

TOWN OF STONINGTON
BOARD OF FINANCE SPECIAL MEETING
District Office Meeting Room
Tuesday, February 25, 2020
7:15 PM

A meeting of the Board of Finance was held on this date at the District Office Meeting Room. Members present were Chairman Tim O'Brien, Glenn Frishman, Lynn Young, Michael Fauerbach, Deborah Norman, Bob Statchen and David Motherway Jr. Director Jim Sullivan was in attendance.

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman O'Brien noted, for members of the audience, that public comments would not be allowed during departmental budget presentations to the Board of Finance. Public comments will be allowed during the April 9th, 2020 public hearing.

First Selectman's Budget:

Presenting the budget from the Office of the Selectman, First Selectman Danielle Chesebrough stated she would highlight and speak to notable changes in her budget, other than expected cost of living increases.

Increases are noted to line items for Mosquito Abatement and the Examination of Indices. Selectman Chesebrough stated that a meeting in early March with neighboring towns on Mosquito Abatement may favorably impact the amount budgeted.

The First Selectman's budget for Programs and Agencies saw no notable changes other than expected fee increases.

The Waterfront Commission, Pawcatuck River Harbor Management and the Shellfish Commission budget had no changes from previous years.

The Economic Development Commission did request a \$2,500 increase in the consulting services line item, however, a decrease in advertising offset the increase and their budget remained flat. Board member Glenn Frishman inquired to Dave Hammond, EDC Chair, what the \$17,000 requested budget amount would provide. Mr. Hammond reported that historically the money has been used to fund drawings and studies that could lead to investment in projects in the downtown Pawcatuck area which would grow the Grand List.

First Selectman Chesebrough noted that areas of Pawcatuck in particular have remained under developed for nearly seven years with little interest from the private sector in investing in those properties. The EDC has intervened to take it to the next level, providing developers and investors with drawings of envisioned development possibilities for those properties. This assistance is specifically targeted towards problem areas or projects that are stagnant, and which would benefit from public intervention to get the private sector's attention. Redevelopment of these areas would be beneficial to the Town as added tax revenue.

A new request from the Beautification Committee in the amount of \$5,000 was heard by the Board. Julie Holland, Committee Chair and Dan Oliverio, Committee Vice-Chair were in attendance along with other members of the all-volunteer Committee. A handout was provided to the Board members listing the current projects of the Committee. Ms. Holland noted their mission is to support the ecosystem of the Town of Stonington while improving the general aesthetics of the Town. Established three years ago, the Committee is an advisory board that reports to the Board of Selectmen. Meetings are once per month and always open to the public. Ms. Holland acknowledged that the Committee collaborates with many Stonington boards and commissions, garden clubs and outside agencies. They actively fundraise, write grants, seek sponsorships and at times members of the Committee have funded projects themselves when funding was not otherwise available. Ms. Holland thanked Director of Public Works Director Barbara McKrell and Highway Supervisor Tom Curioso and all the public works department employees for their support and hard work and the Board of Selectmen for being supportive in their efforts and projects.

A new request for \$2,000 of funding for the Charter Revision Commission was briefly discussed. First Selectman Chesebrough noted the need to reconvene the Commission and has requested the funding to cover clerical and other expenses.

The Committee to Study Needs and Use of Town Buildings, along with Emergency Management saw little to no increase to their budgets from previous years.

Emergency Management:

Board member Lynn Young inquired why the line item for Generator Maintenance showed only \$1. Finance Director Sullivan noted the Police operational budget allows for generator maintenance and this line item is kept open in case of an emergency requiring additional funding.

Town Clerk:

Moving on to the department budget of the Town Clerk, First Selectman Chesebrough noted an increase in the clerical salaries in addition to the cost of living increase. This is due to a union negotiation to create a new deputy position within the department, which was recommended by the Town Consultant report.

Payments to Other Civil Divisions:

The budget for payments to the Borough of Stonington saw an increase of \$60,943. Finance Director Sullivan informed the Board that this credit back to the Borough is calculated through a set formula based on the Highway Department's operating and CIP budget expenditures. It reflects taxes that the Borough has been assessed for highway maintenance costs which they do not receive the benefit of as they have their own highway department. The amount of the increase is directly related to the level of expenditure within the Highway Department's operating and CIP budgets. When overall expenditures go up, the credit to the Borough goes up. Should Highway expenditures decrease, then the credit to the Borough would decrease.

