TOWN OF EAST HADDAM
Board of Finance
Regular Meeting Minutes
December 12, 2022
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Rooms 1 and 2
Via Zoom and YouTube Life

Participating:

Board of Finance Members:

Joseph Corbett
Bruce Dutch
Todd Gelston
Tracey Gionta
Harvey Thomas
Rebecca Whatley

Others:

Rob Funk – Finance Director
Irene Haines – First Selectwoman
And other members of the public virtually

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Gionta called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and the attendees said the pledge of allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Regular Meeting - November 14, 2022

Ms. Gionta called the Board's attention to a copy of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 14, 2022 in their meeting packets. Mr. Gelston noted a typographical error on the bottom of page 3: correct "Board of Education's" to "Board of Education".

Motion was made by Mr. Gelston to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 17, 2022 as amended. Ms. Whatley seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Motion carried.

GUESTS AND AUDIENCE

There was no discussion under this agenda item.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence discussed at the meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Ms. Gionta reported that the revaluation letters were sent to East Haddam property owners. She noted that revaluations are required by law every five years. She reviewed the relationship of assessment values and the mill rate and noted that she expected a significant change to the Town's mill rate this year. In response to a question from the Board, she advised that more information regarding the topic is contained in the Citizen's Guide to the Budget which will be inserted in an upcoming issue of the East Haddam News; also, if residents still have questions, they should contact the Assessor's office.

a. Tax Collector's Report

Ms. Gionta called the Board's attention to a copy of the Tax Collector's Report in their meeting packets. The Board had no questions regarding the report.

b. Board Subcommittee Reports

i. Communications – Mr. Gelston called the Board's attention to a draft article in their meeting packets regarding the budget process and several edits were noted. Mr. Gelston advised that the article will be published in the January 5th edition of the East Haddam News and he responded to several questions from the Board members.

Mr. Gelston stated that the Subcommittee is planning two more articles in the immediate future: an article on the revaluation and how it impacts the mill rate and property taxes, and an article introducing Mr. Funk as the new Finance Director and outlining the position's job responsibilities. During This Discussion the Finance Director's article was postponed.

ii. Long-Range Capital Improvements Committee –Ms. Gionta reported that she, Mr. Thomas, and Mr. Funk met and discussed the scoring process for proposed Capital Improvement projects as it relates to Cleargov.

Mr. Funk advised that the Long-Range Capital Improvements Committee met on November 17th and that requests were sent to department heads and board chairmen to submit their list of 2023 capital requests to the Finance Office. He noted that he requested the information be submitted no later than December 19th and has already received a number of submissions.

iii. Financial Policies – Ms. Gionta stated that the Board's Financial Policies documents may require some slight revisions to ensure that the policies and the actual capital projects scoring process are in compatible.

c. Review Citizen's Guide to the Budget Process

The Board reviewed the draft Citizen's Guide to the Budget Process and minor edits were noted.

d. Liaison Reports

i. Redevelopment Agency – Mr. Thomas reported that the Agency met last week and he reviewed highlights of the meeting. He advised that they have issued an RFP for a Tax Incentive Financing (TIF) consultant and also formed a sub-committee to research environmental consultants. Mr. Thomas stated that he supports both actions. He noted, however, that he feels the Agency must make it a priority to develop a project concept that they believe will be both financially sustainable and attractive to investors.

Mr. Funk advised that he had received materials on TIFs at a recent CCM meeting and he would share it with the Board and the chair of the Redevelopment Agency. Mr. Thomas responded to questions from the Board.

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

First Selectwoman reported the following:

- New traffic cameras and seismograph technology has been installed at the Swingbridge construction site and the schedule to open the area for marine traffic has been moved up to February 1st.
- Three bids were received for the reconstruction of Fire Company No. 2's building and the Fire Marshals presented their recommendation to the Board of Selectmen. She advised, however, that the Board of Selectmen is going to reinterview some of the bidders before they approve the Fire Marshal's recommended contractor. She stated that there is the possibility of some grant funding for this project.
- The Library Committee will be presenting their report to the Board of Selectmen at the Board's December 21st meeting.
- A joint EDC/PZC sub-committee is looking into developing a master plan for the Moodus business district. She stated that there are technical assistance grants available and other organizations that could assist in the project.
- Santa will be flying into East Haddam Village on December 13th.

Ms. Haines responded to questions from the Board and provided information regarding the Eversource/CT Natural Gas pipeline that will be install along Route 149 through Moodus.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Following up on a question that was raised at the previous BOF meeting, Mr. Funk advised that, by law, the Town's record retention policy follows the CT State Library's policy. He noted that each department has a binder providing applicable detail regarding the retention policy for their documents.

a. October 2022 YTD Budget Report – Mr. Funk called the Board's attention to the October 2022 YTD summary budget report in their meeting packets. He stated that, on the revenue side, Conveyance Taxes are dropping from what was received in 2021; he also noted that Building Permit fees for 2022 are down.

Mr. Funk reported that the Town had received its share ($35k) of the federal opioid settlement which is reflected in Other Revenue. He noted that the distribution is the Town's full 5-year allotment and, to date, no instructions have been provided on how the funds can be used.

Mr. Funk discussed the Shared Services budget and advised that, due to several staffing vacancies, the Shared Services payroll will come in slightly under budget, even without transferring funds from Contingency for the HR position. He responded to several questions from the Board members.

b. Draft 2023-2024 Budget Calendar

Mr. Funk reviewed some minor changes to the draft 2023-2024 budget calendar and noted that it will be posted on the Town's website.

c. Audit Schedule Update

Mr. Funk reported that the audit is going well; however, he does not expect that it will be completed by December 31st. He stated that the auditors had recommended the Town apply to OPM for an extension to January 31st. He noted that OPM has already approved that application.

OLD BUSINESS

a. School HVAC Grant Application – Update

Ms. Gionta advised that the Board of Education had submitted a grant application to the state for $4.2M for HVAC projects at the three schools. She stated that they expect a fairly quick response and, additionally, the state is talking about a second round of air quality grants.

b. Capital Items

i. Fire Company No 2 Building Assessment Update and possible action – Ms. Gionta noted that the BOF has allocated $175k for this project and there was no new update.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Grant Acceptance – M. Jones Family Fund at the Community Foundation at Middlesex County Summer 2023 Camp Donation

Motion made by Mr. Dutch to accept a grant in the amount of $1,136.40 from the M. Jones Family Fund at the Community Foundation at Middlesex County for the purpose of supporting summer 2023 camp programs and to request the Board of Selectmen schedule a Town Meeting for approval of said grant acceptance. Mr. Gelston seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

GUEST AND AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Mr. Funk noted that there were no questions or comments submitted by the public.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Mr. Dutch to adjourn at 8:02 p.m. Ms. Whatley seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
/s/
Bruce Dutch
Secretary