

TOWN OF EAST HADDAM
Board of Finance
Special Meeting Minutes
October 16, 2023
Municipal Office Building – Rooms 1 & 2
Via Zoom and YouTube Live

Participating:

Board of Finance Members:

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

Others:

Don Angersola, Facilities Manager
Rob Funk, Finance Director
Irene Haines, First Selectwoman
Cindy Hughson, BOE Business Manager
Leslie Zoll, CPA, CliftonLarsonAllen
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.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence discussed at the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Gionta called the Board's attention to a copy of the minutes in their meeting packets of the Special Meeting of September 13, 2023. Ms. Whatley noted that the minutes incorrectly listed her as absent from the meeting.

Motion was made by Mr. Gelston to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of September 13, 2023 as amended. Mr. Dutch seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Motion carried.

GUESTS AND AUDIENCE COMMENTS

There were no guest or audience comments raised at the meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence discussed at the meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

a. Board Subcommittee Reports

- i. Communications – Mr. Gelston reported that the Communications Sub-committee has scheduled a meeting for November 1st to discuss potential topics for its next article.
- ii. Long-Range Capital Improvements Committee – First Selectwomen Haines advised that a meeting of the Long-Range Capital Improvements Committee is scheduled for October 25th. It was noted that the second BOF liaison position to this Committee is vacant and Mr. Thomas volunteered to attend the October meeting.
- iii. Financial Policies – Ms. Gionta stated that she will schedule a meeting for this sub-committee to meet in the near future.

b. Liaison Reports

- i. Redevelopment Agency – Mr. Thomas reported that the Town was approved for a \$200k state grant for non-invasive environmental studies on properties within its redevelopment district to close any gaps from previously completed inspections and to develop an outline for a remediation plan.

Mr. Thomas further reported that the First Selectwoman has signed a contract with a financial consulting firm to provide an opinion on what kind of development would be financially viable (i.e., attract commercial developers) in the redevelopment district and to suggest potential options for financing of offsite improvements.

Mr. Thomas responded to several questions from the Board.

FIRST SELECTMEN'S REPORT

Ms. Haines reported the following:

- She provided an update on Public Works' road reclamation projects.
- An RFP will be issued for an engineering plan to pull together the CT DOT Highway study and sidewalk plan for the Moodus business district.
- Between December 1, 2023 and March 31, 2024, there will be one-way traffic on the Swingbridge controlled by a traffic light. Beginning April 1, 2024, the contractor has an

option for six more 63-hour closings; however, it has yet to be determined whether or not all/any of the closures will be needed.

- She encouraged people to visit the new Riverview Park below the Riverhouse in the Village.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- a. FY22 Audit Presentation – CLA – Mr. Funk introduced Leslie Zoll, a member of CliftonLarsonAllen CPA, the Town's audit firm.

Ms. Zoll reviewed the Town's FY22 audit, including terms of engagement, results of the audit, financial statement highlights, federal and state audits, required communications, and upcoming FASB changes. She stated that the state and federal audits noted a significant deficiency due to the Town's delayed FY22 audit.

Ms. Zoll recognized that the Town's unfilled Finance Director position had an impact on the timeliness of the FY22 audit and, given the fact that the position is again vacant, she stressed the need to fill the position as quickly as possible. There was a general discussion regarding the lack of qualified candidates and whether there are options for utilizing a temporary staffing agency during the interim.

- b. August 2023 Year to Date Budget Report – Finance Director Funk called the Board's attention to the August 2023 YTD Budget Report in their meeting packets. He noted that revenues are up primarily due to increased Town Clerk fees, Building Department fees, and investment interest income.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business discussed at the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Board of Education/CIP Update

- i. HVAC Grant Process – Ms. Hughson distributed materials related to this agenda item. She reported that the BOE estimated it would cost \$3.4M to equip the Elementary School with air-conditioning, \$4.7M for the High School, and \$2.5M for the Middle School. She advised that the state has released its second round of grants for such projects and stated that the BOE would like to submit applications for the Elementary and High School projects. Ms. Hughson noted that the Middle School does not qualify for the state's grant program because it is less than 20-years old; however, the BOE recommends installing air-conditioning in that facility also.

