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Board of Finance
Budget Hearing Minutes

Wednesday, March 18, 2024
Town Hall Auditorium – 7:00 pm

Present: Chairman Glenn Patterson, John Sheehan, Michael Rocchetti*, Ronald Fedor, Joe Filippetti, David Peabody and Robert Tuneski

Absent: *Michael Rocchetti arrived 7:08pm

Elected: First Selectman Robert Brule; Pat Fedor, Chair Board of Education, Paul Goldstein, RTM; Susan Driscoll, RTM; Thomas Dembek, RTM

Staff: Kimberly Allen, Director of Finance; Marc Balestracci, Chief of Police; David Ferland, Police Lieutenant; Jeff Robillard, IT Manager; Gary Schneider, Public Works Director; Sandra Kenniston, Public Works Office Coordinator; Michael Howley, Director of Fire Services; Ryan McNamara, Director of Recreation & Parks; James Bartelli, Utility Commission Director; Thomas Giard, Superintendent of Schools; Joseph Mancini, Director of Operations Board of Education; Rebecca Hall, Admin Assistant Finance Office/BOF 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 18, 2024.

2. Public Comment: None

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

Standing Motion: A **motion** was made by Bill Sheehan and **seconded by** Ron Fedor to have a standing motion by Joseph Filippetti and seconded by Robert Tuneski to consider each budget as presented.

Vote: 6-0-0 **Motion:** Passed

3. **Building Maintenance**:

Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works, along with Sandra Kenniston, Office Coordinator Public Works, opened the discussion with a brief overview of the department's accomplishments in the past year. He feels that operations are going in the right direction and that the DPW team is planning and executing their work more effectively. The team of employees no longer resorts to "quick fixes" or doing things "the way they've always done them". The department is planning with details in mind and selecting vendors in the town's regular bidding process as opposed to contracting on an emergency basis. It is a large department with many projects in process but they are currently able to run smoothly. Building Maintenance is refining what has been done in past years and he is seeing the improvement.

Bill Sheehan began questions from the Board of Finance by asking about the services provided by this department, the process for work order requests by other departments, and if there is a single point of contact from Building Maintenance located in each town building. Director Schneider answered that his department manages most custodial services, utilities and maintenance operations of all buildings. He stated there is a formal email system in place for departments to submit work order requests in which they typically respond and complete within 24-48 hours. While there may not be a designated Building Maintenance representative at every town building, the Department Heads and office coordinators communicate with his staff regarding any issues. It was suggested by Mr. Sheehan that designating a Building Maintenance representative in all buildings in the future could be beneficial to the town.

Chairman Glenn Patterson suggested renaming Building Maintenance to "Facilities Management". He noted the marked improvement in this department in being proactive rather than reactive to their work. Chairman Patterson discussed the Eugene O'Neill property to clarify what the town is responsible for as some work is being done by Building Maintenance now. Director Schneider said his department is handling sprinkler maintenance, a roofing job on the mansion, and some maintenance responsibilities but the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center is handling all else. Chairman Patterson asked if Building Maintenance will acquire the maintenance responsibilities of the new Fire House. 1st Selectman Rob Brule indicated that the new Fire Station would assume that maintenance would come from the town who will own the new building.

Ron Fedor pointed out a $5,000 differential in delivery and supply of electricity to the town buildings. Director Schneider said Eversource is the contractor and each building could be categorized under different rate codes. This is something they can look into for cost savings in the future.

David Peabody asked about a possible energy audit of the buildings in town. Director Schneider shared that a UConn Conservation group conducted assessments in coordination with Jon Mullen, town Planning Director, but the group has not been in contact with the department since the end of 2023. Mr. Mullen is currently following up with the group to continue assessments and view conclusions.

The board was thankful to Director Schneider for providing an accurate list of supplies for the backup documentation and commended him on the functional improvement and organization of the department.

Motion by Joseph Filippetti seconded by Robert Tuneski to tentatively approve the Budget for Building Maintenance in the amount of **$895,824**.

Vote: 7-0-0 **Motion:** Passed

4. Public Works:

Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works, and Sandra Kenniston, Office Coordinator Public Works presented the FY25 projection for the department. Director Schneider said their theme is to be "good stewards of the infrastructure" for the Town of Waterford. The department is working to be sure they get the basic functions of Public works working well to help the community thrive.

Bill Sheehan asked where the Department of Public Works (DPW) engineering services come from and if an engineer is needed for the town. Director Schneider stated that there are several on-call engineering services used by the town. David Peabody asked for clarification of the Clerical/Technical position as the totals were different on summary sheet and in backup. Kimberly Allen, Director of Finance, clarified that the Board of Selectman approved the requested amount of $143,000, not the $157,000 indicated in the backup.

