Board of Selectmen
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2
January 10, 2022
Via YouTube LIve
Special Meeting Minutes
Tri-Board Meeting

In attendance:

Board of Selectmen Members: Irene Haines, First Selectman; Erik Dill (remotely); Theresa Govert (remotely)

Board of Finance Members: Tracey Gionta, Chairman; Bruce Dutch, Secretary; Joseph Corbett; Todd Gelston; Harvey Thomas; Rebecca Whatley

Board of Education Members: Marc Pisciotti, Chairman (remotely); Patricia Stricker, Secretary; Erik Anderson (remotely); James Francesi, (remotely); Terri Garrity (remotely); Bryan Perry (remotely); Keira Thompson (remotely)

Also Present: Brian Reas, Superintendent of Schools; Cindy Varricchio, Finance Director; Linda Zemienieski, Executive Assistant to the Board of Selectmen and other members of the public

1. Call to Order:

   Ms. Gionta called the Board of Finance meeting to order at 7:00 pm. and the attendees said the pledge of allegiance.

   Ms. Haines called the Board of Selectmen meeting to order at 7:00 pm.
   .
   Mr. Pisciotti called the Board of Education meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2. Tri-Board Meeting, 2022-2023 Proposed Budget-Boards of Finance, Education and Selectmen

   A. Review and Discussion

   Board of Finance

   Ms. Gionta stated the goal of the Board of Finance is to provide current services and plan for the future within the financial means of the community. She said she wants the public to understand the budget process and advised that the budget workshop calendar is on the Town's website and meetings will be open to the public and also on YouTube. She provided information on where the public could submit their comments and questions.

   Board of Selectmen

   Ms. Haines provided a brief opening statement. She advised that ClearGov will provide the public with line-by-line real-time detail regarding the Town's budget. She stated the Town is using a zero-based budget approach which will require justification for any department's request for increased funding. She reviewed the 2022-2023 budget development timeline and encouraged early and regular participation in the process by the public. She provided a

staffing update and noted that, even though Finance Director Varricchio has accepted a position with the town of Preston, she will be assisting East Haddam with this year's budget workshops on a consulting basis. Ms. Haines reviewed several other open positions and advised that the Town had eliminated the part-time constable positions.

Ms. Haines discussed capital requests and the Long-Range Capital Improvement Committee's work. She also reported the following:

- A new library building sub-committee is being formed and she encouraged qualified individuals to apply.
- GetAway Campgrounds is open and the cabins are fully booked through March.
- The old Cumberland Farms property was sold and a new gas station will go in on the site.
- In response to public input, a Redevelopment Agency is being established to oversee the development of the 1 and 5 Main Street site. The Board of Selectmen will update the Village Revitalization Committee's charge and reinstitute the group into the Town's Redevelopment Agency. She advised that most of the existing committee members have expressed a willingness to serve as members of the new agency and several other community members have also expressed interest in participating.
- She anticipates, and wants to take advantage of, federal funding for the development of municipal broadband infrastructure. She discussed the next steps in the process.
- She is pursuing a composting program for the Town to reduce expenses at the Transfer Station.
- She noted several challenges for the Town, such as the state's upcoming Swing Bridge repair project, several open positions, and a significant building repair needed at Fire Company #2.

Ms. Haines added that she is looking into a wholistic approach to the Town's social service programs and also noted that the Town is working with the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce to establish a line of communication with the public and businesses regarding the Swing Bridge repair project. She responded to several questions from the Board of Finance members.

Board of Education

Superintendent Reas thanked the members Boards of Finance and Selectmen for this opportunity to meet and discuss the upcoming budget process. He introduced Ms. Stricker who is the Secretary of the Board of Education and the Chair of its Business and Planning Sub-Committee and noted that the Board of Education started their 2022-2023 budget process in the fall.

Mr. Reas stated that the Board of Education is in its third year of a five-year strategic plan and he reported the following accomplishments:

- They have expanded the pre-K program and are re-energizing the K-3 curriculum.
- They are working on a social/emotional curriculum for all grades.
- They have moved their data to the IReady platform and all students now have the necessary technology hardware to work remotely.
- The high school has doubled it passing scores in the advanced placement courses.
- The Parentsquare app was launched which streamlines communications with parents.

Mr. Reas stated that inflation will be a big driver of the 2022-2023 budget and, also, the Board would like to begin incorporating field trips back into the school programs. He noted that, due to the pandemic, there is an increased need for student support and they are collaborating with Goodwin College for math instruction. He stated that a priority for the schools is to counsel students on college prospects as well as opportunities in the trades and to prepare them to pursue either.

Mr. Reas reported that the capital projects' list for this year includes the Elementary School envelope project, replacing the oil tank at the High School, and the construction of a sports complex at the High School.

Ms. Stricker reviewed the Board's budget workshop schedule and encouraged public participation. She provided information on where the public could submit comments/questions.

Ms. Stricker and Mr. Reas responded to several questions. In response to an inquiry from Ms. Whatley, Ms. Varricchio provided additional clarification regarding selecting vendors from the state's bid list. Mr. Reas advised that the Board of Education is expecting funding from the state that is consistent with previous years. He confirmed that the Elementary and High Schools are fully utilized, and the Middle School is slightly less then fully utilized.

Mr. Thomas asked both First Selectman Haines and Superintendent Reas to provide their presentations to the Board of Finance members so that they can submit any additional questions they have to them in writing. Ms. Haines and Mr. Reas agreed and agreed to respond to any submitted questions at the BOF's February meeting.

B. Guest and Audience Comments: There were no guests or audience comments raised at the meeting.

3. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Ms. Govert, seconded by Mr. Dill, to adjourn the meeting at 7:54pm. Unanimous aye.

Respectfully submitted,
Erik Dill, Secretary

Recorded