Ms. Hughson reviewed new state mandates for an annual evaluation and certification of the air quality in schools starting January 1, 2024 and inspections and uniform evaluations of

school HVAC systems which must be conducted by a certified industrial hygienist every five years.

Ms. Hughson stated the BOE would like the BOF's input on undertaking air conditioning projects for all three schools and applying for grants for the Elementary and High School projects. She responded to questions from the Board.

Ms. Gionta queried the Board on their opinions and the consensus was in support of installing air-conditioning in all three schools and to apply for state grants for the Elementary and High School projects.

Motion made by Mr. Thomas to authorize the Board of Education to apply for the state's HVAC improvement grants for the East Haddam Elementary School and the Nathan Hale-Ray High School and to recommend that the Town hold a referendum to authorize the total cost of HVAC projects for all three Town schools. Mr. Dutch seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

- ii. Athletic Complex Update – Ms. Hughson She invited the Board to a ribbon cutting ceremony on October 30th and stated that a number of state dignitaries have also been invited. She advised that, mainly due to the unanticipated need to remove a number of stumps in the center of the new track, the project is \$108k (2%) over budget. She stated that former Superintendent Reas had recommended transferring the balance (\$24k) of the Elementary School envelope project over to the High School track project to reduce the overage.
 - iii. ADA Viewing Platform, High School – Ms. Hughson reported that bids to construct an ADA compliant viewing platform at the High School softball field came in between \$130k to \$150k. She advised, however, that the BOE rejected all bids because none covered anticipated stump removal work. She stated the project needs to be completed by August 2024 and the BOE will add this item to the list of long-range capital improvement projects.
- b. Discussion Regarding Open Space Reissuance of Bond Authorization Relating to Purchase of the Kronberg Property – Ms. Haines advised that the Town's bond counsel will draft resolutions for the BOS and BOF calling for a Town Meeting and a referendum in January regarding this agenda item.
 - c. Discussion Regarding Open Space Future Bonding Authorization – Ms. Gionta provided background information on this agenda item. First Selectwoman Haines recommended the Board consider allocating the proposed bond authorization equally for open space purchases and economic development initiatives. There was a general discussion regarding her recommendation and Ms. Gionta stated she would include a discussion item regarding Ms. Haines' proposal on the BOF's next meeting agenda.
 - d. Other Business – There was no additional Old Business discussed at the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Budget Transfer Request – Request from Director of Operations to Transfer Funds Between Capital Projects – From Grange Windows & Town Meeting Hall Windows to Replacement of FD#1 Roof – Mr. Angersola provided background on this agenda item. He advised that the roof on Fire Company No. 1 is 25 years old and is leaking. He stated that 50-year shingles were installed and the manufacturer has issued a \$1,500.00 rebate to the Town; however, the main reason for the leaks is that the shingles were poorly installed.

Mr. Angersola requested \$45k be transferred from the Grange and Town Meeting Hall window replacement project to cover the cost of a new roof for Fire Company No. 1. He responded to several questions from the Board.

Motion made by Mr. Gelston to move \$45,000.00 from Capital Project C0272 to a new project titled Replacement of Fire Department No. 1 Roof. Ms. Whatley seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

- b. Budget Transfer Request – Board of Education Request to Transfer Funds Between Capital Projects – From Elementary School Envelope Project to Athletic Complex – Discussion of this agenda item was postponed until the BOE informs the BOF with the amount of the transfer.
- c. Other Business – Timeline for Budget Development – Ms. Haines reviewed potential schedules for the FY2024-2025 budget development process. Ms. Gionta asked the Board members to consider the proposals and stated that she will add the topic as a discussion item on their November meeting agenda.

Mr. Funk reported that he will be filing an amended Budget Report with the CT Office of Policy & Management which reflects the BOE's decision to reduce its capital budget by \$143k. Ms. Hughston and Mr. Funk responded to questions from the Board.

AUDIENCE AND GUEST COMMENTS

There were no guest or audience comments raised at the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Mr. Dutch to adjourn at 9:20 p.m. Mr. Gelston seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Bruce Dutch

Secretary