TOWN OF EAST HADDAM
Board of Finance
Regular Meeting Minutes
April 10, 2023
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Rooms 1 and 2
Via Zoom and YouTube Live

Participating:

Board of Finance Members:

Joseph Corbett
Todd Gelston
Tracey Gionta
Harvey Thomas
Rebecca Whatley

Absent:

Bruce Dutch

Others:

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

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.

Ms. Gionta stated that she would like to add the following item to the Agenda:

- 8e) Grant Authorization – Historic Document Grant

Motion made by Ms. Whatley to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Gelston seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Regular Meeting, February 13, 2023

Motion made by Mr. Thomas to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 13, 2023 as written. Mr. Corbett seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion passed.

b. Special Meeting, March 6, 2023

Motion made by Mr. Corbett to approve the minutes of the special meeting of March 6, 2023 as written. Ms. Whatley seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion passed.

c. Special Meeting, March 29, 2023

Mr. Gelston requested the minutes be amended as follows:

- Item a under 2023 – 2024 BUDGET WORKSHOP – Revise the last sentence in the 4th paragraph to read: "*After Board discussion, the consensus was to include the expense of a new full-time officer in the Contingency budget for FY2*4."

Motion made by Mr. Gelston to approve the minutes of the special meeting of March 29, 2023 as amended. Mr. Corbett seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion passed.

GUESTS AND AUDIENCE COMMENTS

There were no guest or audience comments discussed at this time in the meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence discussed at the meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

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. She reviewed the report and in response to a question she raised, Mr. Funk provided a three-year history of tax receipt percentages.

b. Board Subcommittee Reports

i. Communications – Mr. Gelston reported that the Communications Subcommittee had not met during the Budget Workshop season.

ii. Long-Range Capital Improvements Committee – Ms. Gionta reported that the Subcommittee is scheduled to reconvene in June 2023.

iii. Financial Policies – Mr. Thomas reported that he and Ms. Gionta will be scheduling a meeting to discuss policies for which grant submissions the BOF must pre-approve, establishing a capital reserve account for the Cemetery Committee, and updates to the Lakes Association and Long-Range Capital Improvements Committee policies. Ms. Gionta reported that Ms. Varricchio is reviewing the General Fund Revenues policy.

c. Liaison Reports

i. Redevelopment Agency – Mr. Thomas reported that the next meeting of the Redevelopment Agency is scheduled for April 13th. He advised that the primary topic on the agenda for that meeting is to develop their workplan.

Mr. Thomas reiterated that the Agency has engaged an environmental consulting firm to coordinate the existing environmental reports for the former town office and garage property and identify what, if any, additional tests need to be done and perform them. He noted that the consulting firm is also charged with identifying any potential environmental clean-up grants for which the Town may qualify. He added that two TIF consulting firms had previously provided presentations for the members of the Redevelopment Agency.

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

Ms. Haines provided an overview of the state's new Police Accountability Law. She stated that the town of Hebron has reached out to her requesting they share the services of the individual assigned to address compliance with the new legislation. Ms. Haines advised that she supports Officer Rhodes' recommendations that (1) he is the individual on the Town's police staff that is best qualified to address compliance with the new law, and (2) since that project will require his full-time attention, the Town should hire a new officer to cover his patrols so that the current level of police service is maintained.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Gelston, Ms. Haines clarified the reasons the state legislature felt they needed to implement the Police Accountability Law. Mr. Gelston expressed his frustration with what he feels is "poorly thought out legislation".

In response to a question from Ms. Whatley, Mr. Funk confirmed that the funding the BOF agreed to set-aside for a new officer, is equivalent to a Step 1 (i.e., new hire) position with the Town and does not include any health insurance benefits.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. February 2022 Year-To-Date Budget Report

Mr. Funk called the Board's attention to the February 2022 year-to-date budget report in their meeting packets. He reviewed the report and highlighted several seemingly variances in Operating Budgets and Revenues.