Administrative Services:

The Department of Administrative Services budget had cost of living increases to salary requirements and an increase in longevity payments.

Information Systems (IT):

IT Director Roger Kizer spoke to the Board on the increases requested in his department budget. The 2.63% increase in equipment and licensing is for anticipated increases for the upcoming year. Director Kizer is requesting a \$2,000 increase in technical assistance to assist him with the support of the new technology procured for the Police Department and Town Hall.

Human Resources:

Labor negotiations shows a decrease of \$49,529, as last year the Town was in labor negotiations so prior year funding was unusually high. FY20/21 budget figure reflects funding for ordinary labor matters.

Accrued Leave Pay-out shows a substantial increase of \$125,000. Finance Director Jim Sullivan anticipates four Town employees retiring this year and this line will fund vacation and sick time that retirees are entitled to.

Assessment:

First Selectman Chesebrough spoke on the behalf of Director of Assessment, Marsha Standish on that department's budget. Noting mostly cost of living increases, Selectman Chesebrough did bring attention to the Board that she was requesting a merit pay increase in the salary of the Director of Assessment as a way of recognizing the hard work and service of Director Standish who will be retiring in October.

Finance Department:

Finance Director Jim Sullivan addressed the Board regarding the Finance Department budget. Noting that there were only slight increases anticipated in payroll services and software support the expenses portion of the budget remained mostly flat.

Director Sullivan explained his request for a new position within the department, Deputy Director of Finance. Providing a copy of the Operational Audit Report completed by the Town Consultant, Director Sullivan pointed out that the position was highly recommended. With enhanced budget procedures and the expansion of duties between the Director and the Senior Accountant, the Senior Accountant role has grown significantly over the past several years. The new position would involve the Senior Accountant assuming the executive Deputy position. A new hire would undertake the lower level duties of the current Senior Accountant responsibilities.

Emphasizing how the roles within the department have evolved, Director Sullivan noted that previously the Finance Director position did not handle RFP's or contracts with vendors and each department handled their own. Per the charter, Director Sullivan has developed a standard contract for consistency and is very involved in acquisitions. The Finance Department has changed over the years and Director Sullivan would like to see the department move forward and develop with the changing times.

Board of Finance:

A brief discussion on the Board of Finance budget decreases in the Teacher's Retirement Contribution and the Contingency for Education Minimum Budget Requirement posed the question of whether those accounts should have a reserve available for FY20/21.

Risk Management:

Risk Management budget saw an increase to property and liability insurance consistent with a raise in rates.

Tax Collector:

First Selectman Chesebrough spoke to the Board on behalf of the Tax Collector, Linda Camelio. Currently the Tax Department is showing a 98.75% collection rate with four months to go. The Tax Collector's budget remains mostly flat, with the exception of an increase in clerical salaries, which reflects a reclassification of a clerical assistant to Deputy Tax Collector. This is due to a union negotiation to create a new deputy position within the department, which was recommended by the Town Consultant.

Department of Planning:

Interim Planning Director Keith Brynes presented the Planning Office and Boards and Commissions budget, noting no remarkable changes from the previous years.

Debt Service:

Finance Director Jim Sullivan presented the Debt Service budget to the Board. As a courtesy to the newer members, Director Sullivan provided a summary of the Town's current obligations. In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, the Town will have paid down General Obligation Bond long term debt principal and interest of \$5,545,000 and \$2,632,582 respectively.

Building Official:

First Selectman Chesebrough spoke to the Board on behalf of the Building Official, Mr. Larry Stannard. The Building Department budget shows little to no increase from prior year with the exception of the Equipment & Software Support line item request for \$30,000. The \$30,000 increase is for licensing and maintenance fees for the new permit tracking program requested in CIP.

FY 20/21 Capital Improvement Requests

General Operations: Director of IT - Roger Kizer

- Town Wide Computer Upgrades \$65,000
A yearly allocation, the funds are used to upgrade and/or replace computer systems within the Town
- Orthophotography/Planimetric Updates \$15,000
The GIS (Geographical Information System) is designed to capture, store, and present geographic data.

The application is used by many departments within the Town, including the Assessor's office and Planning & Zoning. The funding allows the updating of information.

