

**Board of Finance
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 21, 2021
7:00pm via Cisco Webex Meetings**

Present: Jeffrey Otto, Kenneth Dykstra, Heather Allen, Sandra Brodeur, Kim Conroy, and April Lamothe; Recording Secretary

Absent with notice: Andrew Dionne

Also Present: Rick Ives, Lou Brodeur, Justin Phaiyah, Patti Buell, Stephanie Levin, and Matthew Ritter

- 1) **Call to Order and determination of a quorum:** Jeff Otto called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and with four members present, a quorum was determined. Kim Conroy joined the meeting at 7:07pm.
- 2) **Public Comment:** None
- 3) **Action on Minutes of 3/31/21 Meeting:** Sandra Brodeur made a motion to accept the minutes of 3/31/21 as presented. Heather Allen seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed 4-0.

Kenneth Dykstra made a motion to add Matthew Ritter to the agenda. Sandra Brodeur seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed.

- **Visit from Attorney Matthew Ritter:** Rick Ives told Matthew Ritter that there has been a question about Capital expenses which have not been completely expended in one fiscal year. Rick Ives explained that in 2018 the budgets for Capital, School, and Town were approved at a Town Meeting. It was decided to expend money two different ways: some items were put into BAN and bonded and some were expensed. A designated Capital account was not created; so money was not taken for the expensed items and interest for the bonded ones was not set aside. The year goes by and the things that were bought and expended for and paid for that year are okay, but if it went into the next year the money was not sitting there because it was unspent and went back to the unallocated reserve. There have been questions on how the money can be spent if it went back to the reserve. Sandra Brodeur clarified the question. She told Matthew Ritter that \$20,000 cash was set aside in case of something broke, it was not for a specific project. The money was not in a separate account, just in Capital. At the end of year, all unspent money was returned to the General Fund, but should the Capital account keep \$20,000. Matthew Ritter replied that if the Board is appropriating funds for Capital projects and purposes, the money could continue year after year, because it was approved under Capital. He also mentioned that because the money was mingled with the General Government, the Board should go back to make sure what amount was appropriated and move the money back into Capital or rescind the amount at a Town Meeting. Discussion ensued.
 - Jeffrey Otto asked if there are funds leftover after a project is completed if the Board of Selectmen could use the funds for other projects or debt services. Matthew Ritter replied yes, the Board of Selectmen can transfer the funds **with** authorization from the Board of Finance. Jeffrey Otto asked Stephanie Levin look back at Capital accounts to see if there is excess money to put towards current budget.

4) Old Business:

- a. **Rescheduling of Budget Hearing and Budget Meeting to June 2 and 16, respectively:** Sandra Brodeur made a motion to change the Budget Hearing to June 2nd and the Budget Meeting to June 16th. Heather Allen seconded the motion. Discussion: Sandra Brodeur asked if the meetings will be able to held in school rather than outside. Rick Ives responded the meeting could mostly likely be held inside. He is working with Patti Buell and IT to see if the meeting can be held in the auditorium. Jeffrey Otto said that everyone would be required to wear a mask. Rick Ives said the difficult part is making sure people can connect remotely. He also mentioned that the Governor does not know the right way to conduct meetings. Jeffrey Otto asked once the Governor has authorized meetings in person if it will still be required for the Town to make available the opportunity for people to participate remotely for those meetings. Rick Ives said that the Government does not believe that if they are legally challenged it would hold up to having all meetings required to be in person. He also mentioned that the Governor has extended the rule on referendums to include absentee ballots with no ask as another way to vote. Jeffrey Otto would still like to get further guidance from Governor's office. Rick Ives said more information should be received by May 19th. Motion passed 5-0.
- **Change of Meeting Date:**
 - Heather Allen made a motion to cancel the April 26th meeting. Sandra Brodeur seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed 5-0.
 - Heather Allen made a motion to have a meeting on May 5th. Sandra Brodeur seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed 5-0.
- b. **Presentation and further discussion of Board of Education adopted budget for FY '21-'22, including expenditure plans for ESSER II and American Rescue Plan Funds**
- N.B. This is the same budget proposed at the 3/31 meeting, with updated documentation and presentation notes as well as BoE adoption.**
- The Board of Education (BOE) approved the budget on March 30, 2021. Patti Buell reviewed the BOE Budget with the Board. There is a \$455,382 increase from last year's budget of \$19,173,991 to the current year's budget of \$19,629,373. Patti Buell explained the Funding Cliff and how it may affect the 23-24 Fiscal Year because the school would not be receiving ESSER II and (American Rescue Plan Funds) ARPA funding that fiscal year. ESSER II and ARPA funds were to support unfinished learning due to COVID. The schools received \$1.5 million in funding which has been used towards summer camp, after school programing, professional development, distance learning teachers, technology director, and health protocols. Patti Buell mentioned that last year, the budget was reduced to make it acceptable, by removing line items for fields trips and spots due to COVID-19, but those items were added back in this year. She also mentioned that there are many unknowns as to what might happen next year with COVID-19, between remote learning or homeschooling. The Board asked Patti Buell to explain different line items of the budget. Discussion ensued.
 - Jeffrey Otto commented that there is 2.3% increase, not including the Capital items, from last year's budget to this year's budget and this is going to be a difficult year. Heather Allen asked if last year was a normal year, what would

