

Minutes

Board of Finance Meeting

December 19, 2013

Town Hall Room 206 7:30 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Liz Mao, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm. All members were present except for Jon Zagrodzky and Gwen Mogenson. Also in attendance was Finance Director Kate Clarke Buch. The meeting was broadcast live over Channel 79.

PRESENTATION BY ASSESSOR TONY HOMICKI REGARDING 2013 REVALUATION

Liz Mao informed everyone in attendance that because the Board of Finance meeting date change, Mr. Homicki could not make it tonight and that he would attend the January meeting.

CONTINGENCY TRANSFERS

Peter Solheim, the Town's Building Inspector, was in attendance and has requested \$30,940 to pay part time inspectors. Mr. Solheim explained that Darien has a surge in construction and the Building Department had a 72% increase in inspections compared to last year. The improved economy, Sandy storm and several large construction projects have contributed to the increase.

Jamie McLaughlin moved to approve. Bruce Orr seconded the motion. Passed 5 – 0.

Jeremy Ginsberg, Planning and Zoning Director, was in attendance and has requested \$12,200 for finishing the flood mapping project in addition to what was allocated in the budget. Mr. Ginsberg explained that the additional funds were needed to pay Darien's contractor for additional reviews of the flood mapping study.

Jamie McLaughlin moved to approve. Dave Lopiano seconded the motion. Passed 5 – 0.

Kate Clarke Buch provided some background on the various departments salary contingency requests. Mrs. Buch explained that there is money set aside in a salary contingency account. This is meant for salary increases approved by the Board of Selectman for non-union employees and that this was lighter than it has been due to several retirements. The money requested is well within what was allocated during the budget process.

Bruce Orr moved to approve. Frank Huck seconded the motion. Passed 5 – 0.

FINANCIAL REPORTING

Kate Clarke Buch mentioned that Darien Police overtime is running high and is expected to go down in the coming months. Liz Mao explained that the Darien Police overtime budget reviewed in detail but is continuously going over. Mrs. Buch mentioned that she just had a meeting with Chief Duane J. Lovello and that he feels that they will be able to provide a better estimate. Officers out on injury was down this year compared to prior years and that items like this can drastically impact their budget. Jamie McLaughlin explained that now the Darien Police track their hours by using an application called "Telastaff." It now should have 3 years of statistical data and that there are 3 controllable areas in which they can provide a better estimate, which are....

Kate Clarke Buch informed us that because the senior center hasn't been moved over that heating and telecommunication may be over budget but overall things are coming within budget. Mrs. Buch went on to say that revenue are doing well from taxation, town clerk fees and building permits, which are all up. Over half of the budget has been collected, which is very good

Liz Mao provided some insight on a sewer dispute that has been ongoing for years. Kate Clarke Buch informed us that we will have some overages in regards to sewer.

DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON APPROPRIATION FOR LAND ACQUISITION

Jayne Stevenson, First Selectmen, discussed the request to purchase 4 Short Lane, which she stated is a once in a generation acquisition. The property is surrounded by town owned property immediately adjacent to Weed Beach. With the support and permission of the First Selectmen Board, Mrs. Stevenson engaged in active negotiation with the property owner. If the land is acquired it would be used as "Park Open Space" and maintained by the Park and Recreation Department. Bruce Orr mentioned that the taxes on the property are \$12,701 and mentioned the property hasn't been for sale which is why the acquisition hadn't come up earlier. Dave Lopiano asked if there was any revenue generating activities that could be done with the property. Mrs. Stevenson said we will be receiving a memo from Sue Swiatek with a list of possible revenue generating activities including beach amenities, like kayak and paddle board rentals. Liz Mao asked if there were any questions or concerns by any of the selectmen, which there were none. Kate Clarke Buch recommended we approve the bonding resolution tonight, which would give the greatest flexibility, and asked if we should include demolition as a part of the approval. Mrs. Stevenson went on to say that cost associated with making the property a public access building would be cost prohibited and that demolition is what is recommended. Mrs. Mao recommended we use \$1,000,000 from our fund balance for the property purchase because we are earning such a small amount of money due to low interest rates. Mrs. Buch recommended we plan to bond and switch to using fund balance to provide maximum flexibility. Frank Huck brought up that it is probably better to bond this property at the lower rate and use the fund balance for the schools. The total resolution cost for the property is \$1,925,000.

Bruce Orr moved to approve. Dave Lopiano seconded the motion. Passed 5 – 0.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Board reviewed the draft minutes for the November 19, 2013 meeting. Frank Huck moved to approve without edits. Jamie McLaughlin seconded the motion. Passed 4 – 0 (Bruce Orr was absent from the November 19th, meeting, so he abstained.)

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Nothing was reported.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Liz Mao wanted to publicly thank the Noroton Fire Department. Chief Ron Riolo and several volunteers responded to her home because two oven mites accidentally caught on fire while someone was cooking. Mrs. Mao stated that the firefighters responded quickly and handled the incident professionally.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Dave Lopiano made a motion to adjourn. Bruce Orr seconded the motion. Passed 5 – 0 at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
David Lopiano
Clerk