

TOWN OF STONINGTON
BOARD OF FINANCE MEETING MINUTES
Stonington Police Department Meeting Room
Wednesday, August 02, 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 Lynn Young, Michael Fauerbach, Deborah Norman, Chris Johnson, Bryan Bentz, and Chairman Tim O'Brien. Bob Statchen was not in attendance.

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

Public Comments: (none)

Previous Minutes:

The Chairman requested a motion to approve the May 04, 2023, June 07, 2023, and the June 22, 2023 meeting minutes. Ms. Young motioned, and Mr. Johnson seconded it. The Chairman asked members for any discussion or corrections pertaining to the 5/4/23 minutes, there were no corrections or edits. The Chairman asked members for any discussion or corrections pertaining to the 6/7/23 minutes. It was noted that under public comments, one of the speakers' names was incorrect. The name was corrected to read Chris Smith, not Chris Donahue. Mr. Fauerbach also requested a couple of edits to the section "Discussion Items". He requested that the fifth word on line four be changed from, "development" to "design", the change was made. He also requested that clarification be made in the second paragraph of this section, to clarify that the Board was concerned that a viable funding source for construction of the bike-path had not been identified or secured, and that was the reason the Board was against funding the design portion of the project. It was the board's position that it doesn't make sense to fund the design of a project if there aren't funds to build it. This edit will be made by the Finance Director. The Chairman asked members for any discussion or corrections pertaining to the 6/22/23 minutes, there were no corrections or edits.

The Chairman called for a vote, on motion to approve the minutes, the motion passed unanimously.

Additional Appropriation Requests:

The Chairman requested a motion to approve the additional appropriation request of \$2,500.00 from the Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce, to fund the 50th anniversary celebration of the Mystic Aquarium, Ms. Young motioned, and Ms. Norman seconded it. Bruce Flax, the Chamber Director, along with the First Selectman, explained the purpose of his request and details surrounding the proposed event, and commented how successful a similar event was in fiscal 22/23.

Mr. Fauerbach raised a concern that this event is being billed as a celebration of the Mystic Aquarium rather than as a Town celebration. He voiced his concern about setting a precedent whereas anytime, any local business hit a similar milestone, they would request and expect a similar event in their honor. Mr. Fauerbach was on board with funding a "Mystic Celebration" but requested that it be more generic or wider in scope than celebrating mainly one specific organization.

Ms. Young, also expressed her concern about funding the request as well. Her concern, was one of mission creep. She noted that, the Outside Agencies budget has increased dramatically over the last several years, and is concerned that the Town is getting over involved in funding non-Town organizations.

There was much discussion among the members, and between Mr. Flax and Ms. Chesebrough about the particulars of the planned event, primarily about the events proposed budget and other funding sources. The members in particular asked whether the Town of Groton and the Mystic Aquarium were contributing any funding towards the event. Mr. Flax responded that the Aquarium was contributing \$10,000.00, and that Groton was contributing donated police services.

The Chairman polled the members to get a sense of the Boards support for the request, all members present, with the exception of Ms. Young were in support of funding the event in principle, but the Chairman had concerns about funding it through an additional appropriation at this time. The Chairman asked the Director of Finance of other ways to fund the request. The Director of Finance responded that if the Chamber could wait until January of 2024 for payment, then a transfer of funds could probably be found somewhere in the existing budget, or the other option would be to fund the event by discounting or writing off charges for Stonington Police attendance at the event.

Ultimately, the Chairman communicated to Mr. Flax, that the Chamber has the support of the Board to fund the event for \$2,500.00, but the details of how and when will be determine at a later date.

Line-item Transfer Requests:

The Director of Finance presented the Director of Economic Development's request to transfer funds from the professional services account in the Planning Department's regular budget, to the Mystic Boat House Park project fund, to help fund an anticipated shortfall in funding for the park project. The Chairman requested a motion to approve the request, Mr. Fauerbach motioned, and Mr. Bentz seconded it. The Chairman asked the members if they had any questions or comments. Ms. Young inquired why the planning department had \$46,574.00 left in its operating budget. The Finance Director responded that the department was without a Town Planner for much of the year, and that the Director of Economic Development was engaged with so many other projects during the year, that they were unable to move forward on other initiatives.

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

The Director of Finance presented his request to transfer \$28,760.00 from the Accrued Leave

Payout account in Administrative Services regular budget, to the Solid Waste Manager salary line-item in the solid waste department to cover the deficit to that line-item, due to the retirement of the prior Solid Waste Manager, and his payout of vacation and sick time. The Chairman requested a motion to approve the request, Ms. Young motioned, and Mr. Johnson seconded it. The Chairman asked the members if they had any questions or comments. There were no questions or comments.

