

Board of Finance
Budget Hearing Minutes

Wednesday, March 20, 2023
Town Hall Auditorium – 7:00 pm

Present: Chairman Glenn Patterson, John Sheehan, Kevin Petchark, Ronald Fedor, Joe Fillipetti, David Peabody and Robert Tuneski

Elected: First Selectman Robert Brule; Thomas Dembek, RTM; Susan Driscoll, RTM; Cheryl Larder, RTM

Staff: Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works; Sandy Kenniston, Office Coordinator, Public Works; Steven Sinagra, Director of Emergency Management; Michael Howley, Fire Services Director; Marc Balestracci, Chief of Police; David Campo, Town Clerk; Paige Walton, Assessor; Thomas Giard, Superintendent of Schools; Joseph Mancini, Director of Operations Board of Education; Kimberly Allen, Director of Finance; Maryellen McConnell, Recording Secretary

1. Establishment of a quorum and call to order:

A quorum was established and the Budget Meeting of the Board of Finance was called to order at 7:00 pm on March 20, 2023.

2. Public Comment: No public comment

An opening statement regarding the budget process was made by Glenn Patterson, Chairman.

3. Standing Motion: A standing **motion** was made by Glenn Patterson and **seconded** by Ronald Fedor for David Peabody and Joe Filippetti to tentatively approve the budget requests for FY23/24 for the remainder of the budget meetings.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

4. Building Maintenance:

The largest increase in the Building Maintenance budget is the custodial services at the Community Center. Last year that was funded by Recreation & Parks and the Senior Center. Building Maintenance must fund that now. Custodial services are bid out over the next three years. Electricity rates were bid out, Eversource is the transmitter, we are locked in for rates for the next 5 years.

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TEST: David P. Campo
TOWN CLERK

Building Maintenance (continued):

If there is an issue with a building (leaky pipe, clogged toilet) the department heads have access to School Dude to start a work order. Of course, they can always call or send an email if someone does not have access to School Dude. The board recommended one person as a point of contact in each building have access to School Dude and they enter in any and all problems. Public Works should charge for their time when working on Building Maintenance items.

We are having HVAC issues at the Police Department, Public Safety building and all the roofs in the town need to be upgraded. The biggest issue is the Underground tank issues, once this is completed it will take a huge environmental risk off of the town. As we start to heat more with natural gas, we can put this out to bid just like we did with the electricity. We are finding drawings of town buildings and are having Fred Lathrop with the Utility Department scan them and put them into digital format.

Status of the auditorium seating: that was passed onto the IT Department, which will not be Building Maintenance. Fire Station maintenance: we do very little for them. Electricity, water, sewer come under Building Maintenance. The rest goes to the Director of Fire Services. Building Maintenance provides everything from clogged toilets to major contracts.

Motion by David Peabody and **seconded** by Joe Filippetti to approve the Building Maintenance request for FY23/24 in the total amount of \$899,770.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

5. Public Works:

Diesel fuel and gas is going up. SCRRRA will be charging us \$61/ton for disposal of solid waste. An organics collection program has started, Stonington has a pilot program going on, although we are not fully familiar with how this works.

Director Schneider is the only one who has taken all of the NIMS courses to date. All Public Works employees are up to date on OSHA requirements. MS4 training will be starting for employees in a few weeks.

We do have an on call service for an Engineer. We also utilize Fred Lathrop, Engineer with the Utility Commission. At this time we have had one mechanic retire. Snow removal to date, we have spent \$8,000.

Public Works (continued):

Streetlights: when we find out a street light is not working we contact our contractor. He then goes out to check on the light, if he can fix it he will. If he has to order a part, this will take a little time and if it is an issue with the electricity with Eversource, they have to come out and fix it. Unfortunately, Eversource does not always do this quickly.

Landfill: the landfill was closed in 2001, and all tests have come back stating that it is stable. We do use that area as a storage area for brush, until SCRRRA comes out in the spring and mulches all of it up. Recreation & Parks and the Board of Educational also have a salt shed for their use on the property.

Motion by David Peabody and **seconded** by Joe Filippetti to approve the Public Works budget request for FY23/24 in the total amount of \$4,994,798.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

6. Capital Improvements:

Building Maintenance: Underground tank for Eugene O'Neil, there are issues with the septic system that is failing. Jordan Park house: the repairs will well exceed the \$25,000 that we have. We will start with that, do what repairs we can. Town dock: the dock needs to be replaced. All permits will be pulled for this job through the town and we are not sure if the Coast Guard will have to inspect this afterwards. The floating dock needs to be removed from the water, it is listing, flip it over and completely clean it.