- Video Safety System \$97,600
Funding will provide replacement of older security cameras and the addition of new cameras in and around the Town Hall.
- Large Format Copier/Scanner/Printer \$25,500
Funds will be used to replace a 10-year-old piece of equipment that is no longer serviceable. Director Kizer noted the diligence of Finance Director Jim Sullivan to work with the vendor to procure the equipment at a very competitive cost and strongly suggests taking advantage of the offer.

Police Services: Chief of Police - Darren Stewart

- Fleet Upgrade \$180,000
A request of (4) cars per year adequately supports the Police Dept in day to day operations. Currently, vehicles log 40,000 miles per year. Oldest vehicles would be traded in for newer models and lighting packages would be reused when possible.
- Technology Upgrade \$20,000
- Surveillance Camera Program \$60,000
Funds would be used to continue the camera technology being used by the department.
- License Plate Reader \$15,000
- Animal Control Vehicle \$50,000
The current animal control vehicle is over 10 years old and has 120,000 miles. A newer vehicle would provide air conditioning and easy to clean stainless steel in the rear to facilitate animal transportation. An offset may be available by utilizing funds in the Dog Licensing Fund.

Department of Assessment:

- Town Revaluation \$70,000
The Town Revaluation is a state mandated program and the cost is historically what has been expended over the past several years.

Public Works: Highway Director - Barbara McKrell
Highway Supervisor - Tom Curioso

- Drainage Town Wide \$1.00

Pending on the request for additional laborers, who could perform the work currently outsourced, this line item was reduced to a dollar.

- Highway Equipment - Purchase \$357,000
A priority listing of DPW equipment requiring replacement was distributed to the Board members. As noted on the listing, the department may be able to use a projected surplus of funds in the Snow Removal Operations account, thus reducing the ask to \$329,000.
- ADA Public Works Transition Program \$75,000
A continuation of prior ADA compliant sidewalk and curb projects, the funds would also be used to acquire the services of a consultant to identify the accessibility concerns in Town buildings. The Board of Finance would like to see a further definition of the cost of the consultant and monies that would be used for actual curb enhancements.
- Road Pavement - Major Maintenance \$95,000
Due to underlying circumstances, last year's paving budget of \$337,000 still has much of the funding available, therefore less funds would be required for this year.
- Road Pavement - Capital \$200,000
The same circumstances applying to the maintenance paving apply to the capital paving. There is money in the budget available from last year's allocation. The Board did have questions on the fluctuating figures going forward and Director McKrell will further define those figures during her budget presentation.
- Radio Replacement \$85,000
The funds would be used to upgrade the current radio system to digital and provide portable units. The system would also be compatible and tie in with the Police Dept radios, enabling immediate response to downed trees or flooding.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

Stonington Ambulance Corp: Nishant Sahoo

- PowerLoad & Stretcher Replacement \$35,589
Current stretchers have reached the end of their useful life and the manufacturer has recommended replacement. The PowerLoad is a device that alleviates the manual lifting of a patient into the ambulance and is quickly becoming the industry standard. This method of patient loading is safer

for the patient and reduces the risk of back injuries for the EMS technician.

- 1st Floor Remodel \$15,000
A continuation of the refurbishment of the headquarters, the area is in desperate need of new sheetrock that has cracked due to shifting once the building was stabilized. New lighting will be energy efficient and the wooden floor sanded and sealed reducing the chance of embedded germs.

Ocean Community YMCA:

- Renovation and Expansion Project \$20,000
A continuation of the FY17/18 CIP Request, the funds will be used to help offset the \$500,000 of site work which included repaving to double the number of parking spots, enhanced storm drainage, additional handicap parking and landscaping.

Pawcatuck Neighborhood Ctr: Susan Sedensky - Executive Director

- New Flooring in Pantry and Pantry Foyer \$23,002
The current floor is the original flooring, which has become a safety hazard due to cracking and curling. Over 2,000 people entered the PNC last year, the majority are seniors or disabled persons who use canes, walkers, wheelchairs or just have difficulty walking. The PNC's goal is to distribute food from the pantry area and they are seeking new flooring for safety and aesthetic reasons.

