

**TOWN OF STONINGTON**  
**BOARD OF FINANCE MEETING**  
**BUDGET HEARING SCHEDULE**  
**Stonington Police Dept Meeting Room**  
**Wednesday, March 6, 2019**

A meeting of the Board of Finance was held on this date at the Stonington Police Department. Members present were Chairwoman June D. Strunk, Secretary Glenn Frishman, Mike Fauerbach, Tim O'Brien, Blunt White, and Danielle Chesebrough. Also present were the Director of Finance, James Sullivan and First Selectman Rob Simmons.

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Comments from the Public – None

Previous Minutes - Mr. Frishman motioned to approve the minutes from February 6<sup>th</sup>, Mr. O'Brien seconded. The minutes were reviewed and approved with minor corrections. Motion carried with Mr. Fauerbach abstaining.

Mr. White motioned to approve the minutes from the Budget Book Sub Committee meeting of October 16, 2018. Ms. Chesebrough seconded. Motion carried.

**Budget Presentations:**

First Selectman Rob Simmons addressed the Board with his budget message to set the stage of the process, he thanked the Board for their time and service and noted the longevity of service from some of the members. Mr. Simmons advised the Board that CT Governor Lamont has issued his budget which reflected a 22% cut for the Town of Stonington. A new item which may impact expenditures is the Teachers Retirement Contribution, traditionally paid by the state directly into the Teachers Retirement Fund. This year, the State has asked the municipalities to provide a contribution. For Stonington, this would equate to a \$100,000. Currently, the largest expenditures that are not routine is the debt service for the two new schools, West Vine Street and Deans Mill. By the same token, merging the middle schools may create savings and may offset some of those costs. Mr. Simmons indicated there would be substantial costs from the Highway Department. Public Works Director Barbara McKrell will be presenting and detailing a 20-year plan for acquisition of vehicles for Department that could run an expenditure of around \$2.6 million over the next five years.

Mr. Simmons indicated that the 152% increase in the SEAT Bus Funding line item in his budget was a bit misleading. Last year, the Board of Finance had initially approved SEAT funding at \$10,000 and the Selectman worked with Human Services, the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center and the COMO to possibly come up with an alternative transportation plan, but were unsuccessful in their efforts. This required the Selectman to come back to the Board of Finance for an additional \$14,675 to fully fund the program for the year. The increase for this year reflects a 2.5% increase by SEAT to each of the participating towns which would be approximately \$617 but because the Board of Finance counts from last year's initial authorization the new request is reflected as 152% increase.

With regard to CIP (Capital Improvement Program) there are two major projects that could result in increased expenditures, one would be the I&I (Inflow & Infiltration) for WPCA and the second would be the reactivation of the transmission lines from Mystic to the Borough plan. Mr. Simmons considers these projects critically important for the future development of the Town of Stonington for the proper disposal of waste water in addition to anticipated revenue.

In regards to changes in policies, Mr. Simmons noted in recent years the town has leased vehicles as a way of obtaining equipment without paying the full price in one year's budget. Currently the lease policy is being eliminated and attempts to purchase equipment outright will take its place.

A change to the Town's waste management specifically the commercial and residential waste collection will see a new contractor for FY19/20. The current Town contractor who serves 50% of the Town, MJ Sauchuk, has gone out of business. The company has been bought out by a company that will continue the service at the current rate until June 2019. At that time the Town will see the prices rise. Negotiations with F.E. Crandall, who covers the other 50% of the Town, are taking place to secure a three- or four-year contract. In addition, increased tonnage, 550 tons over last year, will have an impact on the cost of waste management.

Major changes in revenue is the impact of the building boom in Stonington. These building permits have brought in revenue of approximately \$400,000 and Mr. Simmons noted that kind of economic development should result in more revenue and that the tax collector currently collects 99% of all taxes due.

Mr. Simmons commented that the State was presenting issues for the Town with regards to revenues. Senator Looney is proposing taking the motor vehicle property tax away from the towns, instead having the State collect the tax and then redistribute that money back to the towns. Currently the Town has motor vehicles valued at \$148 million. Mr. Simmons is concerned that the high motor vehicle tax towns like East Haven, Bridgeport and Hartford will get most of that State reimbursed money and towns like Stonington would be shortchanged. Senator Looney also wants a State-Wide Municipal Property Tax, a sweeping property tax on all of the suburbs and rural towns to offset the high mill rate municipalities in urban areas. As of yet these policies have not been signed into law, and Mr. Simmons is carefully watching the situation.

Mr. Simmons was pleased to announce the Director of Assessment declared last year the Grand List growth was 4.64%, which is the largest growth in a decade and that it would continue to grow this year. In 2018, the Town added \$22 million to the Grand List which now totals \$2.7 billion.

With regards to the budget process, Mr. Simmons pointed out that he had personally gone over every line of the general government budget with each Department head and then further discussed each request with Finance Director James Sullivan. During tonight's meeting, the First Selectman offered to provide commentary as necessary as the Department Heads present their budget.

Chairwoman Strunk provided a summary of the budget process to SHS Civics students who were in attendance this evening.

Ms. Strunk began the review of the First Selectman's budget with a question to Mr. Simmons regarding the SEAT increase which is represented in the proposed budget book at \$15,293 and how much of that is the actual 2.5% increase proposed by SEAT.