In response to questions raised by Mr. Gelston, Mr. Funk agreed to confirm whether or not there is any change in the anticipated rent revenue for the cell tower and whether there are any opportunities to add cell providers to the Town's towers.

b. Update 2023-2024 Budget Calendar

Mr. Funk called the Board's attention to the FY2023-2024 Budget Calendar in their meeting packets and stated that no recent changes/updates had been made to the calendar.

c. Audit Update

Mr. Funk reported that he and the auditors had discussed how to verify FY2022 ARPA funds. He noted that the funds had been deposited to the General Fund and it was the auditors' recommendation to delay spending them until after the close of FY2022. Mr. Funk reviewed the pros and cons of the auditors' advise.

Mr. Funk stated that the Town has an extension until April 30th to have its audit completed. He reported that he had spoken with the auditors and they advised that their work will be completed by the deadline; however, their management will most likely not sign off on it until the first or second week in May.

OLD BUSINESS

a. Discussion Regarding Proposed FY2023-2024 Budget for Public Hearing Presentation and Communication

Ms. Gionta advised that the Citizens' Guide has been drafted and she will include Finance Director Funk's calculations in a PowerPoint presentation for the Public Hearing. She noted that she will also include a simple explanation of the impact of the budget vs. the revaluation on a citizen's property tax.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Grant Acceptance – FY 2019 Emergency Management Performance Grant – Mr. Funk provided background information on this grant.

Motion made by Mr. Gelston to accept a Fiscal Year 2019 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) in the amount of $5,000.00 from the state of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (Revenue Account 10542-43000 and Expense Account 10542070-51590) and to request that the Board of Selectmen schedule a Town Meeting for approval. Mr. Corbett seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion passed.

b. Grant Acceptance – Neglected Cemetery Account Grant – Ms. Gionta provided background information on this grant.

Motion made by Mr. Gelston to accept from the state of Connecticut, Office of Policy Management, Intergovernmental Policy and Planning Division, through the Neglected Cemetery Account Grant Program, a grant in the amount of $5,000.00 (Cemeteries Operating Budget 10544350-54424) with no requirement for a Town match and to request that the Board of Selectmen schedule a Town Meeting for approval. Ms. Whatley seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion passed.

c. Request to Reallocate Previously Approved Capital Reserve Funds from MS Hot Water Tank Replacement (C0153) to ADA Motorized Cart (C0254) in the amount of $6,100 to Cover Cost Increases – Ms. Gionta provided background on the BOE's request to reallocate funds.

Motion made by Mr. Gelston, to transfer $6,100.00 within the capital reserve fund from project C0153 MS Hot Water Tank to project C0254 to fund the cost of price increases related to the purchase of an ADA Motorized Cart. Mr. Corbett seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion passed.

d. Request from the Board of Selectmen to Transfer $5,000.00 from FY23 Contingency 10541020-58330 to Shared Services Shredding 26341990-53610 to Fund the Additional Cost for Document Shredding Service Related to Clean-out of the Old Town Office Building – Ms. Gionta provided background information about this request from the BOS to transfer funds from the FY23 Contingency Fund to cover the additional cost of shredding documents from the Old Town Office Building.

Motion made by Mr. Thomas to transfer $5,000.00 from the FY23 Board of Finance Contingency Budget (10541020-58330) to Shared Services Shredding (26341990-53610). Motion seconded by Mr. Gelston and it was unanimously approved. Motion passed.

In response to an inquiry from Mr. Thomas, Ms. Haines confirmed that they are following the Town's retention policy for the documents stored in the Old Town Office Building.

e. Grant Authorization – Historic Preservation Grant – Ms. Gionta provided background on this grant authorization request.

Motion made by Mr. Thomas to authorize the application for a Historic Document Preservation Program Grant in the amount of $6,000.00 for the preservation of historic records and documents. Mr. Corbett seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion passed.

GUEST AND AUDIENCE COMMENTS

There were no guest or audience comments discussed at this time in meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Mr. Thomas to adjourn at 7:59 p.m. Ms. Whatley seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
/s/
Bruce Dutch
Secretary