

FIFTEEN ROPE FERRY ROAD
WATERFORD, CT 06385-2886



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**Board of Finance
Regular Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, September 10, 2025
Town Hall Auditorium 7:00 p.m.

- Present:** Glenn Patterson, Robert Tuneski, Michael Rocchetti (via cell phone), Bill Sheehan, Joseph Filippetti, Ron Fedor
- Absent:** Josh Kelly
- Elected:** Rob Brule, First Selectman; Abbas Danesh, Treasurer; Sue Driscoll, RTM; Paul Goldstein, RTM; Jennifer Bracciale, RTM
- Staff:** Kim Allen, Director of Finance; Jill Stevens, Director Utilities; Chris Haley, Director of Fire Services; Steven Sinagra, Director Emergency Management; Marc Balestracci, Chief of Police; Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works; Paige Walton, Assessor; Christine Johnson, Library Director; Rebecca Hall, Administrative Assistant Finance Office/BOF Recording Secretary
- Other:** Nick Kepple, Attorney

1. Establishment of a quorum and call to order

A quorum was established and the Regular Meeting of the Board of Finance was called to order at 7:00p.m. September 10, 2025.

2. Public Comment

a. Dr. Victor Ferry, Waterford resident, 551 Boston Post Road – Dr. Ferry opened his comments stating that during his time as an educator, the Town paid for his PhD. As a thank you to the town, he felt obligated to pay back in terms of community service. He has been a 50-year member of the Oswegatchie Fire Department in Waterford active for about 15. He is a certified community response team instructor as well as a school safety and security and emergency management instructor and has worked developing the first plans for school safety in the town of Waterford and in 40 other districts and other Vo-Tech schools. The town has had three (3) fire directors in the past six (6) years and all have done extensive research on the Oswegatchie Fire Station. For the betterment of the community and to assist businesses to want to come to Waterford, to raise the SRO rating or the Town, and to improve the efficiency of services, he advised the Board of Finance to vote in support of bonding for this facility.

b. Marc Balestracci, Chief of Police and Waterford resident – Letter Attached to Minutes

c. Jennifer Antonino Bracciale, RTM member, 21 Konomac Avenue – She thanked the Board of Finance for listening and specifically thanked BOF member, Bob Tuneski, for heading the Oswegatchie Fire House Building Committee. Mrs. Bracciale said she wants a firehouse that will cover all of the kids in her district. She is fighting for kids and the friends she has made at Oswegatchie Fire Department and the seniors in her district. She is proud of the work the committee has done and hopes [the Town] can get this done.

3. **Approval and acceptance of minutes:**

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Robert Tuneski to approve the minutes of the August 13, 2025 Regular Meeting as presented.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 1

Abstain: Joseph Filippetti

Motion: Passed

4. To consider and act on a request by Paige Walton, Assessor, for an appropriation in the amount of **\$378.52** from the line **#20501-57639 (Transfers to CAP & NE Funds)**, and forward to the RTM if required.

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Joseph Filippetti to move **\$379** from designated line **#20501-57639 (Transfers to CAP & NE Funds)** to **appropriated**, and forward to the RTM as required.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0

Motion: Passed

5. To consider and act on a request by Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works, for an additional appropriation in the amount of **\$25,000** from the **Undesignated Fund Balance of the Capital Non-recurring Expenditure Fund #205-31520** to a **new project line (Library Electrical Project)**, and forward to the RTM if required.

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Robert Tuneski to move **\$25,000** from the **Undesignated Fund Balance of the Capital Non-recurring Expenditure Fund #205-31520** to a **new project line (Library Electrical Project)**, and forward to the RTM as required.

Director Schneider advised the Board that this project is deferred maintenance. It pertains to the main electrical disconnect to the building. It is rusted due to water leakage in the area. The unit powers the entire library. There is concern about more resistance and the potential increase of heat. Public Works plans to work with Eversource to get a cost estimate and obtain funding for the project. At this point, it is not a danger but he would like to start work as soon as possible.

Ron Fedor asked the director if the Town should inspect all buildings or send an email to directors to check their buildings and inspect the areas for a similar issue as the library. Director Schneider said he has been walking through buildings and inspecting along with one of their contractors to seal areas from any water leakage.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0

Motion: Passed

6. To consider and act on a request by Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works, for an additional appropriation in the amount of **\$1,533,283** to a **new project line within the Capital Improvements Project Fund** for the **resurfacing of roads identified in Year 1 of the three-year plan**, and forward to the RTM if required.

