

# TOWN OF STONINGTON

## BOARD OF FINANCE MEETING

Hybrid Meeting with Remote Attendance/In Person for Board Members Only

Wednesday, December 2, 2020

7:15 PM

The Stonington Board of Finance held a virtual/in person meeting on this date at 7:15 p.m. The in person meeting accommodated board members only and those members not wishing to attend in person had the opportunity to connect remotely. The meeting was also streamed on Facebook live and was available via audio on a conference line.

Chairman Tim O'Brien, Mr. Glen Frishman, and Mr. David Motherway attended in person adhering to all social distancing rules including mask wearing. Ms. Lynn Young, Ms. Deb Norman, Mr. Bob Statchen, and Mr. Michael Fauerbach attended remotely. Finance Director Jim Sullivan was present remotely. Chairman O'Brien called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

Comments from the Public: Chairman O'Brien instructed any public viewing the meeting via WebEx how to be noticed they wish to comment. Those listening by phone were instructed to press star three. No comments from the public were heard.

Mr. Greg Howard, the newly elected State Representative called in to introduce himself to some of the board members he had not yet met and to say that he will try to attend as many of the Board of Finance meetings that he is able. Mr. Howard thanked the board members for their service and relayed that Chairman O'Brien has his contact information and that his goal is to be 100% available to all members at all times.

### Previous Minutes:

A motion was made by Mr. Frishman and seconded by Ms. Young to approve the minutes dated October 7th. All were in favor, motion carried.

A motion was made by Ms. Young and seconded by Mr. Motherway to approve the minutes dated November 4th. All were in favor, motion carried.

### New Business:

Being that it is a regular meeting, Chairman O'Brien asked for a motion to add additional items to the agenda. Chairman O'Brien requested that after the Campbell Grain Mill Update the following items be added:

Update on Old Mystic Bridge  
Update on Lantern Hill Bridge

A bid waiver request from the Board of Ed be added for Avaya Cloud Office District Wide

After discussion of the Stonington Police Department development of funding for the Police Dept policy manual, an update on body cameras be added.

Ms. Young motioned to approve the additional agenda items. Mr. Frishman seconded. All members were in favor. Motion carried.

Additional appropriations:

Finance Director Jim Sullivan informed board members that a review of year-to-date additional appropriations from fund balance for fiscal 20/21 shows no changes from last meeting.

Bid Waiver Requests:

Stonington Police Department requests a bid waiver for the purchase of new Animal Control Vehicle from MHQ for \$28,341.90 and the associated vehicle upfit from Swab Wagon Company for \$18,930. Mr. Frishman motions to approve the request, Mr. Motherway seconded.

Lieutenant Bryan Schneider informed the Board that the 2020 Ford F-250 is a 4WD Regular Cab chassis that will be shipped by Ford to the Swab Wagon Company in Elizabeth, PA where it will be outfitted with an animal transport body complete with lighting and temperature control. Lt. Schneider stated that MHQ provides many of the contract priced vehicles for the department. The decision to use the Swab Wagon Company was based on availability of the animal transport body the department required and the shipping logistics that were offered. All members were in favor of the bid waiver. Motion carried.

Finance Director Jim Sullivan, representing several departments, requested a bid waiver for the purchase of a large format printer from Connecticut Business Systems for \$25,500. Ms. Deb Norman motioned to approve the request, Mr. Mike Fauerbach seconded.

Director Sullivan stated that the funding request was in last years CIP budget and previously approved. The printer will be utilized by the Planning Dept., Engineering, Public Works and Town Assessor departments. Representatives from each department were provided the opportunity to see the machine in operation and make sure it met all the user's needs. Director Sullivan noted that there were not many vendors in the state that were able to provide the equipment and a maintenance contract and extensive research had been done to secure the best pricing and service available. All members were in favor of the bid waiver. Motion carried.

The Stonington Board of Education Department of Technology requested a bid waiver for the purchase of Avaya Cloud Office district wide. Ms. Lynn Young motioned to approve the request, Mr. Bob Statchen seconded.

The schools are currently using the Avaya server system. This purchase will be upgrading the two schools and the entire system to a cloud base and realizing a cost savings from that.

The funds for this project will be drawn from existing previous years Phone System CIP account balances, totaling \$58,294.85. Including the 5 months of free service credit, the total is \$45,906.95. The remaining balance of \$12,387.90 will be applied towards the cost of recabbling the Middle School phones, as the existing infrastructure is CAT3 and CAT6 or a higher rated cable will be required for the new IP phones.

Existing BOE operating funds will be used to cover the remainder of the cabling project, estimated to be approximately \$15,000.

This will reduce the anticipated CIP request for the Phone System from \$100,000 to \$1 for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Due to aggressive promotions being offered by Avaya and Ring Central, the price of this service has been reduced by \$31,059.65 and includes an estimated \$74,048.00 savings on upgraded hardware as the phones are included. These promotions are only valid thru 12/31/20.

All members were in favor of the bid waiver request. Motion carried.

Discussion of federal grants available for replacement of electronics on the Stonington Police Department patrol boat

Lieutenant Bryan Schneider brought the board members up to date with the concerns of the patrol boat as of late. The boat is over 17 years old and besides issues with the infrared camera which has been troublesome, the identification system that interfaces with the Coast Guard which is encrypted software is becoming obsolete. The Coast Guard is also transitioning to a new software which will be required in the immediate future. These issues coupled with the general repairs and maintenance of the boat puts the expense over \$25,000. Lt. Schneider states that the Department applied and received the federal grant which is part of a 3-year grant cycle. The department will be able to purchase \$50,000 worth of electronics and equipment for approximately \$12,500 which they hope to offset with the sale of some of the older equipment. Any funds needed may be able to be taken out of the Police Department budget thru a line-item transfer and not require an additional appropriation.