The remainder of the discussion included topics such as professional fees, updated training for the department, solid waste disposal costs, potential compost removal for residents, recycling, transfer station deliveries and rates, additional tree maintenance costs, and a traffic control cost increase for traffic markings.

Chairman Patterson asked that the costs of DPW vehicle repairs and standard maintenance be separated in the budget backup in the future. Director Schneider told the chairman he will sit with the head mechanic to discuss how to document the work appropriately.

Motion by Joseph Filippetti seconded by Robert Tuneski to tentatively approve the Budget for Public Works in the amount of **$5,086,238**.

Vote: 7-0-0 **Motion:** Passed

5. Capital Improvements:

1st Selectman, Rob Brule, sat to answer any questions from the Board of Finance. As a few questions were posed regarding derivation of the 5 Year Capital Plan and delay of projects, Chairman Patterson suggested leaving these topics for the upcoming Board of Finance regular meeting since the BOF does not approve the 5 Year Capital Plan. By deferring discussion the Board could move on to address the budget requests on the agenda. Members agreed and moved on with the discussion.

As questions arose about the proposed Fleet Plan, it was discovered that the BOF did not have the current plan in hand. Updated hard copies will be supplied to the Board on Wednesday, March 20, 2024 by the Director of Finance, Kimberly Allen.

There were requests made by Glenn Peterson, Ron Fedor, and Bill Sheehan to the 1st Selectman for additional information in the form of backup as well as spreadsheet modifications on the Fleet Plan. Department heads and representatives (Kimberly Allen, Director of Finance; Marc Balestracci, Chief of Police; David Ferland, Police Lieutenant; Gary Schneider, Public Works Director; Sandra Kenniston, Public Works Office Coordinator; Michael Howley, Director of Fire

Services; Ryan McNamara, Director of Recreation & Parks; James Bartelli, Utility Commission Director; Joseph Mancini, Director of Operations Board of Education) fielded questions regarding their FY25 proposed projects.

Motion by Joseph Filippetti seconded by Robert Tuneski to tentatively approve the Budget for Capital Improvements in the amount of $**1,312,527**.

Vote: 7-0-0 **Motion:** Passed

Motion by David Peabody and **seconded** by Joseph Filippetti to reorder the agenda moving Debt Services Budget to Item #7 and moving Transfers to Capital and Non-Recurring Expenditure Fund to Item #6.

Vote: 7-0-0 **Motion:** Passed

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

Questions and comments to Michael Howley, Director of Fire Services regarding the Goshen Fire Station roof replacement and breathing apparatus upgrades. It was noted that FY25 money was not requested for the breathing apparatus upgrades; the Finance Director noted that multi-year requests must be revisited by the Departments heads every budget cycle to ensure requesting the desired amount each fiscal year.

Questions and comments to Gary Schneider, Public Works Director and Jeff Robillard, IT Manager regarding computer replacements, PD HVAC system upgrade, and PD roof replacement. The Board noted that several of the CNR requests for FY25 projects are for funding engineering and/or design-only effort to better estimate the full project cost.

Questions and comments to Ryan McNamara, Director of Recreation & Parks regarding Waterford Town Beach walkway repair and bathroom installation, Stenger Park.

Questions and comments to James Bartelli, Utility Commission Director for Plastic Water Service Replacement Program.

Questions and comments to Joseph Mancini, Director of Operations Board of Education for Energy Efficiency program, HVAC evaluation, possible MUNIS upgrade.

Ron Fedor commented overall that FY26 and FY27 propose massive project costs.

Motion by Joseph Filippetti seconded by Robert Tuneski to tentatively approve the Budget for Transfers to Capital and Non-Recurring Expenditure Fund in the amount of **$938,399.**

Vote: 7-0-0 **Motion:** Passed

7. **Debt Services Budget:**

Chairman Patterson requested to Kimberly Allen, Director of Finance, update the chart on page 2 labeled "Expenditure History" to show FY20-FY30 totals. Director Allen acknowledged the request.

Motion by Joseph Filippetti seconded by Robert Tuneski to tentatively approve the Budget for Debt Services in the amount of $**8,109,746**.

Vote: 7-0-0 **Motion:** Passed

8. Adjournment:

Motion by Joseph Filippetti and **seconded** by Michael Rocchetti to adjourn the Budget Meeting of the Board of Finance at 9:21 pm.

Vote: 7-0-0 **Motion:** Passed

Respectively Submitted,

John Sheehan, Clerk

Rebecca L. Hall, Secretary