

Board of Finance
Regular Meeting – Hybrid
In person and Zoom
March 21,2023
MINUTES

A recording of this meeting is posted on the town website.

Members Present: Liz Charron (Chair), Meghan Scott (Vice Chair), Diane Malozzi (Secretary), Gregg Lafontaine, Philip Johnson and David Scata.

Alternates Present: Mike Ninteau, Haley Messier and AJ Dunnack.

Also present: Kevin Cwikla, First Selectman; Hayley Wagner, Finance Director; Phil Chester, Town Planner; Andrew Gonzalez, Superintendent; Sarah Haynes, Chair, Board of Education.

Recording begins.

1.0 Call to Order

A quorum being present L. Charron called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2.0 Discuss the following FY 2023-24 operating and capital budget areas. After each discussion there will be opportunity for public input.

NOTE: There was no public input after any department discussion.

2.1 Dept. 461 Planning & Zoning

Phil Chesters spoke to the FY2023-24 proposed budget for the department. Salary increases are typical. Legal appropriation for this year has already been used. The Board asked what was driving legal up. Phil Chester said, the enforcement actions have doubled the past year.

2.2 Dept. 469 Conservation Commission

Marc Lang said smaller projects are in the works. He said the appropriation requested holds with the Commission's goal of maintaining a specific amount in the account.

2.3 Dept. 406 Finance Office

H. Wagner said the budget request in the usual salary increases.

2.4 Dept. 418 Insurance

H. Wagner said there is a possibility of a small decrease due to CIRMA numbers. Zero increase may be suggested. P Johnson asked if we get quotes. H. Wagner said Cirma has the municipal markets.

2.5 Revenue

L. Charron asked about investment income. H. Wagner said the current budget has gone up substantially from the amount that was budgeted. H. Wagner said that CD's that have matured have been reinvested at higher rates. Additional revenues from Pride's Corner Farm approximately \$43,000.00. We could go back to \$100,00.00 in the budget.

H. Wagner said the Norwich Water Storage is reverting back so we will lose income, but the Town will gain property tax. Details on numbers are yet to be determined.

P. Johnson asked town aid for roads. H. Wagner said 12% of the State payment goes towards unimproved roads. Currently the numbers split \$218,781.00 for improved roads and

\$100,759.00 for unimproved. The State send the funds in on payment. L. Charron asked that funds for roads be looked at and requested balances. Maybe capital could be reduced. H. Wagner said in her experience there needs to be enough in road maintenance capital to cover any grants. G. Lafontaine said input might be needed from the Selectman and the DPW supervisor because they are the ones that draw the road funds. M. Scott noted tuition from revenues from the schools are not on the sheet.

P Johnson MOVED to move Items 6.1 and 8.1 up from the agenda. D. Scata SECONDED.

MOTION CARRIED: 6:0

6.1 BOE update with Superintendent Gonzalez

A. Gonzalez gave an update to happenings at Lyman High School. The current budget has approximately 30% remaining in operations. Overages expected due to increase in oil prices. P. Johnson asked if the BOE is making adjustment now because of the oil prices or wait until this budget season ends to see what the bottom line looks like. A. Gonzalez said he feels the BOE will come in on budget even with the oil increase.

8.1 Discuss and act on defining and funding a school facilities study.

A lengthy discussion between the BOF members and A. Gonzalez and S. Haynes began. S. Haynes said it needs to be a collaborative effort of the Town boards and community. She said feasibility study to incorporate buildings needs based on enrollment and building repairs. S. Haynes expressed a fear that after the data has been collected, the information given, that the Town does nothing with the study. She would like action to be taken.

P. Johnson asked what is the staffing level of administrators. S. Haynes responded 1 principal at each school, 1 assistant principal at the high school, 1 curriculum director and 1 special ed director. A. Gonzalez said they will do utilization of staff; classroom size and it will be very detailed.

D. Scata said the decision will fall on the community depending on cost so no guarantee can be made.

G. Lafontaine said the project needs a champion and the Board of Education as champion benefits the validation of the study. but the final decision rests with the town. The BOE to define benefits against the costs.

M. Scott agreed on needing a champion to help formalize cross groups, ie: building committee, and to agree on expected outcomes.

D. Malozzi asked if there was any history from other towns completing a study and the outcomes. A. Gonzales said yes, some have built new buildings as the vendor recommended for the city of Stamford.

M. Nintean said he understand the project as focusing on the physical buildings spatial requirements based on student population and repairs. He asked what the study is concentrating on and the costs if staffing is included. He also expressed concern of costs. S. Haynes said a comprehensive study needs to look at all areas.

