

February 14, 2018

A Special Meeting of the Board of Finance was held on this date in the cafeteria of Mystic Middle School. Members present were Chairwoman June D. Strunk, Secretary Glenn Frishman, Blunt White, Danielle Chesebrough and Lynn Young. Members not present were Tim O'Brien and Mike Fauerbach. Also in attendance were Director of Finance Jim Sullivan, Human Services Director Leann Theodore, Director of Assessment Marsha Standish, members of the press and representatives of various outside agencies.

Chairwoman Strunk called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm.

Human Services-Director Theodore thanked the Board for their support in the restructuring of her department last year. She noted that because of this she is fully staffed for the first time in 6 years. She stated that she is looking for a small increase to their general assistance budget for social services while noting that the line item hasn't increased in a decade, yet living expenses have. This funding helps with rent and fuel assistance, among other things. Her department continues to work with their non-profit partners in assisting clients, which are mainly the seniors and disabled in town. In addition, she is requesting an increase in the postage line, as well as the recreation program supplies line.

Westerly Public Library-Bridgette Hopkins, along with President of Board of Trustees Robert Holland, noted that 20% of Stonington residents are Westerly Library cardholders. She mentioned that the library hosted 796 free programs to the public last year. Mr. Holland noted that theirs is a private association library. They fund-raise and receive grant aid from the State of RI. Ms Hopkins thanked the Board for their continued support, and said that the library just celebrated their 125th anniversary.

Stonington Free Library-Nick Kepple, President of the Board of the library thanked the Board for their past support. He said that through reaching out to constituents, they learned that residents want more services than what the library can currently provide, such as longer hours and increased technological infrastructure. He said that without the requested fund increase, the library cannot even continue to maintain the current level of service. He noted that the Town of Stonington spends about 1/3 of what comparable towns spend on libraries, therefore, he is requesting an annual increase in funding of \$110,000 per year for 3 years. He asked that the Board help in achieving their goals by approving the funding request of \$257,402 for FY18-19. He stated their funding comes from their annual appeal, their endowment, and the rest is from the town. He noted that they had drawn from their endowment for the past 2 years out of necessity but they cannot continue to do that.

Mystic and Noank Library-Director Chris Johnson noted her library has circulation through all of Mystic and up to Masons Island for materials, however, residents from all of Stonington participate in their programs. She mentioned that a third of their money comes from their annual fund and donations, a third from investments, and the remainder is what they receive from the two towns. In recent years, the Town of Groton had provided them approximately \$186,000 but last year that had been cut to \$122,000. She is actively persuing the town to restore funding to the previous levels.

Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center-Susan Sedensky, Executive Director, thanked the Board for continued support and for welcoming her. She requested an increase for human services basic needs, and noted that when she started, clients could come to the food pantry once a month, but has since increased it to twice monthly, with an average of 242 residents using the pantry each month. She would like an increase of funds to market the Weekend Backpack Program. This program provides food to children (who have free and reduced school lunches) on the weekend. In addition, the food van, as well as the two passenger vans, have many miles on them and need to be maintained. She said that she would like to increase senior activities and classes, and to restore the foot clinic nurse that came into the PNC.

Stonington Community Center -Director Beth Stewart thanked the board for their partnership over the years. She mentioned that for every dollar the town gives the center, the Como raises \$20. She said that 45% of their income is through fundraising and the other 55% is from program fees. She noted the ongoing facility improvements. Their big project currently is a main building renovation to address ADA requirements and security, which they acquired a low interest loan for. She stated that they are requesting an additional \$10,000 in funding for FY18-19.

Westerly Area Rest Meals-Russ Partridge, Executive Director of WARM, thanked the Board for their ongoing support. He noted that their request of \$6,000 will go towards support services they provide as well as salaries.

Adult Day Center of Westerly- Director Ryan Girard thanked the Board for supporting the center, noting that 1/3 of their patrons are Stonington residents, and that their average length of stay is 3 years. He mentioned that nearly half of their clients are Alzheimer's patients, and said that they see 25-30 people a day.