Mr. Simmons explained that the previous appropriation request of \$14,675 for the SEAT bus funding line item of \$10,000 was to continue service into the Town of Stonington servicing Route 10 & 108. The Route 108 bus delivers riders to Mystic, mostly members of the workforce who work in the hotels and restaurants in Mystic and the Route 10 bus travels from Mystic to Pawcatuck in a series of runs. Attempts were made to replace the Route 10 bus with the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center bus service in collaboration with Human Services and possibly the COMO. However, the initiative failed. This resulted in coming back to the Board of finance to fully fund SEAT for 2018, which was at a cost of \$24,675. SEAT has sent out a notice to all of the membership towns that they will be requesting a 2.5% increase over last year's funds, raising the cost to 25,292. The way the budget book is calculated, it's calculated off of the initial SEAT request of 10,000, therefore it looks like the increase is 152.92% which provides an inaccurate assessment. Mr. Simmons recommended adjusting the figures to show the actual increase over last year's cost, which is \$617 or 2.5%.

Ms. Strunk inquired about the two new additional line items to the Selectman's budget, Line item #30, Mystic River Boat Pump out Service and Line #31, Plastic Bags & Straws Committee.

Regarding the Pump out Service on the Mystic River, Mr. Simmons explained that Groton has contributed \$20,000 towards the costs of the free boat pump out service for a number of years. Groton has asked the Town of Stonington to participate at \$20,000 as well. To show good faith and cooperation the Town has offered \$5,000, acknowledging that by offering this service, it assists in the prevention of illegal dumping of waste by boaters and directly impacts the quality of life and the cleanliness of the river.

Mr. Fauerbach inquired about contributions from other entities and Director Sullivan noted that in addition to Groton, Fishers Island/NY contributes \$10,000 and the remainder is received from Federal grants. Mr. Pete Chappell from Pete's Marine Service who runs the pump out boats also spoke confirming that the federal grants cover 75% of the cost but the remaining 25% must come from the Towns. He would like to keep the cost free to boaters as even a small charge more than likely results in the boaters discharging in the local waters.

The Plastic Bags and Straws Committee was formed last year to look into the issue of reducing or eliminating the use of single use carry out plastic bags from grocery stores and other stores in the community and plastic straws from our restaurants and bars of which we have over 150 in Stonington. Selectman Simmons anticipates that if it passes, funds for education of the community with regards to the new ordinance will be needed, if it fails the money will not be expended and will return back to the Treasurer.

### **Economic Development Commission**

Selectman Simmons spoke with regards to the increase in the funds requested for the Economic Development Commission. The Planning Department of the Town of Stonington, under the leadership of Jason Vincent has been very successful in obtaining grants and investments into the Town of Stonington. The EDC is coming up with additional projects that benefit the town, and this increase of \$9,500 is for assistance with managing some of these projects.

Jason Vincent, Director of Planning spoke alongside Mr. David Hammond, the Chair of the Economic Development Commission. Over the past several years, the volunteer led Economic Development Commission has been working on a number of different initiatives and projects on behalf of the community to try to attract private investment and maintain business growth within the community. The EDC is looking to augment their budget for some additional project-based support so that they can continue these initiatives to try to secure new sources of revenue for the community.

Mr. Hammond outlined some of the support provided by the EDC to include engaging the community with community conversations, contributing to studies, designs and reporting. The committee also undertakes community development actions. The main item being developing a town website and branding, which may also lead to way finding and signage to help develop the community and community pride in addition to directing tourists and residents to the location of the many attractions the Town has to offer. Mr. Hammond advised that the additional funding requested this year would be for professional services to work with local architects to develop conceptual drawings for some of the forlorn properties in the area that could use some help in terms of marketing to investors and developers.

### **Town Clerk**

Town Clerk Ms. Cindy Ladwig, spoke on behalf of her budget. Ms. Ladwig was pleased to inform the Board that she has worked for the Town of Stonington for 42 years in June. The Town Clerk budget, other than the anticipated salary increases, managed to remain unchanged across the board. Land records and data processing were reduced by \$1,000.

Chairwoman Strunk acknowledged that the Town Clerk generates a tremendous amount of revenue compared to expenses and asked Ms. Ladwig for a brief synopsis of the conveyance tax. Ms. Ladwig explained that the town takes revenue when a document is recorded. For conveyance tax purposes, the Town takes in .0025 of the price for every house purchase. This revenue is fluctuating based on the market and mortgage rates and for FY17/18 the revenue was \$435,394.

### **Payments To Other Civil Divisions**

Continuing with the First Selectman's Department, Selectman Simmons noted the increase of 7.22% in payments to other civil divisions, the Borough of Stonington. Mr. Simmons noted that the cost is really beyond control and is a set formula. Director Sullivan added the payment is returning the tax dollars to the Borough for highway cost services that they've paid for, but aren't receiving. The Borough receives credit for the taxes paid in because they have their own highway department. It is formula driven dependent on the Highway department costs.

### **Administrative Services**

Vin Pacileo, Director Administrative Services was joined by Roger Kizer, IT Manager. Mr. Pacileo noted that Mr. Kizer is a critical part of Administrative Services. Administrative Services is primarily the Human Resources Administration portion for the town which means it involves human resources, labor relations, employee benefits, with Mr. Kaiser heading up the information technology system. The Department is also the placeholder for Ledge Light Services. With regards to Ledge Light Services, there was a slight decline in the amount requested this year. Mr. Pacileo highlighted the partnership with Ledge Light has been very favorable.

