

Minutes of the Board of Finance Regular Meeting

Town Hall – May 9, 2016

Members present: Justin Donnelly, Ryan Anderson, Chris Childs, Eric Harrington, Dr. Ann Huntington Mickelson, and Brian Kost; alternates Tracy Eccles, John Sullivan and J. Michael Stevens.

Also present: First Selectman Melissa Mack, Director of Finance Deborah Cerrato, Treasurer Christine Davidson, Director of Economic Development Patrick McMahon, Town Planner Bill Hawkins and Town Clerk Kathy Dunai.

Chairman Donnelly called the Board of Finance Regular Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Correspondence: None

Citizen Comment:

Dave Gauthier of Phelps Road spoke in support of the transfer of funds for the codification of town ordinances project.

Tom Frenaye of Warnertown Road thanked the Board of Finance for funding the economic development project on Route 75 and urged them to seek additional funding to extend the utilities further in the future.

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 11, 2016 and Budget Meetings April 4, April 18 and Public Hearing April 27, 2016 and Special Meeting May 2, 2016

Dr. Mickelson noted that in the 6th paragraph on Page 4 of the April 18th minutes the “radiation of the Bridge Street School” should be “remediation of the Bridge Street School”. Mr. Childs noted that Lauren Life’s comment on page 2 of the April 18th minutes didn’t include her concern that the Advisory Commission for Capital Expenditures (ACCE) was aware of the elimination of remediation costs in the business plan and thought they should have been aware since Mr. Stevens was a member of the Board of Finance, ACCE and the Bridge Street School sub-committee. Mr. Stevens responded that he was not a contributing member of the Bridge Street School sub-committee when that was discussed. Mr. Childs made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Dr. Mickelson and passed unanimously.

Transfer from Contingency to Capital Non-Recurring for Town Clerk Codification Project as recommended by the Board of Selectmen

Town Clerk Kathy Dunai was in attendance and noted that the codification project was discussed in her budget presentation on March 21st and motions were made but not reflected in the minutes to add the project costs to the budget. She provided the members with two cost proposals. First Selectman Mack said that the discussion took place but no motions were made and the item was unintentionally omitted. Ms. Dunai said that the last time the ordinances were published for sale was in the last 1980/early 1990 timeframe. State Statute 7-148a requires they be made available for sale on or before March 1st of every even numbered year. Mr. Kost asked what the town would receive for the \$12,000 project cost. Ms. Dunai responded that all ordinances will be organized, audited and noted for conflicts with current State Statutes, the Town Charter and other ordinances. The ordinances will be available online with searchable indexes and 8 ½ x 11 inch format books will be printed. Ms. Dunai noted that the

project would be completed over a 2 – 3 year timeframe. Mr. Harrington made the motion to transfer \$12,000 from Contingency to the Capital Non-Recurring fund for Town Clerk Codification Project as recommended by the Board of Selectmen. The motion was seconded by Mr. Childs and passed unanimously.

Discussion and approval of Historic Preservation Grant for Town Clerk

Town Clerk Dunai prepared a memo for the Board of Selectmen (BOS) and Board of Finance (BOF). She noted that since 2003 the Town has secured \$65,500 under the Historic Documents Preservation Targeted Grant. This is a non-match, non-competitive grant and the town can apply for \$4,000 in fiscal year 2017. A project to scan land record documents from the fall of 1954 to the early 1980's was completed in February. These records will be available online during Town Hall renovations so the physical volumes can be sent to an archival facility during construction. Ms. Dunai noted that there is a void in a portion of the indexes from January of 1970 to August of 1973. She wants to utilize the grant funds to correct this issue as well as to make additional records from 1983 to 1945 available online. This will be an asset to Title Searchers and attorneys and will generate additional income to the Town. Mr. Anderson made the motion to approve the submission of the Historic Documents Preservation Targeted Grant application. The motion was seconded by Mr. Harrington and passed unanimously.