Stonington Prevention Council-Chairwoman Kristen King said that the council was formed to change community attitude, laws and policies to stop substance abuse and establish a safe community. She noted that the Council installed a prescription drop box in the SPD for citizens to drop off unwanted prescriptions. She is requesting an additional \$500, to fund both an online TIPS training course for bartenders and servers, as well as to erect a billboard encouraging patients to advocate for themselves and ask their doctor for non-opioid pain management.

NL Homeless Hospitality Center-Barbara Nagy, Development Manager for the Center, thanked the Board for their support. She said that the clients she sees at the center suffer from active addictions, as well as mental health issues and chronic health conditions. She noted that their goal is to provide them short term emergency shelter until they get back into housing. This allows them to get the help that they need to resolve these problems. She mentioned that she knows government funding is tight and they are taking their obligation to look elsewhere for funding very seriously.

Safe Futures -Margaret Soussloff, a Director at Safe Futures, thanked the Board for their past support. She said that Safe Futures operates 3 - 24 hour hot lines, one for domestic violence, one for sexual assault, and one for law enforcement. She noted that the Town of Stonington had placed 19 calls last year, of which 18 received services. In total, 145 Stonington residents received services last year.

Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center-Davnet Schaeffer, Associate Director of the Center, thanked the Board. She noted that the Center is looking for funds to help their Wildlife Rescue and Rehab Program, as it is a large part of their budget that does not have a direct revenue stream to support it. She mentioned the many services that the Center provides for the town, and hopes the Board can continue

to support the Center.

Ocean Community Chamber-Lisa Konicki, President of both the Ocean Community Foundation and the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce, clarified that her request is for the Chamber of Commerce side. She said that she is looking for funding to support community events that are enjoyed by residents on both sides of the river. The events are the Riverglow, Santa's Visit, Virtu Art Festival and the Easter Egg Hunt.

Stonington Arms-Cindy Morrone, Social Services Coordinator, spoke regarding Stonington Arms. She noted that she has started a food pantry on the complex. She is requesting funding for the pantry upgrades, as well as for outdoor furniture and to increase resident activities.

Stonington Ambulance-Nishant Sahoo, VP of Stonington Ambulance, thanked the Board with their help in funding their recent capital improvements. He stated that the Corps made 545 calls last year. He noted that in January alone, they took in only 40% of what is billed, partly due to changes in Medicaid and Medicare and that the costs that go unpaid are typically written off. He stated that they are in need of a new ambulance, as well as a first responder vehicle.

Mystic River Ambulance- Ray Munn, Vice President of the Corps, thanked the Board for their support. He stated that 43% of Mystic's calls come from Stonington residents, and predict the number to rise due to the new Masonicare facility. He stated that they have the same experience as Stonington Ambulance regarding collections write offs.

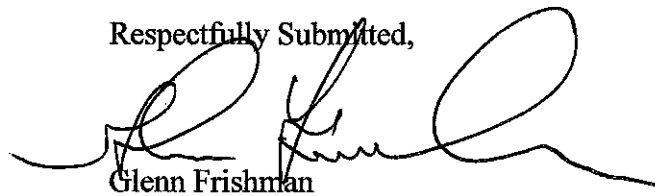
Westerly Ambulance Corps- President Ron MacDonald and EMS Administrator Ken Richards spoke regarding the Corps. He said that 938 of their calls were in Pawcatuck last year, 212 more than the prior year. Similar to the other ambulance corps, they have approximately \$36,000 a month in write offs. He mentioned that they increased their request from Westerly as well as Stonington this year.

The Board elected to table the last two agenda items:

- Budget Calendar
- Line Item Transfer-Request from First Selectman to transfer \$4,562 from Highway Department line item #10151-80230 "material disposal" to line item #10151-80055 for merit pay increase for Highway Supervisor.

With no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Frishman made a motion to adjourn, Ms. Young seconded, and voting was unanimous. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Glenn Frishman
Secretary