Mr. Pacileo stated he would be remiss if he didn't mention that this has been an unusual year for Administrative Services with the unfortunate passing of Administrative Assistant Kris Bell. Mr. Pacileo wanted to publicly thank Kris for the work that she did for the Town and Administrative Services during her time here. Sheryl Krynick has returned from retirement to assist the Department and to train Donna Devlin, the new Administrative Assistant.

Noted changes to the Administrative budget is an increase in salary for the support staff due to a merit increase for the First Selectman's Executive Administrative Assistant and a provision for Sheryl Krynick to remain on as a consultant while the new HR Administrator gets acclimated to the position. Mr. Pacileo would like to have the ability to enlist Sheryl's help as needed.

Professional services increase due to the potential engagement of software professionals to have them come out and assist the new Assistant.

Reproduction services for copying has increased due to a new copier contract and increased usage. There is a \$1,000 increase to Memorial Observances as the Mystic Flag Committee funds will be drawn from here.

### **Information Systems**

For Information Technology, the salary items are slightly above the 2.6% to allow for anticipated overtime, a recognition of the fact that the IT Department will be called in off hours. A \$5,000 increase in technical assistance is driven primarily by the networks becoming more sophisticated.

Roger Kizer, IT Manager, advised the Board that the purchase of two firewalls, one at Town Hall and one at the Police Department, provide a layer of internet coming into the organization and a dual layer of filtering at both ends. This requires additional configuring by a consultant to set up, so the Department can maintain it from that point on. New virtual private network software that goes along with the purchase of the firewall was included. With a workforce that does work outside of the building it is required to securely access data within the network without having to worry about being hacked. With newer software and hardware, the level of security, and networking and public safety side alone, Mr. Kizer anticipates needing even more additional funds in the future to meet these needs.

Speaking to the human resources portion of the health insurance budget, Mr. Pacileo brought to the Board's attention a 0% increase in health insurance. Last year this had increased 12% or \$200,000. This year claims experience is running about 97% of expected, therefore no increase after FY19/20 is anticipated. Mr. Pacileo added the 0% increase will result in slight decreases in the cost shares for employees this year, very much a good news item.

### **Department of Assessment**

Director Marsha Standish presented along with Assistant Director, Greg Hayes. Ms. Standish had presented the Board with a handout detailing the Grand List data. The net Grand List right now is \$2,793,031,779, before appeals.

For revaluations, the Department goes through all the sales, data and mailers received into the Department. One of the things in the budget, a license for Mr. Hayes allows him access to the multiple listing service, which is beneficial. All these tools verify sales during that period leading up to the revaluation going through the next cycle. Questionnaires are immediately sent out for all new sales that information about the sale gets entered into the database.

Even though there is a \$22 million increase in the Grand List on a taxable side, growth was approximately \$25 million, \$3 million representing non-profits. On the tax-exempt side, there is an increase of 4.79%, with the two (2) schools projects, the Mystic Aquarium project, Spruce Ridge and others.

The Pilot for MasoniCare is not included in the taxable Grand List. A pilot payment is calculated on the general government portion of the mill rate. The pilot payment for the FY2017 Grand List included personal property and real estate taxes in the amount of \$244,494.27.

### **Finance Department**

Director of Finance Jim Sullivan noted that other than the anticipated salary increases the Department came close to a decrease this year. Payroll services, the annual fee for ADP, and MUNIS support increased which is offset slightly by a \$500 decrease to the Dunbar service. An increase in the Treasurer expense is in part due to it being an election year and should there be a change in the Treasurer or First Selectman, the accounting software will need to hard code new signatures in the accounts payable system, a one-time cost for next year.

Director Sullivan spoke with regards to the Board of Finance budget, calling attention to an accounting and auditing increase shown as \$4,342. Actually not a one year increase, but reflective of two years to include the current year increase. The GASB \$4,000 increase is to obtain an incremental bump in the contribution to that plan. Risk management had little to no change from last year.

New this year is the inclusion of lease payments in the debt service schedule in the CIP budget. The interest and principle payments are broken down between the Board of Ed and the Town.

### **Tax Department**

Tax Collector Linda Camelio informed the Board that the Tax Department would only incur a 1.96% budget increase, based on an increase in salaries and postage. As of the end of February 2019 the Tax Department has collected \$60,000,743 million in revenue. Ms. Camelio pointed out that she wrote an article for the February edition of Events magazine and at that time had \$2.7 million dollars of delinquencies, and since that time has sent out 2400 delinquent notices. As of February 28th, delinquencies have decreased to \$1.6 million and the Department has a 99% collection rate.

Ms. Camelio pointed out to the Board that the \$1.6 million in delinquencies is not just for the 2017 grand list. Last April the Department started collecting for Wequetequock which had uncollected taxes

dating back to 2001. By state statute it is required to only keep 15 years and the delinquencies go back to 2003.

For tax sale purposes, the Department has a \$5,000 criteria or an account must be delinquent over two grand list years. Anything over \$5,000 is sent to the attorney for collection. The Tax Department collects for every Fire District except for Pawcatuck. Monies collected on behalf of the fire districts are transferred back to the fire district.

### **Department of Planning**

Director of Planning Jason Vincent highlighted to the Board several requests. The first is a stipend for a blight enforcement officer. Mr. Vincent recommends and is requesting funding to create this as a stipend position. In 2010 the town adopted a blight ordinance and did not create resources for administration of the program, relying on the First Selectman's office to be the administrator. Instead of hiring a full-time staff person Mr. Vincent suggests adding it as a stipend to an existing position in the Planning Department.

