

TOWN OF STONINGTON
BOARD OF FINANCE MEETING MINUTES
Stonington Police Department Meeting Room
Wednesday, February 07, 2024
7:00 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, Deborah Norman, Chairman Tim O'Brien, Bill Sternberg, Chris Johnson and David Brown. Michael Fauerbach was absent.

Mr. O'Brien called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited

Public Comments:

The Chairman called for public comments:

Mr. Blunt White, of 77 Collins Road made a suggestion to the Board, that in the annual budget document, it add a page showing the operating surpluses/deficits of preceding years, along with a summary of what funds are available in fund balance which might be used as a funding source in the forthcoming annual budget.

Approval of Previous Minutes – The Chairman asked for a motion to approve the January 03, 2024 meeting minutes. Ms. Norman motioned and Mr. Sternberg seconded. The Chairman asked if there were any edits or corrections to the minutes. Mr. Sternberg noted that the Finance Director had switched from the third person to the first person when describing events. The Finance Director indicated he would correct the grammar. The Chairman called for a vote on the motion to approve the minutes as amended, the motion passed unanimously 6 to 0.

Bid Waiver Requests:

- Bid waiver request from Jill Senior, Solid Waste Manager, for purchase of emergency generator and installation at transfer station. The Chairman asked for a motion to approve the bid waiver request for the Solid Waste generator, Ms. Young motioned and Mr. Johnson seconded. The Chairman asked the Solid Waste Manager to explain the need for the bid waiver. Ms. Senior explained that the current one was destroyed in a fire and that time is of the essence as it is an emergency backup for the transfer station and the dog pound. The Chairman asked for discussion from the members, there was some back and forth between Ms. Senior and the members, as they gained a better understanding of the request. The Chairman called for a vote on the motion to approve the bid waiver request, the motion passed unanimously 6 to 0.
- Bid waiver request from Director of Finance for the procurement of fuel for Town and School District for fiscal 24/25. This would allow the Director of Finance to negotiate directly with fuel suppliers, and would be for the procurement of; 87 octane unleaded gasoline, diesel, and #2 heating oil. Quantities and per gallon prices to be determined. The Chairman asked for a motion to approve the bid waiver request for to procure fuel for the

2024-2025 fiscal year. Ms. Norman motioned and Ms. Young seconded. The Chairman asked the Director of Finance to explain the need for the bid waiver. The Director explained that during his tenure, as Director of Finance which has been the last eight budget cycles, only two fuel distributors had ever submitted bids for the fuel contract with the Town. Consequently, the Director is requesting permission to negotiate directly with those two vendors and perhaps a third, if one can be found, for the procurement of fuel. The Chairman asked for discussion from the members, there was some back and forth between the Director and the members, as they gained a better understanding of the request. The Chairman called for a vote on the motion to approve the bid waiver request, the motion passed unanimously 6 to 0.

Requests for Additional Appropriations: (none)

Line-item Transfer Requests:

- A request to transfer \$2,500.00, from a/c #10101-81000 "Town Wide" to a/c#10176-80651 "Mystic Chamber of Commerce" to help support the Townwide Celebration the Chamber organized in October of 2023, was forwarded to the BOF from the First Selectman.

The Chairman called for a motion to approve the request, Mr. Johnson motioned, Mr. Brown seconded. The Chairman called for discussion. Mr. Sternberg asked why there wasn't someone from the Chamber at the meeting presenting this request. Chairman O'Brien explained that Mr. Bruce Flax from the Chamber had come before the Board back in August to make the request, but the Chairman explained to Mr. Flax that the Board would be unable to designate funding for the request until January 01, 2024, because the charter precludes the Board from making line-item transfers within the first six months of a fiscal year. The Chairman further explained to Mr. Flax, at the time, that although the current Board would likely grant the request, there is a BOF election in November, and the makeup of the Board could change, so the Chairman stated that he could not guarantee that the request would be approved come January.

There was discussion among the Board and it was decided that the request would be tabled till the next meeting, when Mr. Flax would be asked to attend, to explain his request to the recently elected board members. Mr. Johnson withdrew his motion to approve the request. The Chairman asked for a motion to table the request until the next BOF meeting, Mr. Brown made the motion, Mr. Sternberg seconded. The Chairman called for a vote on the motion, motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of possible FEMA grant for the police boat: Captain Schneider addressed the Board to make it aware of an opportunity to obtain some Federal grant funding to replace the collar and engines on the police boat. The Captain explained that the total cost of the work would be between \$100K and \$120K. A provision of the grant would require a 25% match from the Town of between

\$25K - \$30,000. The Captain explained that the window for this grant is three years, so he presented options of funding the match, in the upcoming 24/25 CIP budget, or the following two year's CIP budgets. The Captain was not requesting any action at this time, but was just bringing it to the Boards attention at this time.

Discussion of fiscal 24/25 budget meeting calendar dates and times, and correspondence:

The Members discussed possible ways and means of reaching out to Stonington taxpayers to improve citizen engagement and participation in the Town's budget process. Several ideas were discussed among the Board, and it was decided that Ms. Young and Mr. Sternberg would meet to workshop some ideas and possible solutions.

It was also decided to change the March 6th date for deliberations, to March 12th, as one of the members would be unavailable on the 6th.

Correspondence:

- A letter was received from Kristin Foster, a resident of Masons Island, requesting the BOF designate funds for an engineering study for improvements to the Masons Island causeway and bridge.

The Chairman called for the Liaison reports:

CIP: No report.

WPCA: Ms. Young reported that the WPCA will be putting out an RFP for sewer pipe relining.

BOE: No report.

Mystic Boat House Park Committee: Mr. Brown informed the board that some grant requests the MBHPC was hoping to get were denied, so the park project still has a funding shortfall. The Director of Finance noted that interviews for a Construction Manager for the project are being conducted the following day.

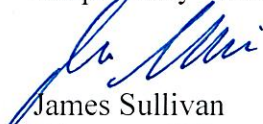
IT: Mr. Johnson informed the Board that he met with the IT Director to discuss IT issues and funding in both the CIP and operating budgets.

Gen Gov't: Mr. Sternberg noted the Town's grand list was filed on time for the first time in many years.

There were no more liaison reports.

The Chairman called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Young motioned; Mr. Brown seconded. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted,


James Sullivan
Director of Finance