

MINUTES
BOARD OF FINANCE – REGULAR MEETING
October 12, 2021
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APPROVED AS CORRECTED – 11-9-2021

In Person:

Board of Finance Attendance: Chairman John Grabowski, John Ford, Sharon Huxley, Lars Demander.

Absent: Catherine Erickson and Kathleen Barone.

Also in attendance: First Selectman Paula Cofrancesco, Finance Director Tom Ellis, Director Rod White, and Town Counsel Vincent Marino

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Finance Chairman John Grabowski called the Regular meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board addressed several typos and corrections, one being the absence of Member Lars Demander at the September 14, 2021, meeting. Chairman Grabowski called for a motion of approval for the amended Regular Meeting of the Board of Finance minutes for September 14, 2021. So moved by Member Huxley and seconded by Member Demander. **Voting for: Grabowski, Huxley, Ford. Abstained: Demander.**

2. ITEMS ADDED TO THE AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION.

First Selectman Cofrancesco as for a motion to add an agenda item: Presentation by Director of Facilities Rod White on two LOCIP projects which require the Boards approval.

- a. Approval for funds to update 3 signs in town.
- b. Approval for funds to renovate and expand the First Selectman's office.

Motion to add to the agenda was moved by Member Huxley and Seconded by Member Demander. Voting for: **Grabowski, Huxley, Demander, and Ford. Unanimous Approval.**

3. DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION- APPROVAL OF LOCIP FUNDS.

Director of Facilities, Rod White presented 2 potential LOCIP (Local Capital Improvement Program) projects for funding approval:

1. The replacement of 3 signs in town; the sign at Peck Pond, the sign in the island at Peck Rd. and Amity Rd., which marks the center of Town, and the sign at Veterans Memorial Park. Mr. White expressed that all 3 signs were in a state of disrepair. Additionally, Mr. White informed the Board that after some research he has identified a suitable company and the estimated cost for replacing all 3 signs will be approximately \$ 5,000.

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2. The renovation and expansion of First Selectman Cofrancesco’s office. Mr. White informed the Board that the plan would include removing a wall between the First Selectman’s office and the vacant adjacent office, minor project demolition with subsequent renovation and updating of the space. Mr. White has priced the project at approximately \$19,000 but anticipates it may be less.

Member Huxley moved to approve LOCIP funds up to \$5,000 for the replacement of the aforementioned 3 signs and Member Ford seconded. Voting for: **Grabowski, Huxley, Demander, and Ford. Unanimous Approval.**

Board Chairman Grabowski asked for a motion to approve LOCIP funds up to \$19,000 for the refurbishment and expansion of First Selectman Cofrancesco’s office. Member Ford moved the approval of funds and Member Demander seconded. Voting for: **Grabowski, Huxley, Demander, and Ford. Unanimous Approval.**

4. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION – CHAIRMAN’S REPORT.

Board Chairman, John Grabowski had no updates at this time.

5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION – FIRST SELECTMAN’S REPORT

First Selectman Cofrancesco updated the Board of the following items:

- a. Reminder for Town Meeting BVFD and ARPA Funds: First Selectman Cofrancesco reminded the Board that the Town Meeting on October 14, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. was posted in all the required places and mailers were sent out to residents.
- b. Bethany Airport Refund Letters: First Selectman Cofrancesco informed the Board that the Airport refund letters were mailed on October 1, 2021. Approximately 130 letters were sent out and at this time, 38 of those have been answered with 7 of the 38 requesting a refund of bricks and money. Returned letters must be received by December 29, 2021, to be eligible for a refund. First Selectmen Cofrancesco will keep the Board updated on the progress.
- c. QVHD ARPA Funds Request: First Selectman Cofrancesco communicated to the Board that she and Finance Director, Tom Ellis met with QVHD Director, Karen Wolujewicz to gather more information regarding a request for a donation of ARPA funds. QVHD expressed that their proposal is to approach the four towns they service and request 1% of each town’s total ARPA funds which will be fit into a templet budget to be used for medical supplies, additional staffing, etc. QVHD will speak with all four towns and draft a budget for the Board to discuss and/or approve.

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- d. Simpson Property Update: First Selectman Cofrancesco communicated that the survey of the property has been completed and received. The Board was reminded that this was the final piece required for the grant application. Town Counsel Vincent Marino, spoke with Allison Clark at the DEEP, which will administer the grant, and she informed him that the process can take up to 6 additional months.
- e. Hopp Brook/Beacon Falls Development Update: First Selectman Cofrancesco provided an update to the Board regarding her attendance at a hearing in Beacon Falls on September 29, 2021. Attorney Patricia Sullivan also attended the public hearing, and they will continue to monitor for any updates or developments. Town Counsel Vincent Marino reminded the Board as to the scope of the project and the possible impacts on Bethany.
- f. Conservation Commission Members Approval: First Selectman Cofrancesco informed the Board that Shannon Brighenti and Scotty Kealey have been approved as regular members to the Conservation Commission.

6. DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION- FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Finance Director Tom Ellis updated the Board on the following items:

- a. ARPA Update: Finance Director Tom Ellis echoed First Selectman Cofrancesco's update regarding the Town Meeting on October 14, 2021, to approve the purchase of a new ambulance. The Board was informed, that of the initial \$820,000 the town has spent \$221,000 (not including the funds for the ambulance). Director Ellis informed the Board he has been approached for multiple additional projects and is keeping a detailed record for review.
- Board Chairman Grabowski asked for those present to follow-up on a previous question regarding the appropriate location for funds acquired from the selling of the old ambulance parts.
- b. BVFD - Pension & Retirement: Finance Director Tom Ellis reminded the Board of the 4 different investments. Additionally, Mr. Ellis noted that the updates from the investment advisor and CPA are positive. The location of the trust document from 2003 has been identified as Webster Bank. Next steps include working with Webster bank to determine who should and can be authorized to make changes to the trust.
- c. Line-Item Protocol: Finance Director Tom Ellis asked for the Board's guidance regarding the question around creating more transparency and clarity in budget line-items. Mr. Ellis provided the Board with the examples of "Major Road Resurfacing" and "Other Contracted Services" as two line-items that can have a flexible understanding of work that may fall under each heading.

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Mr. Ellis asked the Board if the Budget line-items should be amended or modified, or if they should be left as they currently are.

- Member Huxley reminded the Board and Finance Director Ellis that town must vote to approve the budget, and any changes to it, at the end for the year.
- The Board then discussed some possible options for renaming budget line-items to reflect the work included more accurately.

7. ADDRESS CONTROL ISSUES

Finance Director Ellis updated the Board that the focus continues to be working on wrapping up the June 30, 2021, fiscal year activities. Mr. Ellis has been working to resolve the remaining action items and will continue to update the Board on the progress.

8. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:50 p.m. the Board of Finance Chairman Grabowski asked for a motion to adjourn the Regular meeting. Member Ford moved to adjourn the Regular meeting and Member Huxley seconded. **Voting for: Ford, Huxley, Grabowski, Demander. Unanimous Approval.**

Respectfully submitted,



Laura Callery
Town Minutes Clerk