Director Vincent would like to have additional funding for training and education, and professional associations. The Planning Department provides customer service, a core function for people looking into investment in the community. Being able to network with professional organizations, and understanding what's happening both at a national and state level requires membership in organizations where access to publications, reports and resources are necessary to keep current with the times.

A substantial increase within the Planning budget is under Professional Services, and increase of \$43,000. Director Vincent states his Department does a lot of work in project development. The Planning Department is tasked with implementing the Plan of Conservation Development, a document of 116 ideas that has been identified as having value to the community. To implement those ideas requires resources, personnel and money, but it also requires some project conceptualization to determine if there's a basis of interest, or what the return on investment might be to the community. To implement all those ideas requires significant amount of professional expertise within a wide range of topics including coastal resiliency, transportation, or natural resource preservation.

Director Vincent feels that by having a line item for professional services, the department could leverage these services better than relying on a generalist to make the right types of asset investments and save money. Mr. Vincent would like to come to the Board before projects are implemented and have a conversation about what the scope of work is, and what the value proposition is within that project. The more information is communicated about the ideas of saving or making more money for the community the better chance an idea or project has of being funded. The Planning Department services 13 different boards and commissions and utilizes volunteers, people that live in the community that are interested but don't know necessarily how to do things within a governmental structure. A lot of time is spent facilitating and answering questions and trying to enable residents to be more effective in governing their community.

Another request is for an increase of \$5,000 for computerization and archiving. According to Director Vincent there are approximately 10,000 records that exist within the department and an investment to

protect these records is urgent. Mr. Vincent feels these documents represent property rights that belong to people and that having secured permits is critical, and it is up to the Town to make sure that they are documented so that when people look to trade property or acquire property, they are able to claim rights and obligations afforded to them from permits previously secured.

Director Vincent states that a large role the department plays is creating confidence in real estate transactions. Without confidence in the transaction, people don't buy property and the Town doesn't generate conveyance tax revenue. A tremendous amount of time is spent trying to build confidence in a real estate transaction before it ever gets to conveyance before it ever changes hands. In addition, the department works closely with the assessor's office so that they can collect a document what the investment is. There are disconnects preventing the Department from maximizing the revenue potential the community could be making. Director Vincent stated that money is required to hire outside experts to come in and validate and understand what the system is, and help troubleshoot this issue.

Director Vincent added that he has put in a request for an enterprise technology plan and permit tracking thru CIP, and would welcome the opportunity to work with the Board to move forward efficiently and in the best manner.

First Selectman Simmons weighed in on the issue, bringing attention to the consultant report from a couple of years ago, a government wide analysis of the towns departments. The consultant noted that the general government employees, many of them approaching retirement age, was a looming problem for the management of these programs in the Town of Stonington. If there isn't a competent system that can be used by new people coming in to trace these documents, it is going to be a nightmare. Just looking in the last decade how much senior leadership has been lost and adding up that institutional knowledge is significant. Director Vincent agreed, adding that if the effort is made to digitize the records, there is technology out there that essentially functions like Google and the public could have access to their information and the town could deliver better service.

### **Public Works Department**

Director Barbara McKrell spoke to the Board outlining the significant strides her Department has made this year. Good decisions were made and promotions and vacancies were filled, resulting in improved efficiency and maximizing the work completed. Director McKrell provided the Board with a department report for the calendar year of 2018. Noting that 39% of the time spent by the department is for highway work, 35% Parks & Recreation, 8% Winter and 4% special projects along with 13% fleet support, training, parades and housekeeping.

This year, the Department repaired or replaced 100 catch basins, compared to last year's total of 54. Road sweeping increased from 60 miles last year to 82 this year.

Director McKrell pointed out the benefits of equipment purchases previously approved by the Board. The purchase of a new tractor, besides utilizing it for regularly scheduled field service, allowed for athletic field maintenance such as field aeration, whereas previously that service was outsourced. The tractor is also being used in the winter months for clearing sidewalks reducing required labor by 50%.

The purchase of the new compressor allowed the Department to blow out and winterize the field irrigation system, also saving the cost of outsourcing.



Equipment storage expansion remains a prominent need. With the 2013 edition of athletic field maintenance & equipment. The marginally self-sufficient storage assets of the highway garage have been severely tested.

Also recommended for the Board's consideration is a fleet replacement reserve. Director McKrell pointed out that the need to replace equipment that is critical to the town should be budgeted in advance before it becomes an urgent request.

Increases to the budget include a \$3,100 increase in consumables as the Department is requesting a copier at the highway garage, presently copying is done by going to the Town Hall.

Safety & Protection has an increase of \$7,000 to a total of \$22,000, the bulk of the increase is related to the cost of providing GPS in the trucks, right now 20 units at a cost of \$20 per month. In general Director McKrell acknowledged that her department takes safety very seriously and wants to be sure that the funding is always available whether for hearing and eye protection or protective gear.

Sidewalk repairs anticipate an increase of \$2,000 to a total of \$70,000 related to the CIP project that will be discussed. The initial estimate of accessible ramps that need to be replaced that are not compliant is \$1.4 million.

Tree removal increased by \$4,000 for a total of \$20,000. Many trees have died as a result of the gypsy moth infestation and it's been quite devastating. Many of the outside tree removers have noted it and Director McKrell feels that this year and next year will see an increase in the having to utilize these outside contractors to assist with dead tree removal.

