

TOWN OF STONINGTON
BOARD OF FINANCE SPECIAL MEETING
VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING
Virtual Meeting/Stonington Police Dept Meeting Room
Wednesday, April 1, 2021
5:30 PM

The Stonington Board of Finance held a virtual/hybrid meeting on this date at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held to present the itemized estimates of expenditures of the Town for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 as recommended by the Board of Finance and to hear the citizens of the Town in regard to any appropriation which they are desirous that the Board recommend or reject. A copy of the budget was available for review in the office of the Town Clerk and online at www.stonington-ct.gov.

Through public notice, residents were provided instructions on how to participate virtually through the WebEx platform, or provide written testimony of no more than 300 words to the Town of Stonington, Office of the First Selectman. The meeting was also streamed on Facebook live for those not wishing to comment.

Chairman Tim O'Brien, Mr. Glen Frishman and Mr. David Motherway were present at the Police Department Meeting Room, Mr. Michael Fauerbach, Ms. Lynn Young, Mr. Bob Statchen and Ms. Deb Norman were remotely present.

Finance Director Jim Sullivan was present remotely. Chairman O'Brien called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

Chairman O'Brien started the meeting thanking everyone involved for their hard work and efforts compiling presentations in the most transparent and public way possible. In lieu of COVID restrictions in place, Chairman O'Brien acknowledged the exemplary communications from Department Heads, allowing the Board to help them understand, without seeing them in person, the needs and issues they were presenting.

The Chairman noted that tax collection rates remain high and when the Board of Finance issued the 1.5% guidance for departments, it was based on the knowledge the Board had at the time, knowing it was going to change. Chairman O'Brien stated the Board has worked through the deliberation process with each department to minimize the impact to the services provided. The Board of Finance continues to look for clarity on the American Rescue Plan funds and Chairman O'Brien notes this budget was made outside any influence from those anticipated funds.

First Selectman Danielle Chesebrough expressed a very sincere thank you to each member of the Board of Finance, the Board of Education, and all Boards, Commissions and Non-Profits who contributed to the budget process. First Selectman Chesebrough stated the work provided by over 40 local Non-Profits in addition to the 30+ Boards and Commissions of the Town are relied on heavily to provide the community with a diverse range of skills and perspectives. The Selectman stated the Board had a difficult task this year with many challenges, but considered the budget proposed to be balanced in both immediate and longer term needs.

Chairman O'Brien started the public comment of budget discussion, requesting those with comments listening to press *3 to raise their hand then *6 to be heard. Chairman O'Brien stated he will also note any letters submitted by the public.

Office of the Selectman \$1,051,514

No correspondence. No online comments.

Department of Administrative Services \$4,617,710

No correspondence. No online comments

Department of Assessment \$362,354

No correspondence. No online comments

Department of Finance \$1,711,473

No correspondence. No online comments

Debt Service \$8,134,208

No correspondence. No online comments

Department of Planning & Land Use \$529,780

Chairman O'Brien presented a letter written by Mr. Rick Newton, 32 Meadowbrook Lane, Mystic. Chairman O'Brien read portions of the letter where Mr. Newton, thanking the Board for their service and stating he is supportive of taxpayer dollars used on education, stated it was his opinion that his interests, protecting the environment, conservation and addressing the climate crisis rarely receives funding. Mr. Newton suggests funding a climate resiliency fund and the addition of a full-time Climate Environment Floodplain Manager. Mr. Newton's full letter can be read as an attachment to the minutes.

No online comments

Department of Public Works \$7,377,486

No correspondence. No online comments

Department of Police Services \$6,541,266

No correspondence. No online comments

Department of Human Services

\$1,701,865

Chairman O'Brien noted (25) total letters were received, all in support of the Mystic-Noank Library for their funding and each were forwarded to every member on the Board of Finance. Chairman O'Brien noted that the funding was not changed from what the department requested. The Chairman summarized that everyone who wrote the letters and emails all stated the great job that the Library does and they would all like to see the funding continued. Chairman O'Brien read the names and addresses of the (25) contributors and those letters can be read as an attachment to the minutes.

Chairman O'Brien noted a letter received from Rob Simmons, Stonington, where Mr. Simmons notes an editorial in The Day on March 18th titled "Trading Salaries to Gain Position a Bad Precedent" is accurate in their analysis. Mr. Simmons points out a zero growth policy for new job positions during his time as First Selectman but feels the pandemic has created a situation where a new position in the Department of Human Services is justified and necessary. Mr. Simmons' letter will be attached to the minutes.

No online comments

Board of Education

\$38,335,596

No correspondence. No online comments

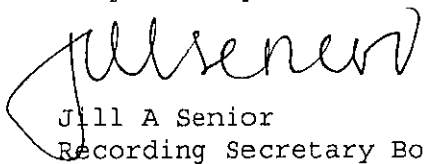
Schedule C: Land, Bldg., Improvements & Equipment \$2,773,319

No correspondence. No online comments

TOTAL RECOMMENDATION \$ 73,136,531

Having no other public comments, Mr. Frishman motioned to adjourn the Public Hearing, Mr. Motherway seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Jill A Senior
Recording Secretary Board of Finance