the increase percentage have been; Patti Buell replied it would have increase around 1.5%.

- Jeffrey Otto commented on the large hardware and software prices in Capital. He would like the line items to be put back into the school's Operating Budget rather than in Capital next year. Sandra Brodeur mentioned that the school was told to put the items into Capital, in order to keep the school's budget lower. Jeffrey Otto replied that he feels that they are operating cost rather than Capital items.
 - Kim Conroy made a motion to accept the BOE budget for further consideration. Sandra Brodeur seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed. 5-0.
- c. **If Stephanie Levin is able to attend, the following items will be discussed; if she is unable to attend, these items will be carried forward to the next meeting:** This agenda item was tabled until the next regular meeting.
- d. **Any other Old Business:** None

5) **New Business:**

- a. **Report of the Capital Committee related to the '21-'22 budget:**
- b. **Discussion of rules applying to pandemic relief grants, if such rules are available:** Rick Ives discussed 5a and 5b together because the Town side of relief grants effect Capital more than the Town budget. He mentioned that the Capital Committee was not able to meet last week. He is still waiting for the amount of relief funds the Town will be receiving and how they can be used from the State. Rick Ives commented that if the American Federal Recovery Funding can be used to pay for two years for the hardware and software for School Technology, it should be used. He was going to put \$100,763 in budget to expend for items, but found that the **T**own Clerks LOCIP account can be used to fix the Health Department Window in the amount of \$21,460.
- i. **Capital items to be Bonded/BAN:** Tow Hall Building Repainted (\$85,000), Town Fire Truck (\$750,000), Highway Dump Truck (\$185,000), Highway Mower Attachment (~~845,000~~ **\$85,000**), Highway Over Rail Mower Attachment (\$45,000), and Old Town Garage Roof Replacement (\$380,000).
- ii. **Capital Requests Put on Hold:** Parks & Recreation Storage Building (\$175,000), Highway Storage Building (\$250,000), East Brooklyn Water Hookup (\$150,000), School Air Conditioning/Ventilation Updates (\$1,500,000), Senior Center Roof (\$28,000), BOE Vehicle (\$24,130), Community Center Fencing (\$26,865), School Fencing (\$40,298), School Furnaces (\$3000,000), and Senior Center Floor (\$20,000).
- Rick Ives said that the Senior Center Floor does not need to be replaced. Rick Ives wanted to hold off on the School Furnaces to see if the American Federal Recovery money can be used to do a gas hook up or use on the air conditioning. It makes a difference on what furnace/boiler would be needed. The American Federal Recovery could be used for the East Brooklyn Water Hook Up. The storage buildings were put on hold because by putting a completely new roof on the Old Town Garage (\$380,000), it would give the building 30-40 more years of use. Jeffrey Otto asked what the building is used for. Rick Ives replied Highway and Parks and Recreation use it for cold

storage mainly, but there is a heated portion, bathroom, and office. Sandra Brodeur commented that the building is full and it is cheaper to replace the roof rather than building two buildings and tearing down the old building.

c. Any other New Business: None

6) Discussion of 4/5/21 Financial Report: Rick Ives will send an updated financial report.

7) Liaison Reports: None

8) Public Comment: None

9) Adjourn: Sandra Brodeur made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:08pm. Heather Allen seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,
April Lamothe
Recording Secretary