Discussion and approval to submit a Grant application to complete the Local Historic Survey

Director of Economic Development Patrick McMahon provided a memo to the BOF explaining that through the Historic District Commission (HDC) the Town has the opportunity to apply for a \$30,000 Supplemental Certified Local Government Grant (SCLG) from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in order to update and digitize its Survey of Historical and Architectural Resources. The application deadline is June 10th. Mr. McMahon noted that the Town received a \$30,000 grant previously and through the work of the HDC led by David Bahlman about 200 of the 363 listings were completed. The Town plans to use the same architectural historian who completed the first project. Mr. Kost made the motion to approve the submission of the SCLG grant and expenditure of the grant should one be offered. The motion was seconded by Dr. Mickelson.

Mr. Childs asked about plans to incorporate this into the 350th anniversary of the Town. Mr. McMahon said that the cultural council meets monthly and has started talking about the 350th celebration. He noted that in the past a separate committee was formed and monthly events were planned about 3 - 4 years in advance of the anniversary. First Selectman Mack said she'd make plans for a committee and request future budget funding too.

Chairman Donnelly called for a vote on Mr. Kost's motion and it passed unanimously.

Discussion and approval to submit a Grant application for the Windsor Locks Canal capacity needs study

Mr. McMahon provided a memo regarding the request. He said that the Towns of Suffield and Windsor Locks would like to make two applications for grants that would fund a capital needs assessment and a feasibility study for hydropower. He said that the Windsor Locks Canal is an important historical and recreational asset to both towns. The Canal is almost two hundred years old and the canal systems are in need of capital repairs, The Canal also has the potential to generate hydropower. It is listed on the

National and State Historic Registers. The canal is closed to navigation today and is privately owned by Ahlstrom Corporation which has a manufacturing facility adjacent to the canal. Suffield and Windsor Locks have been invited to apply to the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation's Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grant (HPTAG) program which is a matching grant up to \$20,000. The \$20,000 match would be sought through a second grant application to the Historic Preservation Enhancement Grants (HPEG) program through the SHPO. The HPTAG grant deadline is June 1st and the HPEG grant deadline is May 10th. First Selectman Mack said that the Canal has historical and recreational value and is a Town asset that has been neglected. Some members argued that the canal is privately owned. There was also mention of possible future ownership by a non-profit or historic trust rather than a private corporation. She also said that group applications show cooperation between Towns which is looked upon favorably for future grant requests.

Dr. Mickelson made the motion that the Board of Finance approved of the submission of a HPTAG grant application to the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation in the amount of \$20,000 to conduct a capital needs assessment and a hydropower feasibility study of the Windsor Locks Canal and further that the Board of Finance approves the submission of a HPEG grant application to the State Historic Preservation Office in the amount of \$20,000 that would be used as matching funds for the HPTAG program to conduct a capital needs assessment and a hydropower feasibility study of the Windsor Locks Canal. The motion was seconded by Chris Childs and passed unanimously.

Discussion and approval to submit a grant to Main Street Investment Fund –subject to Board of Selectmen approval

Director of Economic Development Patrick McMahon provided a memo stating that the Town has the opportunity to apply for a grant of up to \$500,000 from the Main Street Investment Fund (MSIF) through the State Department of Housing. Applications are due May 31, 2016. Mr. McMahon is seeking approval to submit an application to fund site work as part of the Bridge Street Community Center project. Eligible projects include paving, sidewalks, landscaping and site amenities like lighting, benches and playscapes. The Bridge Street School is in the Town Center Village District (TCVD) and the TCVD is part of a Town Commercial Center Plan which is a grant requirement. Mr. McMahon identified \$723,750 worth of qualifying items in the Bridge Street School Community Center project. These items are part of the \$8.4 Million project costs approved by the voters. If awarded the grant could help reduce the project costs or help contain any cost increases. Mr. McMahon suggests applying for \$500,000. He noted this is a competitive grant with \$5 million allocated statewide. He added that this is a compelling project and it is substantially leveraged with Town funds. Mr. McMahon said we can clearly demonstrate how the project enhances Suffield's Town Center.