Highway equipment increases by \$2,000 for a total of \$17,000. This covers mostly small equipment, chainsaws, pole saws, etc. Mr. Tom Curioso, Department Supervisor noted that it was getting to the point the smaller equipment was becoming disposable. Previously the department would try to get inoperable equipment repaired, but the cost of repairing the defective equipment was outweighing the cost of obtaining new.

There is an increase of 25-28% in materials disposal and catch bass and cleaning. The department is cleaning 1000 - 1100 a year of the nearly 1600 catch basins. As Mr. Curioso points out the problem is backup in the pipes which is pushing everything up and forces the drainage to actually not function. For years the whole system was cleaned on a yearly basis but for budgetary reasons it was cut back. Mr. Curioso states that he would like to see the department back to that point. The work is performed by a subcontractor assisted by highway personnel. Along with this comes the cost associated with disposal of the catch basin grit and currently the cost is around \$100 ton.

Maintenance repairs has an increase of \$7,000 for a total of \$160,000. Mr. Curioso noted that the more technically advanced the vehicles become the more money it costs for the parts.

Pavement treatments has a substantial decrease in the budget (\$85,000) bringing the total down to \$75,000. Director McKrell advised the Board that the way she has structured pavement treatments this year is the operations budget is more for minimal repairs like crack sealing, immediate hazards, and full depth patching on roads that are nowhere near the five-year projection of doing work. There is an increase in bituminous concrete and drainage materials for the department to do in house drainage work.

With regards to the annual fertilization program, seasonal help, material, equipment and maintenance and fieldwork, money has been shifted from the fertilization program to the material, equipment and maintenance account. The increase in seasonal help is result having to pay and advertise seasonal help at \$15 an hour.

### **Engineering Department**

Mr. Scot Deledda, Town Engineer, spoke regarding the decrease of (\$11,700) to storm water requirements. The prior year budget anticipates an annual need of \$91,700 for MSU water permitting, but the actual is only about \$80,000. The line item has been brought back down to more be more in line with the opinion of probable cost.

Mr. Deledda stated that currently the Town is managing many municipal infrastructure projects and land use applications. The community is growing and the department is handling some of the largest land use applications probably seen in Stonington to date. A significant municipal infrastructure project that was completed was the Stillman Avenue Bridge structural repair which was a great success. The Bayview Avenue drainage project has been completed. Currently the department is working on a major project, the underground storage tank replacement for four (4) town locations, one at the town dock.

Additional projects the department is working on is the continued oversight and maintenance of the Pawcatuck hurricane protection system, and two projects that are relatively new, the South Pier renovation project at the town dock and the Stonington break water restoration project. With regards to CIP projects of the department, the drainage upgrades in downtown mystic where tidal flooding is an issue is a priority.

Mr. Deledda conveyed to the Board how busy the department has been. In addition to the current projects, the department also works with FEMA and the community rating system. When citizens have questions, whether it's insurance, flood hazard regulations, flood zones, elevation certificates or new home questions these questions are typically directed to the Engineering office. Mr. Deledda approximates that working on anything related to the FEMA program and the community rating system program last year took about 176 hours, adding what this has done is built a really strong coastal development team between the planning department, the building department and the engineering department, essentially a model for other towns.

### **Building Official's Office**

Mr. Larry Stannard, Building Official, thanked the board for providing him with the additional administrative staff for his department last year. With the significant increase in the amount of paperwork processed every day, the additional support has helped immensely.

Mr. Stannard spoke of the significant activity being brought into the department. In the construction business for over 40 years, and a licensed building official for 23 of those years. Mr. Stannard has never seen this level of construction activity in a town of this size and population.

This fiscal year, in December, his department gave out permits for \$58 million in construction projects and anticipates issuing a permit for the Hartford Healthcare building phase of the Perkins Farm project, which will add another \$25 million project that will generate a \$200,000 building permit fee.

Agreeing with a previous statement by Selectman Simmons, Mr. Stannard mentioned the Town charges approximately half of what all the other towns are collecting as far as permit fees, and the topic was discussed further.

The Building Official's budget is pretty much status quo this year with the exception of additional funds requested for Professional Associations and Publications. The fund has been \$1,000 per year for the last couple years, and the department is asking for an additional \$1,700 dollars. The State of Connecticut is adopting new code books in 2020 at a cost of \$2,200 and the State requires every town to be a member of the ICC, which is the international code council at a \$500 a year membership. An increase to training and education of \$500 is for the same reason, the new code books and the additional classes required to learn the new codes.

The Board broke for a break at 9:55pm and reconvened at 10:05 pm.

### **CIP Discussions:**

**The General Government** CIP request has (2) line items, Townwide Computer Upgrade and Orthophotography Updates, both committed.

**Police Services** – Chief Stewart, Captain Olson, Lt. Brian Schneider and the Police Commissioners were all in attendance

Four budget items in the CIP account this year.

- Fleet Upgrade - \$160,000 – committed
- Bulletproof Vest Program - \$34,000 – committed. The offset of anticipated grants is not included in this figure.
- Technology upgrade - \$20,000 – committed. Used to fund equipment such as the phone system, the records management system, and the radio upgrade.
- License plate reader – Requesting \$30,000. Chief Stewart states that the reader has become a very important part of the daily patrols as it identifies vehicles that are uninsured, unregistered or

a wanted person in the vehicle. The current reader is approaching six years old, almost reaching its shelf life.