Stonington Historical Society: Amy Newell - Executive Director
Michael Schefers - President

- Lighthouse Museum Campaign \$100,000 over 2 years
The funding will be used to support the cost of the addition of a fully accessible welcome center to the Lighthouse, including an accessible restroom, in addition to proper walkways, gentler grading and accessibility at the lighthouse.

Public Works: Engineering

- A brief discussion took place between First Selectman Chesebrough and the Board of Finance regarding the North Stonington Road bridge replacement project that was taken out of the budget FY20/21. The First Selectman pointed out there were a number of residents who have voiced their objection to the closing of the bridge and looks forward to more discussion on the issue during the April 9th budget hearing. Currently, \$15,000 is budgeted to close the bridge. Chairman O'Brien noted that for many previous years Stonington had budgeted for the replacement project but the cost sharing town, Groton, did not approve funding during their budget deliberations.
- Pawcatuck Pumphouse Roof Replacement & Masonry Repairs
\$25,000
The pumphouse is part of the Pawcatuck Hurricane Protection System built in 1962, which is showing significant deterioration. This money will be used for priority replacement/repair items to be in compliance with the Army Corp of Engineers.
- South Anguilla Road Bridge \$50,000
The bridge continues to be rated in Fair condition by CTDOT. The bridge concrete rail base, concrete curbing and rail system are severely deteriorated. The funds will be used to hire a consulting firm specializing in bridge design to outline repair/replacement options as well as available funding opportunities.
- Stillman Avenue Bridge \$1.00
This project requires further discussion
- Washington Street Drainage \$50,000
This project scope of work takes place over multiple years and is moving forward.
- Town Hall Parking Lot Improvement \$1.00
This project can be delayed for one year.
- Town Hall HVAC Improvements \$10,650
The system is in need of a comprehensive assessment in an effort to improve conditions.
- Human Services HVAC Improvements \$181,000
Director of Human Services Leanne Theodore reports there is heat in the building with the addition of the new boilers but the building still experiences extreme temperature fluctuations from room to room. The remaining funds will be

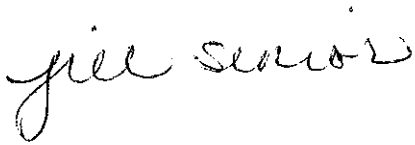
used for control panel, cooling system components and other related upgrades to have a fully functioning system.

- Pawcatuck Pumphouse Fire Suppression Line Abandonment
\$50,000
The Pawcatuck Hurricane Protection System contains 2 separate fire suppression systems that served the needs to two mill properties prior to the installation of the municipal water system. The Army Corp of Engineers indicated that any penetration thru the system are considered a threat to the overall integrity and must be continually inspected or properly abandoned. These funds will begin the abandonment process.
- Coogan Boulevard - Culvert Rehabilitation \$50,000
CTDOT inspection has rated the culverts in Fair or Worse condition as a result of perforations forming along the entire waterline of both culverts. Funds are allocated for multiple years to allow construction in upcoming years.
- Lantern Hill Bridge \$377,500
The CTDOT rates the bridge in Fair to Worse condition. Design and permitting is approximately 90% complete. Reimbursement from the CTDOT Local Bridge Program is anticipated. This project has a 50/50 cost share with Ledyard.
- West Broad Street School Repairs \$200,000
Work is required on the school for roof and masonry repairs to protect the building structure and integrity.
- Engineering and Construction of New Sidewalks \$1,500,000
A new line item, compiling all previous individual sidewalk requests. Initial funding would allow an engineering firm to determine telephone pole relocation options, required easements, retaining walls, and rights of way on South Broad Street.
- Human Services Tennis Court Repairs \$ 25,000
Tennis Court Rebuild \$150,000
To increase safety measures within the park and provide substantial cost savings to the Town going forward, the proposal of the tennis court rebuild provides the installation of a post tensioned concrete court with a 20-year crack free guarantee. The cost of the new court would be shared with the Board of Education. (Town's share/ \$300,000) The \$25,000 ask has been included to complete necessary projects to ensure participant safety in the interim.

Due to time constraints and the availability of the room, the meeting had to be called and the scheduled meeting for Thursday, Feb 27th will be revised to continue the conversation.

Mr. Glenn Frishman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:15 p.m., Lynn Young seconded. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jill A Senior". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Jill A Senior
Recording Secretary