

MINUTES
BOARD OF FINANCE – REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 14, 2021
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MINUTES – APPROVED 10-12-2021

In Person:

Board of Finance Attendance: John Grabowski, John Ford, Sharon Huxley, Catherine Erickson and Kathleen Barone.

Also, in person attendance: First Selectman Paula Cofrancesco, Finance Director Tom Ellis, and Michael Sullivan, and Matt Hubbard.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Finance Chairman John Grabowski called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Grabowski called for a motion of approval of the Regular Meeting minutes of July 13, 2021. So moved by Member Huxley and seconded by Member Erickson. **Voting for: Ford, Huxley, Erickson, Barone. Abstained: Grabowski.**

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION – BVFD – AMBULANCE/ARPA FUNDS-ACCEPTABLE USE

To speak on behalf of the Bethany Volunteer Fire Department were Michael Sullivan, and Matt Hubbard. The Bethany Volunteer Fire Department in a previous meeting with the Board of Selectmen has been proposing the replacement of the Emergency Fire Department Ambulance that assists the Town residents and nearby communities during regular and COVID-19 calls for service due to the wear and tear. At that time the Board of Selectmen suggested to bring the proposed request to the Board of Finance’s next meeting for discussion. They did present their proposal to the Board of Finance, and at this meeting Mr. Sullivan provided financial sheets listing pricing estimations on a potential increase if the estimated costs are not locked in. Four different vendors’ quotes analysis have been provided to give the Board of Selectman and the Board of Finance a possible cost range for coverage of the cost under the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act of 2021) Plan. Mr. Sullivan also presented a list of equipment needs and costs related to parts that are in dire need of replacement. The commission also asked about ARPA requirements and if there were sufficient funds to possibly cover two ambulances. Finance Manager Ellis provided an upgrade in the numbers.

There was discussion by the Board on how the funds should be administered; emphasis was noted on forming a committee and formulate a survey for residents’ guidance as how the funds should be utilized. Member Erickson supports the need of an ambulance, however, she maintains that a committee be formed to coordinate the administration of funds.

The Board discussed the proposals, provided feedback to the BVFD, and noted that it will need to go to a Town Meeting for approvals.

MOTION: The Board of Finance Chairman Grabowski motioned to approve and accept the potential use of the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act of 2021) Plan funds to purchase the ambulance or two depending

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on the funds available for the Bethany Volunteer Fire Department. Member Huxley moved and Member Ford seconded. In Favor: Grabowski, Huxley, Ford, Barone. Opposed: Member Erickson.

3. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION – Authorize BOF Chair to sign MOA with BOE regarding CGS 10-248a – Unexpended funds from 2020-2021 FY in the amount of 142,363.00.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was presented by the BOE to the Board regarding a non-lapsing account being established strictly for educational purposes and waiving its right to request an appropriation of any funds established in the non-lapsing account.

MOTION: Member Erickson moved to approve to authorize the BOF Chair to sign MOA with the BOE regarding CGS 10-248a – Unexpended funds from 2020-2021 FY in the amended amount of \$98,461.00 for the Non- Lapsing account to be established strictly for educational purposes. Member Ford seconded. **Voting for: Grabowski, Ford, Huxley, Erickson, Barone. Unanimous Approval.**

4. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION – Appropriate monies to cover cost of legal counsel for Hopp Brook / Beacon Falls Development.

First Selectman Cofrancesco communicated to the Board that there would be a conflict of interest in representing the Town for Town Counsel Vincent Marino, since he also represents the Land Commission for the Town of Beacon Falls. Due to this circumstance, Attorney Marino had advised and recommended Attorney Patricia Sullivan to represent the Town as Legal Counsel during this matter between the Town of Beacon Falls and Town of Bethany. First Selectman Cofrancesco requested approval from the Finance Board to pay Attorney Sullivan at the same hourly rate as the current Town Counsel.

MOTION: The Board of Finance approved the use of the Town Counsel expense line to pay Attorney Sullivan to represent the Town as Legal Counsel during this matter between the Town of Beacon Falls and Town of Bethany. **Voting for: Grabowski, Ford, Huxley, Erickson, Barone. Unanimous Approval.**

5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION – CHAIRMAN REPORT

Member Huxley reported that Bethany might be receiving \$352,364.00 from the Fiscal Year 2020 – 2021 Amity Region #5 audit.

6. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION – FINANCE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Finance Director Tom Ellis presented the Board with a couple items to discuss and approvals:

1. Cyber Security Insurance: Finance Director Ellis noted that \$36,000.00 was paid to cover costs between the Town and the Board of Education.
2. ARPA Update: Finance Director Ellis noted that \$201,00.00 of the funds were spent out of the \$820,000.00. The Town will receive another \$820,000.00 next year.
3. BVFD – Pension & Retirement: Finance Director Ellis announced that as of June 30th there is \$320,000.00 in four different investments, budgeted for when a fireman retires. Mr. Ellis was needing feedback and protocols on how to go about modifying the investments options. The Board advised to check with Town Counsel.

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7. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION – SELECTMAN’S REPORT

First Selectman Cofrancesco mentioned that the Town is still waiting on having the electricity connected at the hangar. First Selectman Cofrancesco also noted that the Town has been working diligently on organizing the amounts for claims by the donors. A notice will be placed in the Town Bulletin that a letter will be sent out to each donor which will give a 90-day period to submit the claim for the refund of their donations. **NO ACTION TAKEN**

8. ADDRESS CONTROL ISSUES

- 1) Mr. Ellis noted that in conjunction with the Board of Education and Michelle Lasso, they are working to put paperwork together to start preparing for FY 2020-2021 audit.
- 2) Mr. Ellis also noted regarding Bank accounts closing processes and asked about the appropriate procedures and approvals.

9. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:00 p.m. the Board of Finance Chairman Grabowski motioned to adjourn the Regular Meeting. Member Huxley moved and Member Erickson seconded. **Voting for: Grabowski, Ford, Huxley, Erickson, Barone. Unanimous Approval.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lina V. Frazer
Board of Finance Clerk