### **Outside Agencies CIP Requests:**

#### **Stonington Ambulance Corp – Nishant Sahoo, Vice President**

First Floor Remodel Project - \$10,000 committed. Mr. Sahoo thanked and informed the board that the capital improvement funds from last year started the remodeling of the first floor, this year's \$10,000 will complete the bathroom remodel, bringing most of the first floor to ADA standard. The final \$10,000 next year will allow the walkway and drywall and any remaining renovation. This will bring the building up to fully renovated with a useful life of 30 years.

Ambulance Replacement – Requesting \$30,000 to replace a 1999 Ambulance with 100,000 miles. Mr. Sahoo believes they are at the point where there is no more preventive maintenance that can be done on the vehicle. A loan will be required to pay the remaining balance due after receiving all available funding, but Mr. Sahoo hopes to keep that liability as low as possible.

#### **Ocean Community YMCA –**

First Selectman Simmons spoke on behalf of the YMCA, stating it is a committed expenditure of \$100,000, of which \$60,000 has already been paid leaving \$40,000. The director of the YMCA has relayed to Selectman Simmons that if the Board of Finance wanted to spread the payment out over another budget cycle he would be in agreement. Selectman Simmons suggested to the Board \$20,000 this budget cycle and \$20,000 FY20/21.

#### **Borough of Stonington – Warden Jeffrey Callahan**

Mr. Callahan took the opportunity to commend the Town Hall personnel for their dedication and hard work, especially Scot Deledda, Town Engineer. Mr. Callahan indicated the need for the borough and the Town to work together on many issues and Mr. Deledda has proved to be very helpful in those areas.

#### **Railroad Footbridge - \$15,000**

The structure was built in 1990, replacing one that was built in 1940 at the request of the then New York-New Haven-Hartford railroad. When Amtrak took over, the original agreement was that Amtrak would be responsible for the footbridge. However, currently they state that they are not responsible. Mr. Callahan expressed his frustration with contacting Amtrak to discuss the issue and has now enlisted the assistance of CT Congressman Courtney's office. So far, his office has also received no response from Amtrak.

Mr. Callahan provided photos of the current condition of the footbridge, highlighting concrete that is starting to split away, and adding that since the picture was taken a chunk has fallen down onto the railbed. (not the tracks themselves) Amtrak was notified but it drew no interest. The steel structure also has deep rust. Previous Wardens have attempted to obtain Amtrak cooperation to allow repairs to the footbridge but these inquiries also received no response.

Mr. Callahan proposed a project totaling \$70,000, largely an estimate, funding at least the first year of the two-year two-phase project. This initial funding would obtain an engineering firm to perform an analysis and assessment of the footbridge and determine if it continues to be structurally sound and safe. Mr. Callahan suggested that the assessment could be completed without Amtrak cooperation adding if the report detailed problems this could get their attention.

Asked by Board member Michael Fauerbach who the legal owner of the footbridge was, Mr. Callahan stated according Amtrak, it is the borough and acknowledged that both ends of the bridge are in the borough. However, the original agreement with the New York-New Haven-Hartford railroad, which Amtrak ultimately took over, the agreement clearly shows that the railroad was responsible for maintaining the footbridge.

Tim O'Brien expressed his concern that if the study finds the bridge deficient there would be an immediate need for all of the funding to repair an inadequate structure in one year and not over the course of two years. Looking at the condition of the bridge and knowing the trains that pass under Mr. O'Brien was concerned that Amtrak could force the immediate repair of the structure.

Selectman Simmons stated that he had written the new CT Commissioner of Transportation regarding the Elihu Island and Walker's Dock at grade crossings which are unsafe; a project the Selectman has been working on for six years along with Senator Blumenthal. Selectman Simmons received a letter back from the new Commissioner and would be happy to collaborate with the Warden to see if the project could get some interest.

#### **Thames Valley Community Action (TVCCA) - \$15,000**

Unable to attend the meeting, Finance Director Sullivan confirmed the request for a new delivery vehicle.

#### **Stonington Free Library – Micayla Hall, Assistant Director, Denise Easton, Board Co-President**

##### ADA Compliance - \$210,000

Ms. Hall thanked the Board for their support of the project last year and for the opportunity to speak tonight. Providing access to every member of the community is a major priority for the library, all of the collections and programs are free and open to the public. Since 2010, full access to the library is not obtainable. Most significantly, those impacted are children and families with disabilities unable access the lower level of the library. Anyone in a wheelchair, on crutches, or with limited mobility simply can't use the full library. Ms. Hall asked the town to continue to support the project this year. Last year, the

town was asked to fund the project at two thirds, which is \$280,000 and were awarded \$50,000. The library committed to raising \$140,000 with private donations which was achieved with an additional \$20,000, which included grants, for a total of \$160,000. This \$160,000 plus the \$50,000 from last year brings the library halfway to the goal of \$420,000. Ms. Hall asked the town to fund the remaining \$210,000 needed to complete this project.

Board member Danielle Chesebrough inquired to the approach of the project, whether the amount of available funding would have an impact on start dates or progress. Ms. Easton stated that it is agreed by the Library board that the project will not start until in receipt of complete funding, but are continuing as of this date to do private funding fund raising in order to meet that full goal.

**Stonington Historical Society** - Elizabeth Wood, Executive Director, Michael Schefers, Board of Directors President, Chris Campbell, Director of Development

#### Lighthouse Restoration Project - \$100,000

Ms. Wood thanked the Board for their previous support and described the project as it is going forward. The lighthouse was built in 1840, and since 1927 has served as a museum dedicated to telling the stories of Stonington's history, preserving the artifacts associated with those stories, and to preserving the building itself. It is an iconic feature of Stonington's cultural landscape.

