Board of Selectmen
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2
February 26, 2025
Special Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: I. Haines; T. Bourgoin; E. Dill
Also Present: D. Angersola; V. Belles; Dr. T. DeBrito; M. Hall; C. Hughson; P. Stricker; L. Zemienieski and other members of the public

1. First Selectman Haines called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. 2025-2026 General Budget Review Workshop

   A. Board of Education Capital – Superintendent DeBrito and Facilities Director Angersola reviewed the following Board of Education Capital items:

   - Elementary School Exterior Lighting Upgrade ($25k) – Mr. Angersola advised that this is a new request that is a consequence of a recent Police Department safety audit. He stated that the BOE received quotes to upgrade the lighting in the parking lot and sidewalk areas. This item has not yet been reviewed or rated by the Long Range Capital Improvements Committee.

   - Elementary School Grade 2/3 Playground Equipment ($25k) – Dr. DeBrito stated this capital request is to fund $25k a year, over six years, to replace the 2nd and 3rd grade playground equipment. This item has not yet been reviewed or rated by the Long Range Capital Improvements Committee.

   - Elementary School K/1 Playground Equipment ($20.5k) – Dr. DeBrito stated that this is a one-time request to expand the kindergarten and 1st grade playground equipment. This item has not yet been reviewed or rated by the Long Range Capital Improvements Committee.

   - Elementary School Kitchen Serving Line ($30k) – Mr. Angersola advised that this is a 2-year capital plan with contributions of $30k annually. He noted the current serving line was originally installed in the 1960s.

   - Elementary School Rear Access Road ($500k) - Mr. Angersola advised that this is a new request which is a consequence of a recent Police Department safety audit. He stated that the Police recommended a second means of egress should be installed at the Elementary School for emergency purposes. Locations for the proposed rear access were discussed by the Board and Mr. Angersola. This item has not yet been reviewed or rated by the Long Range Capital Improvements Committee.

- Elementary School Security Camera Replacement ($81,890.00) – Mr. Angersola stated that the current security cameras are at the end of their life cycle and are being replaced on an "as needed" basis. Ms. Hughson stated that there is a 5-year lease-to-own option that would cost $3,258.00/month, which includes licensing and a 10-year warranty. This item has not yet been reviewed or rated by the Long Range Capital Improvements Committee.

- Elementary School Sidewalk Repair/Replace ($25k) – Mr. Angersola stated that the first phase of this project is nearing completion and the BOE is requesting $25k/yr. for four years to replace the rest of the cracked and broken asphalt sidewalks and bring them into ADA compliance. Ms. Haines expressed concern about liability issues if the project is spread over four years.

- High School and Middle School Driveway Crack Sealing ($66k) – Mr. Angersola stated that putting down a sealing coat will extend the life of the driveways. This item has not yet been reviewed or rated by the Long Range Capital Improvements Committee.

- High School BAS System Replacement ($194,439.00) – Mr. Angersola stated that this request is to replace the school's HVAC automated controls which are currently failing or inoperable. This item has not yet been reviewed or rated by the Long Range Capital Improvements Committee. In response to a question raised by Ms. Haines, Mr. Angersola confirmed that the new system is generic/non-proprietary and the request is based on the state bid list prices.

- High School Ceiling Tiles ($10k) – Mr. Angersola confirmed that this is an annual, on-going Capital expense.

- High School Courtyard Improvements ($25k) – Mr. Angersola advised that the courtyard is used an exterior classroom and a break area for students and staff. He stated that the BOE would like to upgrade the ground area using a combination of grass, slate, and gravel. This item has not yet been reviewed or rated by the Long Range Capital Improvements Committee. Mr. Angersola responded to questions from the Board.

- High School Exterior Lighting Upgrade ($25k) – Mr. Angersola advised that this is a new request that is a consequence of a recent Police Department safety audit. He stated that the BOE received quotes to upgrade the lighting around the parking lots and sidewalk areas. This item has not yet been reviewed or rated by the Long Range Capital Improvements Committee. Mr. Angersola responded to questions from the Board.

- High School Office Carpeting ($17k) – Mr. Angersola stated that the existing carpet is original to the building. There was a general discussion regarding the pros and

cons of replacing the existing carpeting with tiles. This item has not yet been reviewed or rated by the Long Range Capital Improvements Committee.

- High School Security Camera Replacement ($155,964.00) – Mr. Angersola stated that this project could be done in coordination with the other two schools. Ms. Hughson stated that there is a 5-year lease-to-own option that would cost $5,747.00/month, which includes licensing and a 10-year warranty. This item has not yet been reviewed or rated by the Long Range Capital Improvements Committee.

- Middle School BAS System Replacement ($186,192.00) – Mr. Angersola stated that this request is to replace the school's HVAC automated controls which are currently failing or inoperable. This item has not yet been reviewed or rated by the Long Range Capital Improvements Committee. He reiterated that the new system is generic/non-proprietary and the request is based on the state bid list prices.

