FINANCE MEETING
Stonington Police Department Meeting Room
Wednesday, January 4th, 2023
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, Bob Statchen and Chris Johnson.

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

Public Comments: David Brown, from 358 River Road, Pawcatuck, CT, asked Chairman O'Brien if BOF meetings typically begin with the Pledge of Allegiance. The Chairman replied to Mr. Brown that the Pledge had been omitted to condense meetings during Covid-19, and as an oversight it was never reinstated. Mr. Brown requested to once again add the Pledge of Allegiance before the commencement of BOF meetings. The Chairman requested a motion to modify the meeting agenda by reinstating the Pledge of allegiance: Mr. Statchen motioned, and Ms. Norman seconded the motion. The vote unanimously passed, and a moment was taken for the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Chairman requested additional comments from the public, and there were none.

Previous Minutes: The Chairman asked for a motion to approve the December 7th, 2022, meeting minutes. Mr. Fauerbach made the motion, and Ms. Norman seconded it. The Chairman asked Members for any corrections to the minutes, and there were none. The Chairman requested a vote on the motion to approve the minutes, and the motion was passed unanimously.

Head count of residents in attendance: Two residents were present.

Bid Waiver Request from the BOE IT Director (purchase cameras from DEF): Chris Williston, the BOE IT Director, requested a bid waiver to purchase cameras from D/E/F Services Group, at an estimated cost of \$126,664.00. The Chairman called for a motion to approve the bid waiver request. Mr. Statchen motioned, and Ms. Young seconded the motion. Mr. Williston summarized the project bid process for Board Members, in which he discussed two bids submitted by competing vendors DEF and ITS. Mr. Williston explained the DEF bid was approximately \$100,000.00 less than the ITS bid, and provided details for Board Members regarding several economic considerations pertaining to the bids. Mr. Williston noted from the \$151,274.00 currently allotted for the BOE camera line, all three phases of the camera project would cost \$126,664.00. Mr. Williston continued, explaining to Members that additional hardware components will elevate project costs to \$149,000.00, leaving approximately \$1,200.00

remaining in the project budget.

The Chairman called for questions from Board Members. Ms. Young asked Mr. Williston if the bid waiver request amount is sufficient for the project. Mr. Williston confirmed the bid request allows for the completion of the project, on a district-wide basis. Board Members asked Mr. Williston questions about the installation and maintenance aspects pertaining to the project. The Chairman called for a vote to approve the bid waiver request. The vote was unanimously passed.

Line-item Transfer Requests

To expedite the line-item transfer process, the Chairman called for a motion to simultaneously approve nine individual line-item transfer requests as shown on the agenda. Mr. Fauerbach motioned, and Ms. Norman seconded the motion to approve the transfer requests. The Chairman presented the following line-item transfer requests, and called for questions or discussion after each individual request was presented:

A request from the BOE for a line-item transfer of \$246,000.00 from BOE CIP account #4022023-88290 "Ductless AC & Heat Upgrade-SMS", to a new BOE CIP account for two boiler replacements at Stonington Middle School.

A request from the Town Engineer, Chris Greenlaw, for a line-item transfer of \$5,700.00 from the Assistant Engineer Position account #10153-88366, to the Engineering Intern account #10153-80396, to cover an expected overage in line for the fiscal year.

A request from the Director of Assessment, Jennifer Lineaweaver, for a line-item transfer of \$5,000.00 from Assessor's Assistant Stipend, and \$2,890.00 from Assessor Clerical line-item account #10128-80075, to the Furniture and Equipment account #10128-80310, to fund a new ADA compliant counter in the Assessor's Office.

A request from the Deputy DPW Director, for a line-item transfer of \$33,000.00 from Labor Salaries line-item account #10151-80042, to Regular Overtime account #10151-80082.

A request from the Director of Administrative Services, Patti Burmahl, for a line-item transfer of \$5,000.00 from line-item account #10123-80351, Accrued Leave Payout, with \$2,500.00 going to accounts #10121-80075 Clerical Salaries, and #10141-80075 Clerical Salaries, each to reward Gayle Phoenix and Mary McCrea for outstanding service.

A request from the Town IT Manager, Roger Kizer, for a line-item transfer of \$13,300.00 from contingency account #10136-80435, to telecommunications account #10122-80317, for a dark fiber lease. Mr. Fauerbach asked Mr. Kizer to explain what a dark fiber line is. Mr. Kizer presented an overview of the dark fiber line technical aspects for Board Members, explaining the project will provide a fiber optic internet mainline between the various Town building locations, that no one but the Town will have access to. Mr. Kizer also advised that this line should avoid future bandwidth concerns or costly ISP restrictions. There was continued discussion with Mr. Kizer and Board Members, and Mr. Kizer answered supplementary questions about the dark fiber proposal.