The Historical Society which owns and maintains the lighthouse claims the unique distinction of being the first lighthouse museum in the country. An advantage of having the Mystic Seaport nearby is that audience is willing to drive a few more miles down the road to see these exciting new exhibits in possibly one of the great architectural resources in the State and interest in the lighthouse has been growing.

The Historical Society has created a master plan for this property that serves a number of needs. Those needs include ADA access to the museum's entire first floor and its exhibits, the preservation of the building itself as well as the collections within, and preservation of open space. Mr. Campbell stated that this is a first and last request for funding for the lighthouse, a one-time capital project. After project completion it will be accessible for the future in perpetuity. This includes two dedicated handicapped parking spots on the grounds, a handicap walkway taking you into a new accessible entrance in the rear of the building and the facade. Care has been taken to preserve the architectural integrity. The group has successfully cleared significant hurdles related to planning and zoning concerns about size and design. Mr. Campbell indicated to the Board that the museum's content is starting to drive interest from the outside and from within the community. Also, this project fits the town's priority to create ADA access to its most important public spaces.

Nearly \$1 million of the \$2.25 million-dollar project has been raised to date. Grant funding has been received from the National Park Service, the State of Connecticut Community and Economic Development as well as funding from the Connecticut Humanities, the Montauk Foundation and others. Ms. Wood indicated to the Board that any financial support would be meaningful and the Historical Society could leverage those funds in a multitude of different ways going forward.

Mr. Schefers spoke on how the lighthouse was a great economic driver for the town; and an incredible educational resource for the public-school system.

It is the Historical Society's intent to go public after raising \$1.5 million and if successful in their fund-raising efforts, would like to put shovel in the ground after Labor Day and start the construction in September of this year.

**Department of Assessment** – Director Marsha Standish

Town Revaluation - \$70,000

Director Standish addressed the Board, stating the Town Revaluation is a state mandated program and her request is based on the history of what the department's revaluations have cost in the past. The last revaluation was not a complete inspection of all properties, however the next revaluation in 2022 will be a more detailed inspection. Currently the department is looking at over 9000 parcels. Mr. Fauerbach asked if there was any flexibility in the department's budget and Director Standish said there may be some, however she also incorporates court costs into that figure.

**Department of Public Works** - Director Barbara McKrell, Supervisor Foreman Tom Curioso

Drainage Townwide - \$80,000

A fund established to do a full depth replacement of catch basins, currently the Town has 1600 catch basins. Ms. McKrell states that the bid cost per basin is \$8,000 to do a full depth replacement if the basin needs to be fully reconstructed. The previous year the department completed 25 out of 100 in need of reconstruction.

Highway Equipment - \$290,000

Director McKrell pointed out that the 6-wheel dump truck shown on her handout as being removed from service is inaccurate and that truck will be repaired and put back into service. Two vehicles do remain out of service, the 2001 and 2004 pickup trucks, which according to Director McKrell should have been replaced in 2013 and 2016, and she is asking for the funding to replace those two vehicles. Mr. Fauerbach asked about the particular role each of the trucks had and how these fit in with the rest of the fleet. Director McKrell explained that the maintenance employee was using the one of the trucks in the past and now uses her truck. This has become problematic for a number of reasons, for instance, the size of her truck limits the deliveries he needs to make, the amount of time he is utilizing the truck, requiring Director McKrell to use her own personal vehicle when going out to construction sites, something she would prefer not to do especially during paving work. The second truck that has been out of service is primarily used by the highway department as a general use/transportation truck.

Director McKrell is also requesting replacement of a 2007 52" zero turn mower, which currently has 509 hours on it, noting that 35% of the department's work is cutting grass.

Director McKrell relayed to the Board that having a reserve fund for equipment replacement would be the correct approach to understanding what the funding needs of the department may be in future years and preparing for those needs.

Mr. Fauerbach agreed with the strategy but advised caution when deciding when to replace a vehicle. A 10-yr old vehicle with low mileage, and good running condition could provide years of more service and not require replacing just because it has reached its expected usefulness.

Artificial Turf Replacement - \$30,000

This fund sets money aside to replace the athletic field turf. The last required funding for this item will be in 2024. The school maintains the turf field, the replacement of the turf is listed in Public Works.

ADA Public Works Transition Plan - \$50,000

This past year the department contracted with a consultant that provided a complete assessment on the inventory of the sidewalks. Director McKrell noted that these assessments will be posted online. In summary the Town has 464 accessible ramps in total, 375 of those ramps are non-compliant. Federal law requires that the Town has an inventory of the ramps and a program in place to address any issues from non-compliant ramps. Director McKrell is proposing a 15-year plan, estimating a project cost of \$1.4 million for ramp replacement.

The Town is mandated that any road repair greater than a shim and chip seal have sidewalks accessible sidewalks. The Town is responsible for all of the ramps on Highway State roads as well. For this year and next, the CIP request is \$50,000, however, Director McKrell anticipates increasing that request to \$100,000 in the years following.

Road Pavement – Major Maintenance - \$337,000  
Capital - \$367,000

Director McKrell defined road paving major maintenance as a shim and chip seal which has a limited life and a capital road pavement project as a full depth reclamation that would result in 10+ plus years on the road. A list of projects was provided to the Board and Director McKrell is proposing \$1 million dollars of road improvements every year.

