

Board of Finance Meeting Minutes (revised)  
May 21, 2020 at 6:00pm  
Meeting was held remotely due to Covid-19

- 1- **Call to Order:** Board of Finance Chairman Steve Ezzes opening the meeting at 6:00pm. Also in attendance were BOF Members: Greg Murphy, Rone Baldwin, Amy Gare Jeff Farr, Dick Bochinski and Alan Grauberd. Finance Director Rick Darling, Town Administrator Jonathan Luiz, First Selectman Chris Spaulding, Superintendent Dr. Bill McKersie, BOE Chairman Tony Pesco, Assistant Superintendent Mike Rizzo, BOE Finance Director Phil Cross, and Town residents.
- 2- **Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited
- 3- **Discussion and possible decision regarding the proposed Town operating budget for FY 2020-21.** Mr. Ezzes asked the Board if there were any outstanding questions. Mr. Farr asked if money included for potential salary increase for non-union Town employees. Mr. Darling said approximately \$35,000. First selectman Spaulding explained his position on this. Other areas discussed included senior tax abatements and partnering with Redding for the Communications Center. Mr. Luiz explained that Easton needs to hold a referendum regarding joining the Health District, which won't take place in time for this budget. First Selectman Spaulding stated that we are expecting a back payment from Sprint who has a lease on our tower. The Tower reserve fund balance was discussed. Mr. Luiz mentioned that we could increase the offset from this fund by \$35,000.
- 4- **Discussion and possible decision regarding the proposed Town Capital Budget:** Capital Budget line items were discussed including Michael's Way Bridge and Fire Dept. respirators. The Town will be applying for a STEAP grant for the bridge project. Capital costs continued to be discussed, including the ramp at the senior center, DPW masonry truck purchase and paving costs. Mr. Baldwin asked if the Town Building repairs and Onion Barn improvements can be moved to next year. Mr. Luiz responded repairs are a constant line item that needs to stay. The onion barn can be delayed, but pointed out that this area serves as an alternative egress for emergency vehicles.
- 5- **Discussion and possible decision regarding the proposed Board of Education's Operating budget for FY 2020-21.** BOE Chairman Tony Pesco stated they have reduced their operating budget by an additional 120,000 and their potential cost savings increased by 550,000 to \$600,000 this year due to COVID 19. Mr. Farr asked several questions. Items discussed included the school bus contract, potential salary increases for non –union employees, early retirement program, security system monitoring and special education transportation costs. Mr. Ezzes asked to get more information

on early retirement. Mr. Pesco said they are constantly looking at more efficient models for Special Education. Mr. Baldwin asked about the areas where they found the \$120,000 savings. Mr. Pesco said those areas were FTE related budget adjustments.

**6- Discussion and possible decision regarding the proposed BOE Capital Budget for FY 2020-21.**

Mr. Baldwin asked about soundproofing rooms at the high school and the middle school. Dr. McKersie said this is an occupation hazard and needs to be resolved.

Other Capital line items were discussed. There was a brief discussion regarding COVID related savings and impact on the mill rate next year and the following year should savings be used to affect the FY 20-21 mill rate.

Mr. Bochinski expressed his feelings that a decision has to be made; we have all the formation we need. Mr. Grauberd expressed his opinion that we need to get to a 0% increase to mill rate by accessing the General Fund. Mr. Farr expressed he doesn't feel we should tap into the Town's surplus; instead we should look towards more budget cuts. It was agreed that the BOF will make a decision on the budget and mill rate on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

**The meeting was then opened to the public for questions only**

7- **Discussion/decision regarding approval of minutes from the May 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing.** Mr. Grauberd moved to approve the minutes from the May 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing, Mr. Farr seconded. Motion carried 4:2 with Ms Gare and Mr. Murphy opposing

8- **Adjourn:** Mr. Bochinski moved to adjourn at 9:11pm. Mr. Grauberd seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes submitted by: Randi Derene, Administrative Assistant

Minutes approved: June 11, 2020