D. Scata said a discussion with the community to weigh in on the study and the costs concerning may be in order. Also, to take advantage of information through CAFE and CAPS for different vendors.

M. Scott said there is a need to know the scope of what is wanted before costs can be determined. A. Gonzalez said there are tasks that can be included in the study that would affect the budget for the study.

Enrollment study, progress analysis, Capitalization utilization, facilities evaluation, MP options and community meetings. These range in cost from \$10,000.00 to \$30,000.00 each. L. Charron asked if the BOF needs to take action to form a team from within the BOF to work with the BOE and a vendor before any decisions are made.

A.J. Dunnack asked what is the timeframe for the study. A. Gonzalez said in his opinion about 4 to 6 months once a vendor is chosen.

D. Scata said it may be early to talk to vendors now. He would like to see what the study will cover before committing to a vendor.

P. Johnson expressed concern that we are losing sight of whose project this is. Board of Finance can give insights but it is the BOE'S decision as to scope, needs and wants.

A. Gonzalez said he would be the champion. S. Haynes said they are listening and are trying to take action.

D. Scata MOVED that the Board of Finance chose up to three members to participate with the Board of Education on the feasibility study. G. LaFontaine SECONDS.

MOTION CARRIED 6:0

G. Lafontaine left meeting at 8:21pm. L. Charron seats AJ Dunnack.

Return to order of original agenda.

3.0 Correspondence

E mail from Ashley Littlefield; BOE budget, 3/1/2023

4.0 Minutes

4.1 Regular meeting - 2/21/2023

P. Johnson MOVED to accept the minutes of February 21, 2023 regular meeting. M. Scott SECONDED.

MOTION CARRIED 5:0 M. Scott abstained.

4.2 Special meeting - 2/28/2023

D. Scata MOVED to accept the minutes of February 28, 2023 special meeting P. Johnson SECONDED.

MOTION CARRIED 5:0 P. Johnson abstained.

4.3 Special meeting - 3/4/2023

D. Malozzi MOVED to accept the minutes of March 4, 2023 special meeting M Scott SECONDED.

MOTION CARRIED 6:0

4.4 Special meeting - 3/11/2023

P. Johnson MOVED to accept the minutes of March 11, 2023 regular meeting. M. Scott SECONDED.

MOTION CARRIED 5:0 D. Scata abstained.

5.0 Public Comments

None

6.0 Town wide updates.

6.1 Previously moved on the agenda. See above.

6.2 Town update with First Selectman Cwikla

K. Cwikla advised the Board that the future Department of Public Works facility project is on hold. The owners of the property the Town was interested in purchasing have received a cash offer for the entire property from another buyer.

K. Cwikla said Solid Waste pricing has seen a major increase and fees at the transfer station will likely increase. The Board of Selectman is looking to increase choice of vendors through SCCOG. He said they are looking at RFP's that have gone out for various town contracts. The mowing contract has seen a major increase which the BOS will review.

G. Lafontaine reseated to meeting at 8:25 pm.

7.0 Financial Reports: Fiscal Year 2022-2034 Expenditures, Revenues, Town Improvement Plan, School Improvement Plan, Board of Education- Non-Lapsing.

The reports were reviewed with H. Wager.

8.0 New Business

8.1 Previously moved on the agenda. See above.

8.2 Discuss and act on TIP fund balance guidelines.

Discussion among Board members concerning adding a minimum balance requirement to the TIP fund.

NO ACTION TAKEN

M. Scott left meeting at 8:38 pm. L. Charron seats M. Nintean.

9.0 Subcommittee Updates & Actions

9.1 Policies & Procedures Subcommittee

Discuss and Act on the following policies:

a) Capital and Non-Recurring Policy

NO ACTION TAKEN

b) Capital Assets Policy

NO ACTION TAKEN

c) Lease/Purchase Policy

M. Nintean MOVED to accept the revised Lease/Purchase policy. P. Johnson SECONDED.

MOTION CARRIED 6:0

9.2 Long Term Planning Subcommittee

No report

9.3 Audit Subcommittee

No report

10.0 Other

Budget calendar review, meetings next week will be Zoom. Reminder Charter Review public hearing next week.

11.0 Adjourn

L. Charron, hearing no objection, adjourned the meeting at 8:46 pm.

Recording ends.

Respectfully Submitted,
Diane Malozzi, Secretary
Lebanon Board of Finance
March 24, 2023

Please see the minutes of subsequent meetings for the approval of these minutes and any corrections hereto.