- Middle School Exterior Sealing & Painting ($25k) – Mr. Angersola explained that the total cost for this project is $100k and $50k has already been funded. The work is being done in two phases and the balance of the funding request is spread over the next two years.

- Middle School Security Camera Replacement ($111,187.00) – Mr. Angersola stated that this project could be done in coordination with the other two schools. Ms. Hughson stated that there is a 5-year lease-to-own option that would cost $4,375.00/month, which includes licensing and a 10-year warranty. This item has not yet been reviewed or rated by the Long Range Capital Improvements Committee.

- Middle School Tile Replacement – Cafeteria ($25,750.00) – Mr. Angersola stated that BOE would like to replace the tile in the High School café with VCT tile which has a 20-30 year life and is easier to maintain.

- Middle School Tile Replacement – Main Hallways ($48k) – Mr. Angersola stated that BOE would like to replace the tile in the High School café with VCT tile which has a 20-30 year life and is easier to maintain. He reported that the contractor has offered a $7k reduction in the cost of this project if it is done at the same time as the cafeteria tile replacement. In response to a question from Ms. Bourgoin, Mr. Angersola confirmed that the tile in the café and the main hallways is original to the building.

- System-wide Interior Paint ($15k) – Mr. Angersola advised that this is an annually recurring request that funds repainting of the interior of each school over a 2-year cycle. He responded to questions from the Board.

- System-wide Cafeteria Equipment ($25k) - Mr. Angersola advised that this is an annually recurring request to replace food service/cafeteria equipment as needed.

- System-wide Carpet/Flooring Replacement ($20K) - Mr. Angersola advised that this is an annually recurring request to replace carpet and other flooring as needed. He responded to questions from the Board.

- System-wide Field Improvements ($18k) - Mr. Angersola advised that this is an annually recurring request and the funds are used to maintain the Middle and High School fields.

- System-wide Field Maintenance Machine ($31k) – Mr. Angersola advised that the current machine is 20-years old and it is difficult to get replacement parts for it. This item has not yet been reviewed or rated by the Long Range Capital Improvements Committee. In response to a question from the Board, Mr. Angersola confirmed that the machine is used at Nicols Field and the Elementary School as time permits.

- System-wide Maintenance Truck with Plow ($60k) – Mr. Angersola stated that this capital request is to replace a 2010 Chevy Cargo Van.

- System-wide Mandated Radon Testing ($12k) - Mr. Angersola advised that this is an annually recurring request.

- System-wide Modernization of Learning Environments ($50k) - Mr. Angersola advised that this is an annually recurring request and the funds are used to updated classroom furniture and fixtures.

- System-wide Zero Turn Mower #2 ($20k) – Mr. Angersola stated that there is an option to lease this piece of equipment for approximately $4,100.00/year.

- System-wide Network Switches ($80k) – Director of IT Hall advised that this is an annual recurring request. He stated he plans to begin the process of upgrading the eleven network switches at the High School next fiscal year which are two years out of warranty. Mr. Hall stated that the switches at the High School are the core of the BOE system which allow access to the security cameras, wifi, and computers. In response to questions from the Board, he advised that the switches have a 5-7 year life span.

Ms. Hughson confirmed that the BOE is working with the contractor and Emergency Management Director Mansfield to identify grant opportunities for the replacement security cameras for all three schools.

In response to a request by Mr. Dill, Ms. Stricker agreed to provide him with a list of BOE capital requests that were not submitted for this fiscal year.

- Shared Services

Mr. Hall reviewed the Transfers to Shared Services budget for technology. He confirmed that BOE Technology transfer should be updated to $450k, an increase of

$130k (40%) over FY2024-2025. In response to questions from Ms. Haines, he provided clarification about the actual amounts spent by the BOE in FY24-25 for hardware and software. Ms. Hughson stated she would provide Ms. Belles with the back-up for the updated request.

In response to a question from Ms. Belles, Ms. Hughson advised that the BOE Maintenance transfer amount should be updated to $175k, a $50k (40%) increase from FY2024-2025. She stated that, to date, BOE has expended $89,409.00 this year; and there is a current balance of $145k in the account. Ms. Zemienieski confirmed that the Town's Maintenance line in the Shared Services budget is flat at $75k.

Mr. Hall reviewed the proposed Town Technology transfer to Shared Services for FY2025-2026. He noted the increase in the increase in this budget line is primarily to do an increase in the cost for contracted Technical Services. Mr. Hall responded to questions from the Board.

In response to a comment from Ms. Haines, Mr. Hall confirmed that he is aware of the potential need to upgrade the Town's software to a .gov site and stated that it is not in the FY2025-2026 budget but he estimates the cost would be $26k-$35k.