Discussion of development and funding of new Police Department policy manual to adhere to the new Police Accountability pronouncements.

Chief Darren Stewart addressed the Board regarding the development and funding of a new police department manual.

Chief Stewart stated that at the last Police Commission meeting, the commission had approved the law group Daigle Law Group LLC to development a new policy manual to adhere to the new police accountability and members should have in their packets information from Mr. Eric Daigle, Esq.

Chief Stewart explained that Atty Daigle is well know throughout Connecticut and the country as being one of the leading experts in policy development, especially when it comes to the use of force. Part of the new law that came out recently was that each Police Department in the State of CT must be CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies) certified which can take a couple years to complete, as it has to do with redoing all the department's policies.

Chief Stewart stated he was pleased to have an attorney that has been vetted and nationally know to assist them with such a large undertaking. Chief Stewart also believes that there will be many departments lining up for Atty Daigle's services and the Chief would like to secure his services sooner than later.

The Chief asked the Board for the ability to move some of the department's money that is in their school safety and reserve officer account to hire Atty Daigle to start the process. Due to COVID, the expenses of school safety and a reserve officer at the school is at a minimum, and funds are available. Chief Stewart anticipates the cost of the new policy manual to be approximately \$50,000.

After discussion, Chairman O'Brien, hearing a sense of the board that they were in support of the Chief engaging with Atty Daigle to move forward on developing a new policy manual, informed the Chief that he could feel confident in starting the process. All Board members were in agreement.

#### Update on Body Cameras for the Police Department

Chief Stewart acknowledged Lieutenant Schneider and IT Director Roger Kizer's commitment to their research to secure body cameras for the department. The Chief stated that there are really only one or two vendors, WatchGuard and Axon that provide the support and technology allowing you to interface with other departments, the court system etc.

There are technology, storage and distribution concerns, and an abundant of information to process. The Chief recognized that this will be a costly undertaking. Cameras will be mandated by law, and the ability to negotiate better pricing is not available. The department is looking at having to obtain in-car video systems for approximately \$170,000 and the body camera system to cost about \$440,000. It is anticipated that the State will provide 30% reimbursement. An annual service agreement is expected to cost \$48,000 annually.

Lieutenant Schneider has put together a group of officers from inside the PD, as well as IT Director Kizer and a member from the Board of Police Commissioners to go over the different products, meet with vendors and discuss pricing.

Chief Stewart made the recommendation to Chairman O'Brien that one member from the Board of Finance sit in on the group to also take a look at the breakdown of the expense. Discussing what would be the best formula for the funding and purchase and under what timetable the funds would be available, which will provide an idea how to move forward.

Chairman O'Brien committed to having a Board of Finance member at the meetings and will poll the members for a participant.

### Campbell Grain Building Update

Chairman O'Brien informed the Board that the Selectmen were leaning towards putting out the tax abatement proposal in early January. This was approved by legislate that they are able to do a Town meeting. A final draft of the proposal abatement should be out early next week which Chairman O'Brien will circulate to the board members. The Chairman reminded the members that the Board of Finance does not have to be part of the discussion, but the Selectmen are engaging the Board. The Chairman wished to note his very high regard for the new Assessor and her input to the process.

Selectman Chesebrough clarified that it will be a virtual town meeting then referendum. Residents will be able to vote via absentee ballot and the Selectmen are meeting with the registrars to work out the logistics.

### Old Mystic Bridge Update

First Selectman Danielle Chesebrough and Chairman O'Brien met with Old Mystic Fire Chief Ken Richards to survey and discuss the bridge. Foremost were the safety concerns where the bridge closure delays the fire department's response to calls and greatly increases the distance to a fire hydrant in the area. Discussion of a dry hydrant which they would be able to tap live from a connecting hose and hydrant from in front of the fire department was a viable solution. A verbal commitment of \$10,000 was offered but the CIP line item for bridge repair/replacement remains at \$1.00

### Lantern Hill Bride Update

Chairman O'Brien stated that the First Selectman has reached out to Fire Chief Richards and to Ledyard to have a discussion on the bridge. New facts on the structure indicate that the repair is a much higher dollar value proposition than any anticipated. New ideas to come up with a solution to alleviate public safety concerns while understanding the budget doesn't support a \$5-8 million dollar bridge refurbishment are being brought to the table and discussions are continuing.

### Review of Board of Education Monthly Line Item Transfers:

A brief discussion of the global report and a note of no line item transfers took place. Chairman O'Brien stated he had a conversation with the Board of Ed Chair, and both agree the fluid situation of COVID expenses are difficult to confirm at this time.

Correspondence: None

Liaison Reports:

WPCA - Ms. Young reports that repairs are being made as they are needed and in the not to distant future, discussion regarding a facilities plan will need to take place.

BOE - Mr. Frishman reports that he has met with BOE Chairman Todisco on a number of serious issues and he is awaiting further communication from the Chairman.

Retirement Board - Chairman O'Brien stated that while they didn't hit the numbers they had made as assumptions; the numbers weren't nearly as bad as expected. Changes were made to the mortality tables, the assumed rate of return was dropped an 1/8 of a point, and the inflation rate was changed to match that of social security. This decrease in the inflationary rate had a cost savings to the overall funding. As a net result to the changes, a savings of \$25,000 could be realized.

General Gov't - Mr. Fauerbach stated that Linda Camelio, Tax Collector has informed him that as of November 30<sup>th</sup>, collections were up \$963,000 from this period last year. Ms. Camelio did mention that the Governor may announce another tax deferral and if that comes to be the case, the Town will review deferral requests on an application basis.

With no further business, Mr. Frishman motioned to adjourn, Ms. Norman seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jill A Senior  
Recording Secretary Board of Finance