Text, letter

Description automatically generated

Board of Finance

Meeting Minutes, February 15, 2023

7:00 pm via Zoom & Clifford B. Memorial Center

**Present:** Sandy Brodeur, Ken Dykstra, Dave Lee, Aaron Soucy, Andrew Dionne, Lisa Mileski, Recording Secretary

**Also Present**: Lou Brodeur, Shelley Cates, and Austin Tanner, Joe Voccio via Zoom, and other members of the public

1. Determination of a quorum and Call to Order: S. Brodeur called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm
2. Public comment: None
3. Action on minutes of January 18, 2023 meeting: A. Dionne made a motion to approve meeting minutes of January 18, 2023. Motion seconded by D. Lee. No discussion. Passed unanimously.
4. Old Business:
   1. Status of bringing WPCA in-house: S. Cates reports that we have all the bills, reports, etc., and we are already doing some of it; there is going to be a meeting at the end of the month; that all the bank accounts have been changed; and we are easing right in.
   2. Monthly Capital report status: S. Cates states that not much has changed, a couple of expenditures, and the only thing she was questioning was she wanted to make sure we had the all invoices for the garage doors at Mortlake. L. Brodeur stated he would check. K. Dykstra brought up creating a contingency fund for the Capital Fund, and discussion was had about cleaning up the bookkeeping. S. Cates stated she would check on a contingency fund for the next meeting.
   3. Discuss statements showing Recreation fund activity for donations/scholarships: It was agreed the recreation reports would be discontinued until we have an opening balance. S. Brodeur stated the one she did not have is the request for the report for the money flowing through the East Brooklyn Fire District. D. Lee stated there is no East Brooklyn Fire District, it is the Brooklyn Fire District. A. Tanner confirmed that he spoke with Tax Collector and there is no question that it is referred to as the Brooklyn Fire District. D. Lee asked for verification that during the fiscal year, the Town brought in $74,000.00 and remitted $74,000.00 to the Brooklyn Fire District and S. Cates confirmed that this was done via ACH; however, S. Cates further stated the Town does not confirm with the Brooklyn Fire District that the numbers match.
   4. Update of ARPA projects – Ken/Dave: S. Brodeur stated there is a meeting tomorrow. A. Tanner stated that a form was created and sent out with the meeting notice. D. Lee read the form aloud and S. Brodeur stated that it may need to include “copies of invoices”. Projects have been approved but funds have not been distributed yet.
   5. Other Old Business: S. Brodeur requested information on going to the Town to request LOCIP funds. A. Tanner stated that he has been speaking with Roger LaFleur, our contractor, who gave a preliminary estimate, but we are waiting for more information on what we need before we go to Town meeting. S. Brodeur reiterated that we cannot do the sale of the community center until the Housing Authority meets.
5. New Business
   1. Review prior year funding requests and backup documentation from various entities for review by the Board: D. Lee stated we need to provide rationale to taxpayers for use of their dollars. He counted 13 requests for funds, and he is concerned that the requestors are not providing information on what is happening with the funds when they receive them. Discussion was had regarding this, including being provided some sort of “close-out” report showing how the funds were used. J. Voccio stated that in the past contributions were made to operations based on the work they do within Brooklyn and were not treated as grants that need to be justified. He stated that we need to establish some broader thresholds on who needs to report. It was decided that a Sub-Committee of two members of the Board of Finance be created. D. Lee and K. Dykstra volunteered to be on the Sub-Committee, and S. Cates stated she is available for consult, if needed. S. Cates commented on the nonpayments, stating that the Coalition to End Homelessness, which she does not anticipate a request for, we put it in a budget but they have not made a request since 2017; Community Kitchen and Access usually come in May or June and they are the only help operations that we have; Senior Center is on quarterly payments.
   2. Status of 21-22 audit: S. Cates stated over the next two weeks, they will focus on Brooklyn and not on their other audit; hopefully by the end of February; they have everything, and she is not super clear on what is going on on their end.
   3. Review of 22-23 financials: The financials were not printed. L. Mileski needs to learn how to run them.
   4. Status of generator project – when is the town meeting going to be scheduled for the LOCIP request: A. Tanner said there was nothing to add.
   5. Discuss and vote on two items that the Selectmen are requesting to use funds from our contingency account