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Joseph Filippetti to appropriate **\$1,533,283** from the **Unassigned Fund Balance of the General Fund** to a **new project line within the Capital Improvements Project Fund** for the **resurfacing of roads identified in Year 1 of the three-year plan**, and forward to the RTM as required.

Ron Fedor opened discussion by pointing out the current poor condition of Spithead Road. He questioned why this road is not on any of the lists for the paving/resurfacing. Director Schneider said a study was performed in town in 2022 so the 3-year plan was to address roads where there are gas mains. The roads listed were prioritized because Eversource provided the Town over \$800,000 to cover the cost of their reparation. Spithead Road and Cross Road will likely be included as he seeks funding from the Town in the next three-year plan.

Bill Sheehan noted that his records show the last study was performed in 2020 [not 2022] and he questioned if the Director is planning to pay someone to come in and update the plan. Director Schneider confirmed the study was 2020, not 2022 as he had stated. The director added that this funding for a future study will be part of the Public Works budget presentation in the upcoming budget season.

Chairman Glenn Patterson stated that the funding for this project is supposed to come out of the General Fund Balance. This type of project used to come out of the Capital Improvement Plan. He expressed concern with taking money out of the General Fund Balance as the Board of Finance's policy is to maintain 13-15% of revenue funds in this line. Using money from this line for this project will be the first time the Town will be under the 15% threshold. He doesn't think it's a prudent approach, or good project planning practice, to fund from this account in the future. The Chairman believes the town should go year-by-year and not three years out to fund projects like road work.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0

Motion: Passed

7. To consider and act on a request by Jill Stevens, Director of Utility Commission, for an additional appropriation of \$500,000 for the line #20531-57881 (Plastic Water Service Line Replacement), and forward to the RTM if required.

Motion by Bill Sheehan and seconded by Joseph Filippetti to appropriate \$500,000 from the Unassigned Fund Balance of the General Fund to line #20531-57881 (Plastic Water Service Line Replacement), and forward to the RTM as required.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0

Motion: Passed

8. To consider and act on a request by Jill Stevens, Director of Utility Commission, to appropriate \$200,000 from designated line #20531-57881 (Plastic Water Service Line Replacement), and forward to the RTM if required.

Motion by Bill Sheehan and seconded by Robert Tuneski to move \$200,000 from designated line #20531-57881 (Plastic Water Service Line Replacement) to appropriated, and forward to the RTM as required.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0

Motion: Passed

9. To consider and act on a request by Jill Stevens, Director of Utility Commission, for an appropriation in the amount of \$200,000 from designated line # 20531-57895* (Cross Country Sewer Main Access), and forward to the RTM if required. **correction to line # on agenda*

Motion by Bill Sheehan and seconded by Ron Fedor to move \$200,000 from designated line #20531-57895 (Cross Country Sewer Main Access) to appropriated, and forward to the RTM as required.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0

Motion: Passed

10. To consider and act on a request by Jill Stevens, Director of Utility Commission, for an appropriation in the amount of \$46,222 from designated line #20531-57896* (Water Tank Management), and forward to the RTM if required. **correction to line # on agenda*

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Joseph Filippetti to move \$46,222 from designated line #20531-57896 (Water Tank Management) to appropriated, and forward to the RTM as required.

Chairman Patterson asked Director Stevens to clarify the process. Director Stevens stated that the vendor comes in and manages the tank for the Utility Commission. The vendor makes sure the coating is not damaged or negatively impacted when the town's radio system is adjusted or Veolia moves their equipment near the tank. It is an annual contract for the \$46,222/year and cannot be issued biennially.

Vote: 6 – 0 - 0

Motion: Passed

11. To consider and act on a request by Jill Stevens, Director of Utility Commission, for an appropriation in the amount of \$166,950 from designated line #20531-57898* (Bartlett Corners Water Booster), and forward to the RTM if required. **correction to line # on agenda*

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to move \$166,950 from designated line #20531-57898* (Bartlett Corners Water Booster) to appropriated, and forward to the RTM as required.

Vote: 6 – 0 - 0

Motion: Passed

12. **RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING AN APPROPRIATION AND BOND AUTHORIZATION OF UP TO \$12,600,000 FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW TOWN OF WATERFORD OSWEGATCHIE FIRE STATION**

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Robert Tuneski to recommend an appropriation and bond authorization of up to \$12,600,000 for the construction of a new Town of Waterford Oswegatchie Fire Station, and forward to the RTM as required.