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

Addition to the agenda:

At the request of the Director of Finance, the Chairman made a motion to add an additional transfer request to the agenda. Mr. Fauerbach made the motion, Ms. Young seconded the motion. The Chairman called for a vote, the motion, was unanimously approved.

The Public Works Director requested six line-item transfers totaling \$5,462.96, to cover deficits in certain line-items in the Public Works and Engineering budgets, for fiscal 22/23. The Chairman requested a motion to approve the request, Ms. Norman motioned, and Mr. Johnson seconded it. The Chairman asked the members if they had any questions or comments. The Public Works Director explained to the members the various reasons for the deficits in those particular accounts.

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

Bid Waiver Requests:

The BOE Director of Facilities requested a bid waiver to purchase a utility van from Gengras Ford, for \$50,103.10, for the newly hired HVAC technician that the district hired. The Chairman requested a motion to approve the request, Ms. Young motioned, and Mr. Bentz seconded it. The Chairman asked the members if they had any questions or comments. Mr. Fauerbach inquired whether this truck was fully funded in the CIP budget, the Director responded that it was, and that it is off the state bid list. Ms. Young noted that during the 23/24 budget presentation, a plow truck had been requested, but now that request has changed to a utility van. She asked the Director to explain the change in vehicle. The Director explained that with the hire of the new HVAC tech he needs a vehicle to house his tools as he moves around Town from location to location. He further explained that when the plow truck was requested, it was needed at that time, but through discussions with the Town's Public Works department, the DPW has agreed to take on some more plowing responsibilities for the BOE, lessening the BOE's need for the new plow truck.

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

The Public Works Director, and Deputy requested a bid waiver to purchase a mini-excavator from WI Clark, for \$115,233.00. The Chairman requested a motion to approve the request, Ms. Young motioned, and Mr. Fauerbach seconded it. The Chairman asked the members if they had any questions or comments. Ms. Young asked if it was off the state bid list. The Deputy Director responded that it's not of the state bid list, but it is off a National Bid service called

Sourcewell. Mr. Fauerbach asked if it was fully funded in the CIP budget, again the Deputy Director responded it was.

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

The Public Works Director and Deputy requested a bid waiver to purchase a Ford F550 from Gengras Ford, for \$83,654.20. The Chairman requested a motion to approve the request, Ms. Young motioned, and Mr. Bentz seconded it. The Chairman asked the members if they had any questions or comments. Ms. Young asked if the vehicle was on the state bid list, the Deputy Director responded it was. Mr. Fauerbach asked if it was fully funded in the CIP budget, again the Deputy responded that it was.

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

Correspondence:

- The Board received a thank you letter from Carole Nossek, the Chairperson of the Beautification Committee, thanking the Board for approving the funding for the Pawcatuck/Donohue Park lighting projects.
- The Board received two communications from the CT DOT regarding the Viaduct bridge replacement projects. The member discussed the funding of the Town's portion of the project, and the Chairman noted that the DOT has been very forthcoming and easy to work with, and he is confident that the Town's portion won't exceed the approximately \$1.5 million estimated by the DOT.
- A letter was received from the Director of Administrative Services, that due to performance, retention, and labor market pressures the Town is making salary adjustments to several positions for the 23/24 fiscal year. No action is being requested of the Board at this time, but come January the Board can expect some line-item transfer requests to fully fund these increases, which is anticipated will be funded from other line-item transfers, not requiring any additional appropriations.

Liaison Reports:

Tax Collector Liaison Report: Mr. Fauerbach noted that he heard from the Tax Collector that tax collections for the first month of fiscal 23/24, were excellent. Collections YTD are at 52.02%, 54.88%, and 81.45% for real estate, personal property, and motor vehicles, respectively.

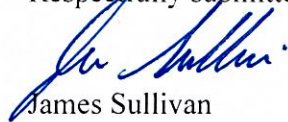
BOE Liaison Report: Ms. Young noted that she had meet with the Superintendent and the BOE Finance Director, and that the BOE budget situation isn't as dire as first thought during the 23/24 budget process. The BOE Finance Director has been reviewing every aspect of the budget in detail and looking for possible savings throughout the budget. Ms. Young also noted how diligently the BOE and staff were working at making their budget work and commended them for their efforts.

Mr. Johnson asked Mr. Fauerbach if he had been in contact with the Bike Stonington group, regarding funding of the Bike Path project discussed at the June 07th BOF meeting. He responded that he hadn't, but Ms. Young commented that the Bike Stonington group had been in contact with her regarding funding of the project and she would provide Mr. Fauerbach with the group's contact info.

Adjournment:

The Chairman called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Young motioned, and Ms. Norman seconded. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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

James Sullivan
Director of Finance