* Pay the remaining balance of $6,000 for the salary study (copy of contract is attached): D. Lee stated that he did not see a contract, and that the purpose of this is to do a review of salaries but, and the invoice says “without salary survey”. S. Cates assured that it would include salaries and job descriptions and the total cost is $7,700.00. D. Lee made a motion to pay the invoice in increments and A. Dionne seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
* Pay $4,750 to a professional grant writing company to request a Safer Grant to fund some paid, full-time fire fighters for up to 3 years: D. Lee explained what a Safer grant is; it provides 100% funding to get firefighters paid and slowly decreases over the years. A. Tanner stated that he has been speaking with Alma Catic; her standard fee is $6,000 but she is giving a 25% discount. Members discussed the grant in great detail, including the shortage of fire personnel; missed calls during the day due to no staff to respond; need for paid staff; consolidation of the fire departments; rotation of paid professional fires staff and ambulance; the lack of a plan and how it is premature. A. Tanner suggested that we meet with Safer agent and obtain more information. The matter has been tabled but A. Tanner will meet with Alma Catic to get additional information. A special meeting can be called if necessary since it closes March 23, 2023.

f. Appoint members for the Capital Committee: D. Lee stated this committee needs one member from Board of Ed, Board of Finance, and Board of Selectmen, and two at large members. A. Tanner suggested A. Fitzgerald and J. Paquin for the two at large and S. Brodeur offered to check with them first. A. Dionne said he would reach out to the Democratic Town Committee and Recreation to see if anyone who would like to serve. It was agreed that H. Allen would be the member from the Board of Finance.

g. Set tentative dates for reviewing budget requests: S. Brodeur proposed the following: Fire Commission, March 15, 2023; Recreation, March 22, 2023; Board of Education, April 5, 2023; Capital and Town Budget, April 19, 2023; that we could hold a hearing second week in May and vote at the end of the month.

1. Other new business: No new business.
2. Selectmen’s Report: A. Tanner introduced his new secretary, L. Mileski. He stated the ENFAC meeting was held today with S. Cates and stated it was the most positive meeting he has had, not many questions and we are headed in the right direction. He further stated the Governor’s proposed budget is out and basically the town is flat, and we did not get cut. A substantial amount of opioid money was received with additional funds coming, and it needs to be used to address the issues of abuse of opioids, etc. There are restrictions. Uses for the funds that were discussed included educational classes through school, providing Fire Departments with Narcan or other devices, Health Department, updating and purchasing additional defibrillators, helping homeless with drug addictions, training on how to deal with health issues. A. Tanner stated the MS4 Report is on-line for thirty days. He spoke about pipes that burst and the status of the repairs to Clifford B. Green Memorial Building; an insurance claim was made; there is asbestos and the insurance does not cover asbestos abatement; staff from that building have been relocated.
3. Liaison Reports: S. Brodeur stated the Housing Authority did not meet; there was no Rec meeting. D. Lee reported that the Board of Fire Commission met and discussion was had about the need to have paid staff and the funding opportunities for that, tax abatement, budgets were preliminarily reviewed and how revisions need to be made; getting appropriate physicals for members; providing a report for the Board of Finance containing certain information such as age of their air bottles, breathing apparatus, demographic of their membership to get a better idea of their needs, capital needs from an equipment prospective, facility needs. All are good for now. A. Soucy stated there was no Board of Ed meeting, but there is budget and regular meeting next week. K. Dykstra said the Resource Recovery meeting went well. Discussion continued about putting in a generator for the compactor and Public Works so there is power during an outage due to a storm; business is booming, and they are getting many npeople from out of Town.
4. Public comment: J. Nemeth stated that it would be remis not to remind the Board that they continue to hold the power to inquire both into past spending practices of both the Brooklyn Fire District and East Brooklyn Fire Department as well as allocate any funding for the next fiscal year. She then thanked the Board for the discussions that occurred earlier in the meeting regarding their finances, specifically, straightening out proper legal names, etc.; she is excited there may be possible overview of their annual spending going forward; even with changes in their administration, the Town needs to monitor; she wholeheartedly agrees with the discussion regarding consolidation of the departments.
5. Adjournment: A. Dionne made a motion to adjourn, seconded by D. Lee. Meeting was adjourned at 8:58 pm.