Mr. Kost asked if we were awarded the funding would we have to spend it based on the unclear project status. Mr. McMahon noted that the town had applied twice for funds for Ffyer Place but due to the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act the grants were not awarded. Mr. Kost asked if the state would be compelled to fund the project since we already approved bonding for it.

Mr. McMahon noted that the Board of Selectmen will consider this item at their May 18th meeting and the submission would have to be approved at Town Meeting which is tentatively scheduled for May 26th.

Dr. Mickelson made the motion to recommend the submission of a \$500,000 grant application to the Department of Housing for the Main Street Investment Fund for Bridge Street Community Center site improvements. Mr. Childs seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Appointment of Auditors

Director of Finance Debbie Cerrato reported that the Town needs to appoint auditors to be in compliance with State General Statutes. Mr. Kost asked what the proposed fee increase was and Ms. Cerrato responded that it was 2%. Mr. Kost made the motion to appoint Blum, Shapiro & Company, P.C. for the 2015-16 audit. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Childs asked about the suggestion to have a fraud risk assessment completed with current year funds. Chairman Donnelly said that he discussed the idea with the Board of Education and Water Pollution Control Authority and they are in agreement. Ms. Cerrato has a copy of Meriden's RFP and plans to choose a vendor and issue a purchase order by the end of the fiscal year to encumber the funds.

Budget Highlights

Ms. Cerrato passed out actual vs budget figures as of 4-30-16 for revenue and expense categories. Items of note on the revenue side included building department revenue at \$82,000 lower than last year at the same time; Park and Recreation activity up \$18,000; an invoicing timing issue at the Board of Education and the Pequot Grant being delayed since it was sent to the wrong town. Mr. Kost was concerned about the \$643,000 accounting for the Remington Street Bridge project which will cause a reduction in the fund balance. He also asked about the status of the High School Building audit and reimbursement. It was suggested that our State Representatives be contacted to assist in the process. Ms. Eccles questioned the tax collection rate but it was noted to be ahead of last year at this time.

Expenses were discussed and it was noted that the mild winter has kept expenses low for snow removal overtime and salt costs usually taken from the State Aid Road fund. The Contingency fund has a balance of \$256,000 after the \$12,000 transfer that was approved earlier in the agenda. Mr. Kost suggested that since the Finance Department will have a larger staff that he would like to see a quarterly forecast for revenues and expenditures. First Selectman Mack noted that the job descriptions/goals and objectives for Finance Director and Assistant Director of Finance are being reviewed and will be presented to the Board of Finance for their approval.

First Selectman's Report

First Selectman Mack began with the topic of the Bid & Purchase Policy. She noted that the Board of Selectmen approved changes on October 7, 2015 and the Board of Finance had requested information on how the Town Policy differed from the Board of Education (BOE) and Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) policies. Ms. Mack highlighted the differences and explained that the different threshold for construction and building projects was meant to facilitate the process. Mr. Kost asked if the thresholds were high enough.

First Selectman Mack reported that the town has been awarded the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Plan (LOTICIP) Grant for \$355,000 for the Mountain Road sidewalk and bike path project. Construction is expected for next year. Mr. Donnelly raised concerns about estimated vs. actual project

costs. Town Planner Bill Hawkins noted that the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) can raise the awards based on increased costs.

First Selectman Mack reported that the Town has received a grievance from a firefighter. She said that a legal review is taking place and a large percentage of career and volunteer personnel are being interviewed regarding the matter. She will have a report compiled to be presented to the Board of Selectmen, the Fire Chief and Fire Commission and the Fire Union.

More Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) have been found in the ceilings and possibly in the sealant used on the walls at the Kent Memorial Library. A consultant with PCB expertise is being hired to determine the extent of the problem to define a plan and to estimate abatement costs. Ms. Mack will be setting up a meeting with State and Federal EPA regulators. She noted that our zone has some of the most stringent regulations and she will be looking into the possibility of Federal funds to help with the costs.

Chairman Donnelly reminded the BOF members that the Town Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 11th and tentatively a special meeting to set the mill rate at the conclusion of the Town Meeting if the budget is approved.

At 8:00 p.m. Mr. Anderson moved to adjourn the regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kost and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Trase