The following Capital requests were reviewed with Mr. Hall:

- Upgrades to the Town-Wide Phone System – He stated that this project is to continue to upgrade the phone systems in the off-site buildings to the CISCO phone system. Ms. Zemienieski provided additional background information Mr. Hall responded to questions from the Board. Ms. Haines stated that the current balance in the account is $31k and Mr. Hall confirmed that that amount would cover upgrading the Public Works' phone system and possibly Firehouse No. 2.

- Video Conferencing Replacement & Upgrades – He advised that the A/V system in Meeting Room 4 is broken and needs to be replaced. Ms. Zemienieski stated that they have received an estimate of $45k to replace the equipment and add Zoom meeting capability. She noted that there is a balance of $44k in the account and if $15k is approved for FY2025-2026, they could complete the project, have funds remaining for on-going maintenance of the A/V equipment, and begin savings to add Zoom capability in Meeting Room 3.

- Network Switches – Mr. Hall stated that this account funds the rolling replacement of the network switches in all of the Town buildings. He noted that the network switches in the Municipal Office Building are 7 years old. In response to a question from Ms. Haines, he confirmed that he has requested a recurring $46k each of the next two fiscal years for this project.

B. Early Childhood Council ($9k) – Dr. DeBrito stated that the cost for this program was originally shared equally by the Town and the BOE. Ms. Hughson stated the cost has increased but the Town's contribution has remained constant at $9k annually.

C. Fringe Benefits – This budget reflects a 2.1% ($33,364.00) increase from FY2024-2025. Ms. Belles reviewed the budget and noted that she is expecting a 10-15% increase in employee health insurance premiums for FY2025-2026. She noted that this year's actuarial report on the Firefighters' pension stated that it is currently funded at 120%. She suggested that the Town could skip its contribution to the fund for FY2025/2026.

D. Debt Service – This budget reflects a 24.4% ($645,866.00) increase over FY2024-2025. Ms. Belles noted that Debt Service shows a reduction for the bonds that will be paid off next fiscal year; however, it projects the payment for the short-term BAN starting in June. She stated she will confirm the balance of the Elementary School/Town-wide Radios Project/Municipal Office Complex line.

E. Interfund Transfers – Ms. Belles advised that this budget is not yet completed. She reviewed the budget and there was a brief discussion about the level of appropriate funding for the Fire Apparatus line. Ms. Belles strongly encouraged the Board of Selectmen to consider bonding for fire apparatus; however, she did not support eliminating funding the line entirely.

Mr. Dill and Ms. Belles discussed Mr. Lindsey's presentation at the February 25th Board of Finance meeting. It was again noted that, due to the state's change in how vehicles are valued, the Grand List is down $8M.

F. General Overall Operating/Capital Budget Review – Ms. Belles reported that the current total of the Town's proposed FY2025-2026 Operating budget is $17,137,365.00, an increase of 2.77% over the last fiscal year.

The Board discussed the status of the Town's FY2025-2026 capital requests. There was a general discussion about Fire Department's proposed request to rebuild Fire Company No. 2. In response to a request made by Ms. Belles, Ms. Haines stated that she would ask Mr. Mansfield to add the project into ClearGov.

The Board also discussed Public Works' Director Velez's capital request for road reclamation and maintenance. Ms. Belles strongly encouraged the Board that the Town should begin saving for the road reclamation and new firehouse projects.

Mr. Dill supported the capital requests for fire apparatus and a grant writer program; however, he emphasized that if the Town decides to fund a multi-year road reclamation project, no additional Public Works capital requests should be considered for the period during which the road reclamation project is being funded.

There was a general discussion regarding moving forward on the AP Gates and Beebe Road culverts/bridges so that the Town does not lose out on the state grants. Ms. Zemienieski stated that the AP Gates Road project needs to be added to ClearGov.

The Board concurred that Capital requests for the following should be added into ClearGov: (1) a new Company 2 Firehouse, (2) a grant-writer program ($35k), and (3) funding for land acquisition for a new/expanded Town cemetery. Ms. Haines concluded that the Board would continue its discussions about the Town's Capital requests for FY2025-2026 at a future date.

Ms. Haines discussed the need for housing in East Haddam and across the state. She provided an overview of housing acquisition programs in other rural CT towns and suggested that, going forward, it might be in the Town's interest to establish a Housing Authority similar to one in the town of Cornwall.

3. Budget Resolution

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Bourgoin, to recommend to the Board of Finance for fiscal year 2025-2026, a budget of $17,137,365 which represents Town government, Debt Service and Reserves. and Capital that is funded through grants and reserves. The Board of Selectmen budget has made no provision for any Capital that would be funded by taxation. The Board of Selectmen requests the opportunity to work with the Board of Finance to evaluate Capital needs (in accordance with the Capital Policy and the evaluation process conducted by the Long-Range Capital Improvement Committee) and any state and federal grants. Unanimous aye.

4. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Bourgoin, to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Erik Dill, Secretary