Vote: 6 – 0 - 0

Motion: Passed

Ron Fedor began discussion with stating when the Board first looked at this project, the total project cost was considerably less than presented now. He asked Robert Tuneski, Oswegatchie Fire House Building Committee Liaison, why is the project as expensive as it is? Is this a top of the line facility or are there minimum expectations? Mr. Tuneski responded saying he believes this firehouse is elegant in its simplicity using materials meant to last 50 years. He is confident the project plan is well done.

Mr. Fedor asked if the Town should expect any additional contracts or maintenance fees that may be incurred that differ from the other fire stations in town? Mr. Tuneski said much of the plan is meant to be long-lasting and an economic investment. Director of Fire Services, Chris Haley added that it's important to note that the facility will now be Town-owned and operated with access to the Town's preferred vendors and in-house staff for any maintenance that may arise. Cannot project maintenance at this time other than items with compliance standards.

Mr. Fedor do the Fire Fighters Union and the Building Committee that currently exists for Oswegatchie both endorse this project? Robert Tuneski said that the Building Committee unanimously supports the project and one of the Building Committee members is in the Fire Fighters Union.

Ron Fedor asked about the size of the building specifically the number of bays being built and how many vehicles the building can hold. He said that the plan indicates that nine (9) vehicles can fit in the building and why? Director Haley pointed out that this will be the smallest fire station in the town once built. He said that the bay design is a "drive-through" design. The design encourages the use/storage of three (3) vehicles to fully access the drive-through feature. Robert Tuneski added the building size is 9,988 ft².

Bill Sheehan asked if the building meets all NFPA requirements to which the director answered, "yes". Mr. Sheehan informed the Board of the financials associated with this project and the Upgrades to the Town's Communications System. In FY27, if the town didn't do either bondings tonight, the Debt Service would be approximately \$7 mil. With both projects tonight, it's an increase to approximately \$9 mil. The Town won't get the Debt Service back down to about \$7 mil until FY32. He doesn't think this is a reason to turn the project down, he just wants it noted in the public that we don't decrease the Debt Service in the current year because the town hasn't spent the money yet.

Chairman Patterson agrees with this financial analysis. Mr. Patterson asked the Director of Finance, Kim Allen, what the tax implication would be on a median house in Waterford to which she responded that worst-case scenario would be an increase of \$63 per household. Mrs. Allen added that this number is quite fluid and will fluctuate based on the projected increase in the Town's revenue next year.

13. RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING AN APPROPRIATION AND FUNDING AUTHORIZATION OF \$4,600,000 FOR UPGRADES TO THE TOWN'S COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to recommend an **appropriation and funding authorization of \$4,600,000 for Upgrades to the Town's Communications System**, and forward to the RTM as required.

Chairman Patterson began discussion with the panel of directors: Chief of Police, Marc Balestracci; Director of Emergency Management, Steven Sinagra; and Director of Fire Services, Chris Haley. Chairman Patterson asked if there is any portion of the project where other equipment may be used or the contractor could go out to bid to get a better price? Director Sinagra said that Motorola builds systems with some equipment by other manufacturers but it is not possible to buy the system in parts as everything is under state contract pricing. Chairman Patterson asked about the Nuclear Safety Grant that the Town is applying for next year. Director Sinagra informed the Board that if awarded, the Town will receive \$1,000,000 toward the \$4,600,000 project. There are stipulations for use of the grant money and it must be spent in 365 days. The timeline for the project is between 12-18 months and the current quotes are good for 60-90 days. Once the money is approved, the Town would want to sign a contract and start work as soon as possible. The grant comes directly from Dominion and the State is the fiduciary.

Chairman Patterson asked Director Allen if the Town bonds \$4.6 mil for this project and \$1 mil comes in from grant, is the Town still paying the Debt Service? Director Allen informed the Board that once the money is bonded, it is the total owed and cannot be paid off early. Mrs. Allen added that after speaking with bond advisors and the Town's banking partners, she is looking at direct bank loans with interest rates the same as bonds and the Town can pay off at any time. She is looking at this option to be sure the residents are not taxed over the next 10 years and paying for more principle and interest than necessary. Additionally, Director Allen said that the resolution was specifically worded at "funding authorization" to allow flexibility in the funding options to do what is in the best interest of the town's residents.