Motion by David Peabody and **seconded** by Joe Filippetti to approve the Capital Improvements budget request for FY23/24 in the total amount of \$1,636,721.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

Motion by Glenn Patterson and **seconded** by Ronald Fedor to change the order of the agenda to move Transfers to Capital and Non-Recurring Expenditure Fund to the Debt Service slot.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

7. Transfers to Capital and Non-Recurring Expenditure Fund:

IT: computer replacement at the Police Department in FY24 for \$42,500.

Fires Services: SCBA upgrade, there is a 15 year life span on these tanks for \$64,000.

The board did question when the upgrades for the bathrooms and bunk rooms would be starting.

WUC: is requesting an additional \$100,000 as they are already behind the eight-ball on this project. When they do come out to repair the water leak, they will replace the plastic pipe with the copper.

Motion by David Peabody and **seconded** by Joe Filippetti to approve Transfers to Capital and Non-Recurring Expenditure Fund request for FY23/24 in the total amount of \$281,250.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

8. Capital Improvement Snapshot:

A discussion regarding the five year Capital Snap Shot was held. The board is happy with the \$1,000,000 funding of the Fleet Management Plan. They would like to see more clarity, they have an outline, and they would like to see more details.

Cheryl Larder with the RTM commented that the Capital Snap Shot was not part of the agenda and is not on the web site. She was trying to follow along, but could not due to items not included on the agenda.

9. Debt Services:

Status of the Early Learning Center closeout: the Director of Finance is working with the Board of Education Director of Finance to see if this debt can be eliminated. We are also working with the State of Connecticut on this. They have been in touch with Kathleen McCarthy on this as well.

The board did ask why we have a balloon payment in FY24? We did refunding of bonds and FY24 is when we picked.

Motion by David Peabody and **seconded** by Joe Filippetti to approve the Representative Town Meeting budget request for FY23/24 in the total amount of \$8,148,250..

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

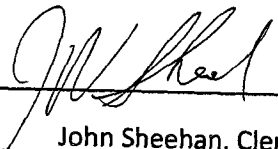
10. Adjournment:

Motion by John Sheehan and **seconded** by Robert Tuneski to adjourn the Budget Meeting of the Board of Finance at 8:48 pm.

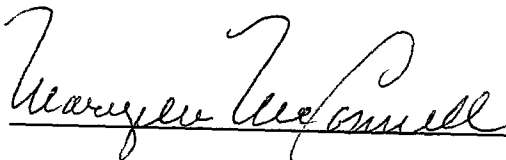
Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

Respectively Submitted,



John Sheehan, Clerk



Maryellen McConnell, Recording Secretary

**Comments of BOF Member J. W. "Bill" Sheehan
On the FY2024 Capital Plan as Presented
At BOF Meeting on March 20, 2023**

1. The discussion of the Capital Plan includes a new concept – "Projected Capital Requests Outside the Budget cycle". I suspect that, if all of the planned projects in that category are funded, this will be the only year such a formal presentation will be used.
2. The General Fund Balance (GFB) projects are really expected to be funded by the Unassigned Fund Balance of the General Fund that is transferred to the Capital Improvement Fund or the Capital, Non-Recurring Expenditure Fund for the project.
3. I noted that only \$4 million will be used from the Unassigned Fund Balance in the Capital Plan as presented. The forwarding letter also mentions funding the OSW Fire House Construction but it is not in the plan. I am assuming that the lack of figure is because a figure has not been formally presented by the OSW Fire House Building Committee which only recently has been revived. However, doing the math, there is \$6 Million still in play based on the \$10 million mentioned in your letter.
4. The Plan presented this year looks more like a plan than previous year's presentation. Thank you.
5. Some comments on the plan, not the budget aspect (in other words, projects scheduled for 2025-2028
 - a. Glad to see Fleet level funded at \$1 million over the time frame. I will have more comments when we discuss Fleet specifically in the Current Year Capital Plan (the Transfer to the Capital Improvement Fund).
 - b. As I noted above, the \$200,000 for Town Facility Maintenance in the out years will most likely not come from the unassigned fund balance.
 - c. I don't understand why the removal of the O'Neill UST is funded over two years.
 - d. The Town Center Project will most likely not get funding from the Unassigned Fund Balance in the out years
 - e. Same with the funding for Paving Project as the Town Center Project
 - f. Same with the funding for Water pressure project on Bloomingdale Road.
 - g. Same with the Sewer Interceptor Easement Access funding.
 - h. Same with the BOE Athletic Fields and Facility Maintenance funding in the out years.
 - i. Twenty-three projects that were listed as FY24 projects in the FY23 plan were either moved or dropped in the FY24 plan
 - j. Plan does not include any Sewer Maintenance Development Fund or Enterprise Fund projects.
 - k. Plan does not include any use of LOCIP or LOTCIP funds. LOCIP funds are annual from the State and may be banked. LOTCIP requires submitting a detailed request to the COG. Are there any plans to take advantage of these State supplied funds in FY24?