Town Hall Parking Lot Replacement - \$20,000

Director McKrell noted that the parking lot is far past its life, it is crumbling, there may be issues with safety, but the department continues to patch holes and with the tight budgetary constrictions this year she is proposing replacing it in four years, starting this year setting aside funds on a yearly basis for replacement.

Human Services HVAC replacement - \$100,000



Director McKrell had EMCOR, the heating service contractor research the problematic Human Services system and they were able to locate and correct a number of issues but advised the Board that the boiler will require replacing. Three bids have been received for the replacement, but Director McKrell cautions attempting to change out the boiler in the winter months as it would result in a two-day project with the heating system out of service.

Chairwoman Strunk pointed out that on occasion it was only 50 degrees in parts of the building and some of the employees were wearing coats. Aware of this, Director McKrell said that some of the corrections the heating contractor was able to complete has enabled them to address this issue.

Director McKrell reported to the Board that going thru the EMCOR work orders since October 1, 2018 showed that they were called out to address no heat issues at the Human Services building a total of 4 times, the garage buildings, 3 service calls, Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center only once and the Town Hall a total of 6 no heat calls.

Director McKrell also recommends that she would like to have an additional person in the mornings to walk thru and check the heating prior to the public arriving.

It was noted that the budget line item specifies Human Services HVAC, but Director McKrell reported that the amount requested covers about \$25,000 for the Human Services boiler, \$20,000 for efficiency improvements at the Town Hall and additional improvements as needed.

#### **Public Works – Engineering** Scot Deledda – Town Engineer

##### North Stonington Road Bridge - \$291,128

An out of service bridge, Mr. Deledda reports that the State of CT is still carrying funds for the project and Groton, also putting in a CIP request has confirmed that the State has it slated for 50% reimbursement.

##### South Anguilla Road Bridge - \$65,000

With the rails and the curbing in disrepair, the department is looking at a rehabilitation project with funding over the next two years. Mr. Deledda informed the Board that they will not expect any offset on the funding, the reason being in order to receive the offset you have to also correct a deficiency in the bridge. The deficiency would be that it's too narrow and the alignment would need correcting. The department will not be looking to correct those deficiencies as it would change the project into a complete replacement, and they are looking into bringing the bridge to a serviceable state.

##### Stillman Avenue Bridge - \$1

Temporary structural repairs have been completed. It is still slated as being scour critical, meaning the foundation system has some deficiencies, but the repairs have removed the project from the five year capital improvement project outlook.

### Washington Street Drainage Improvements - \$50,000

The project has funding from last year available, however, due to time constraints and other projects, the project has not advanced. It is an Amtrak involved project.

### Coogan Boulevard Culvert Rehabilitation - \$60,000

The DOT recently inspected the two culverts near the intersection of Jerry Brown Road and Coogan Boulevard. The large corrugated metal pipe culverts pass under Coogan Boulevard about 60 feet in length. They have perforations basically rusting at the waterline. As the holes get worse, everything starts to cave and the department is looking at relining the pipes.

At the last Board of Selectmen meeting a more detailed cost estimate was requested, which Mr. Deledda provided to the Board.

A proposal from a pipe contractor that specializes in culvert relining has resulted in an increase in the previous estimate. A more accurate assessment is that the project will entail culvert relining, in addition to guide rail installation, headwall and crack repairs, sediment removal and other incidental work. The initial request was \$330,000, with the current request at \$385,000. Mr. Deledda points out that it is not in danger of failing overnight but warrants attention to get a handle on the project and get ahead of it so it could be stretched out potentially over a three-year period.

### Lantern Hill Bridge Project - \$375,000

Recently inspected by Connecticut DOT and rated in very poor condition and reported it needed to be addressed. Shared with Ledyard, this in-service bridge qualifies for funding of 50% reimbursement and the department is looking to achieve funding to for full replacement of the bridge.

Previously funded, the State pulled their program for the local bridge program. Then they reinstated the program and confirmed that funding is available for that bridge. Ledyard is requesting funding through their town council as well.

The total cost of the bridge replacement is \$1.5 million, the Town of Stonington's share would be \$750,000. However, the net expenditure sewn into that would only be half at \$375,000.

### Solid Waste – Director John Phetteplace

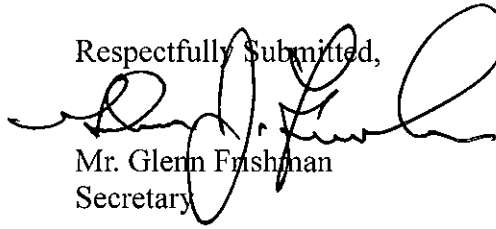
#### Roll Off Truck - \$34,000

The roll off truck, the department's primary vehicle for running the transfer station typically gets replaced between 225 and 250,000 miles. Right now, there is approximately 170,000 miles on the vehicle. The department funds the request over four years. Mr. Phetteplace is looking for the third installment of his four-year request adding this is the only roll off truck the department has, but feels the current plan is a good plan and does feel the need to stay on schedule for its procurement.

Due to the late hour the decision was made to continue the hearing at the March 12<sup>th</sup> meeting with Planning, WPCA, and Building starting.

Mr. Frishman made a motion to adjourn, Mr. White seconded and voting was unanimous. **Motion carried.** The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glenn Frishman", written over the typed name and title.

Mr. Glenn Frishman  
Secretary

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