Ron Fedor suggested bonding the \$3.6 mil, take \$1 mil from the Fund Balance, then apply for a loan for \$1 mil to reimburse the Fund Balance. Mr. Patterson liked the idea and Director Allen said it is feasible but if the Town is not awarded the \$1 mil from the Nuclear Safety Grant, the residents will be taxed to reimburse the Fund.

Bill Sheehan amended his original motion as follows:

Motion by Bill Sheehan and seconded by Ron Fedor to recommend an appropriation and funding authorization of \$3,600,000 for Upgrades to the Town's Communications System and an appropriation of \$1,000,000 from the Unassigned Fund Balance of the General Fund for Upgrades to the Town's Communications System, and forward to the RTM as required.

Vote: 6 – 0 - 0

Motion: Passed

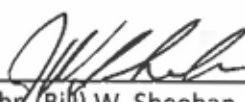
- 14. **Old Business:** none
- 15. **New Business:** none
- 16. **Liaison Reports:** none
- 17. **Correspondence:** No comments
- 18. **Adjournment**

Motion by Bill Sheehan and seconded by Joseph Filippetti to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Finance at 8:17pm.

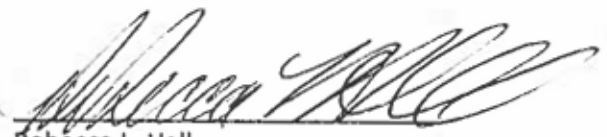
Vote: 6 – 0 - 0

Motion: Passed

Respectfully submitted,



John (Bill) W. Sheehan,
Clerk of the Board of Finance



Rebecca L. Hall,
Recording Secretary

Attachments: Marc Balestracci, Chief of Police – Public Comment Letter, new Town of Waterford Fire Station

Good evening,

Tonight I wanted to take a minute or two to voice my support for the new Oswegatchie Fire House. Although I sit before you as the Town's Police Chief, I spent four terms on the RTM, one term on the Board of Selectman and was actually a member of the Oswegatchie Building Committee while serving on the Board of Selectman. In 2014, when I campaigned for State Representative, I spent considerable time reviewing this firehouse and its deteriorating conditions, which was 11 years ago. So I am uniquely familiar with the position each of you are in, regarding your vote to fund this project or not.

But this project goes beyond just the fire department. The proposed firehouse will serve as a strategic staging location, not only for our firefighters but also for police, public works, utility crews and others. This integrated approach fosters seamless coordination during emergencies and large-scale events, enabling faster response times and better resource management.

When multiple agencies operate from strategically located hubs, communication is streamlined, and lives are saved. For my entire career in Waterford, which spans over 24 years, we have used these firehouses to stage personnel from numerous services during significant storms, flooding, nor'easters and heavy snow forecasts. Should one part of the town be inaccessible due to road closures, floods or other reasons, this town has resources placed to ensure we can properly respond to the public in times of crisis. This has been a standard operating procedure for many years and has been successful.

In addition, the Oswegatchie Fire House, along with a couple of other fire houses, are emergency voting locations should the town experience any voter disruptions on Election Day.

So should you fund the new firehouse, I encourage you to leave in place the number of bays proposed. What one may view as wasted space, I view as properly planned emergency preparation, in addition to looking beyond today's needs and ensuring this critical infrastructure supports tomorrow's needs as well.

Investing in this firehouse is an investment in public safety and community well-being. It will provide our firefighters with state-of-the-art facilities, including improved training areas, modern equipment storage, and comfortable living quarters, all designed to support their demanding work. Moreover, having staging locations for police, public works and utility crews on site, ensures that critical infrastructure maintenance and emergency repairs can be coordinated swiftly and efficiently.

By supporting this construction project, you are reinforcing the town's commitment to our firefighter's safety and the safety of every resident in our community.

In closing, I have heard the comments in regards to fire department staffing, the condition of other fire houses in town and the overall direction of fire services in Waterford. Working as closely as I do with town leaders and with several fire service directors, I am encouraged that we, as a town, have taken a multiple path approach to improving our fire services. In the past few years, there have been many successes to include the creation of Captains positions, a new and improved union contract, an increase in firefighter staffing, a plan for new communications to include state of the art radios and new pagers and finally a plan to have our first town-owned firehouse. There has not been a tunnel-vision approach, but rather multi-layered focus on ways to improve the fire service, which ultimately improves service to our residents.

I Thank you.

Marc Balestracci