A request from Jill Senior, the Solid Waste Director, for a line-item transfer of \$161,494.00 to partially fund the approved increase to the residential trash hauling contract. The Chairman reminded Board Members the details of the trash hauling contract had been discussed during a previous BOF Meeting, in June or July of 2022.

A request from the First Selectman, Danielle Chesebrough, for a line-item transfer of \$5,000.00 from contingency to the Emergency Management clerical line-item, to renumerate the clerical position in preparation of the Emergency Operations Plan.

A request from James Sullivan, the Finance Director, to approve payroll budget transfer to reflect a cost-of-living adjustment for fiscal 2022/2023.

The Chairman called for a vote to approve all line-item transfer requests, as detailed on the line-item agenda. The vote was passed unanimously.

Additional Appropriation Requests and Summary for Fiscal 2022/2023

The Solid Waste Manager, Ms. Senior, requested an additional appropriation of \$61,424.00, to fully fund an approved increase to the residential trash hauling contract. The Chairman called for a motion to approve the appropriation request. Mr. Statchen motioned, and the motion was seconded by Ms. Young. The Chairman reiterated the trash hauling contract was previously discussed with Board Members, when the contract was initially up for renewal. The Chairman called for added discussion, and there was none. The motion was unanimously carried.

Mr. Sullivan provided Members with an overview of what to anticipate regarding potential additional appropriation requests for the fiscal 2022/2023 budget. Mr. Sullivan stated that of the approximately \$369,000.00 line-items addressed during the last BOF meeting, every item except for a potential additional appropriation for gasoline of \$80,000, was addressed through line item transfers from the surplus in the contingency account in the BOF budget, and from vacant position salary line-items.

ARPA Grant Line-Item Transfer Requests

The Chairman announced an ARPA Grant funding request of \$100,000.00, from the Stonington Borough Warden, for the Wadawanuck Square comfort station request. The Chairman asked the Director of Finance's opinion about funding the request from available ARPA grant funds. Mr. Sullivan explained that out of the \$5.2M in ARPA Grants allocated to Town projects, all but \$87,000.00 had already been designated for projects or programs. Mr. Sullivan further noted that three major projects, totaling \$3.1million, being funded with ARPA funds are already underway such as tennis court renovations, the new salt dome, and the Town HVAC project. Mr. Sullivan expressed concern about funding any other projects with ARPA funds until those three projects are near completion in case of project overruns or change orders. Mr. O'Brien asked Mr. Sullivan if the comfort station should be designated as a CIP project, and Mr. Sullivan confirmed the project was already a CIP item. There was further discussion among the Members, Mr.

Sullivan, and Ms. Chesebrough regarding ARPA funding, and ongoing ARPA project considerations.

Jeffrey Callahan, the Stonington Borough Warden, expressed his belief that the comfort station was an absolute need for the Borough, largely due to the convenience the bathroom offers in one of the busier Town areas. Board Members asked Mr. Callahan several economic and design-related questions pertaining to the comfort station. Mr. Statchen asked Mr. Callahan if any of the \$200,000.00 in grants allocated for the comfort station were dependent on the Board's commitment to proceed. Mr. Callahan stated the BOF's approval was not necessary for those grants.

Ms. Young asked if the restrooms at the Lighthouse Museum were available to the public. Mr. Callahan explained that the Museum isn't always open, and the Museum's proximity to the Borough's businesses (over half a mile down Water Street) is inconvenient for the public. There was further discussion with Board Members and Mr. Callahan, regarding the comfort station's proposed location, and maintenance considerations pertaining to it.

The Chairman summarized that the Board is currently advising against allocating ARPA funds for the comfort station, but indicated the BOF would give it due consideration during budget deliberations.

Correspondence

Mr. Sullivan shared his recent discussion with the Director of Assessment, Ms. Lineaweaver, about the progress of the grand list. Mr. Sullivan stated that statutorily, the grand list should be done by the end of January, but a request was submitted by the Assessor to extend the deadline until February, but that the assessor should have good enough numbers by the end of January for budgeting purposes.

Liaison Reports

Ms. Young stated there were no new CIP, WPCA or BOE meetings to report on.

Other Liaison Reports: Mr. Fauerbach reported that the Linda Camelio, the Tax Collector, said the Town is on track to collect at least 98.75% of its taxes for the current fiscal year, and hopefully more.

Mr. Bentz noted that during a meeting with Police Chief Jay DelGrosso, Mr. Bentz approved of Chief DelGrosso's current budget proposal. Chief DelGrosso also indicated to Mr. Bentz that he's open to ongoing budget-related discussions with any BOF Members.

The Chairman called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Young motioned, and Mr. Statchen seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justin Eckert', written in a cursive style.

Justin Eckert

Board of Finance Recording Secretary