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Board of Finance

REVISED Budget Hearing Minutes

Monday, March 10, 2025
Town Hall Auditorium 7:00pm

Present: Chairman Glenn Patterson, Ronald R. Fedor, Bill Sheehan, Michael Rocchetti, Robert Tuneski, Josh Kelly (arrived at 7:10pm, departed at 8:36pm), Joseph Filippetti

Elected: Rob Brule, First Selectman

Staff: Kimberly Allen, Finance Director; Jonathan Mullen, Planning Director; Mark Wujtewicz, Planner; Rebecca Hall, Admin Assistant Finance Office/BOF Recording Secretary

Other: Guy Russo, Economic Development Commission; Michael Buscetto, Economic Development Commission; Talivadis Maidelis, Secretary Conservation Commission

1. Establishment of a quorum and call to order:

A quorum was established and a call to order was established at 7:00 pm, March 10, 2025.

2. Public comment:

- a. Helen Kwasniewski, Quaker Hill resident spoke regarding the Planning and Zoning Department. Ms. Kwasniewski urged the Board of Finance to disallow this budget. She would like all of the staff fired and stated that a board member was given special treatment whereas an investigation should be incited. She submitted a call to the department and has not been responded to in over one (1) year and three (3) weeks at the time of the meeting. She also advised the Board of Finance to stop voting yes to all department budgets as presented.
- b. An opening statement regarding the budget process was made by Glenn Patterson, Chairman.

Standing Motion: was made by Joseph Filippetti and seconded by Michael Rocchetti to consider the budget requests without individual motions for each series and department to expedite the meeting. Bill Sheehan will make motion on all budgets and Ron Fedor will second the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0

Motion: Passed

3. Economic Development Commission Budget:

Motion by Bill Sheehan and seconded by Ron Fedor to approve the Economic Development Commission budget request for FY25/26 in the total amount of \$25,352 designated by the Series Subtotals above.

Jon Mullen, Planning Director gave an opening statement regarding the past year for the Economic Development Commission. He shared that the highlights of the current fiscal year was the Grand Opening of Chipotle and small business events such as the informational open houses held in town. These open houses included "Access to Capital – Finding Money for Your Business" and the upcoming

Women's Business Development Council meeting. Michael Buscetto added that the Commission's outreach through these events have proven to be beneficial for collaboration, recruitment and retention of small business owners in the area. Working with an outside organization such as seCTer (Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region) has also been positive. Guy Russo talked about how the commission is looking for small business entrepreneurs who may be working in their homes or other small, private areas but are looking to expand their business and need more space. The Town has several underutilized properties and the commission is hopeful to fill them as entrepreneurial work spaces.

Bill Sheehan questioned the Commission about the status of hiring a proper consultant. Director Mullen responded that the Commission will be discussing this position over the next few months to solicit a qualified individual.

Board members Josh Kelly, Michael Rocchetti, and Ron Fedor all agreed that the Economic Development Commission budget seems low and the group could use extra money for marketing themselves on a larger scale. Glenn Patterson concluded that a written strategy would probably be in the best interest of the group as the Commission grows and Director Mullen agreed.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

4. Conservation Commission Budget:

Jon Mullen, along with Mark Wujtewicz and Talivadis Maidelis, Secretary Conservation Commission spoke on behalf of the Conservation Commission. There has been a 0% increase from the FY25 budget. Glenn Patterson asked about the cost for testing as the Commission has not used the funds for this line item over the past few years. Director Mullen responded that the near-drought conditions for have not required numerous tests for the past two years so the group has not used the funds to the full extent as budgeted. This year, due to much commercial and private development, testing will increase so they intend to use the funds available.

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to approve the Conservation Commission budget request for FY25/26 in the total amount of **\$18,250** designated by the Series Subtotals above.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

5. Planning and Zoning Budget:

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to approve the Planning and Zoning budget request for FY25/26 in the total amount of **\$695,016** designated by the Series Subtotals above.

Jon Mullen indicated that the majority of the budget increase of just over 1% is due to salary increases in the department. Director Mullen will provide overtime specifics to the Board as requested. Chairman Patterson asked if the department could operate with a deeper reduction in Office Supplies based on expenses from prior years. The director was certain he could work with that deduction in the budget request. Personnel Worksheet submitted as supplemental back-up.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

6. Zoning Board of Appeals Budget:

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to approve the Zoning Board of Appeals budget request for FY25/26 in the total amount of **\$4,310** designated by the Series Subtotals above.

Jon Mullen and Mark Wujtewicz fielded questions regarding the requested budget with a 0% increase. Director Mullen stated that the focus of this group is to acclimate the newer Board members to the role of the Zoning Board of Appeals and processes/procedures for completing tasks for the Town.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

7. Building Department Budget:

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to approve the Building Department budget request for FY25/26 in the total amount of **\$321,515** designated by the Series Subtotals above.

Jon Mullen and Mark Wujtewicz presented the budget for the Building Department. It was noted there is a 1.41% decrease in their budget. A Personnel Worksheet was submitted as supplement back-up.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

8. Flood and Erosion Control Budget:

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to approve the Flood and Erosion Control budget request for FY25/26 in the total amount of **\$1,109** designated by the Series Subtotals above.

Josh Kelly Moved the Question, **seconded** by Michael Rocchetti.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

9. Finance Department Budget:

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to approve the Finance Department budget request for FY25/26 in the total amount of **\$784,326** designated by the Series Subtotals above.

Finance Director, Kimberly Allen opened conversation regarding the Department's budget by sharing the Town is moving to an integrated payables system to make all vendor payments electronically. The Department is in the beginning stages of this transition and will pilot the process using select vendors in April 2025. Director Allen was asked about staffing and responded that her staff continually takes on new responsibilities and works incredibly well together to complete tasks for the Town.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

10. Review Projected Revenue

A short discussion took place amongst the Board members to reflect on various factors that will affect the Town's revenue such as the upcoming Tax Relief Bill for Veterans. Bill Sheehan estimated the Mill Rate will increase by approximately 1-2 mills based on data thus far.

11. Adjournment:

Motion by Joseph Filippetti and **seconded** by Michael Rocchetti to adjourn the Budget Meeting of the Board of Finance at 8:37pm.

Vote: 6-0-0

Motion: Passed

Respectfully submitted

Bill Sheehan, Clerk



Rebecca L. Hall, Secretary