

Minutes

Board of Finance Meeting

July 16, 2013

Town Hall Room 206 7:30 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Liz Mao, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm. All members were present except Jamie McLaughlin. Also in attendance was Finance Director Kate Clarke Buch. The meeting was broadcast live over Channel 79.

EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES 1-200(6)(D) – LAND ACQUISITION

Joe Duwan moved convening an Executive Session to discuss land acquisition; passed 6-0. Following completion of this discussion, Mr. Duwan moved ending the Executive Session; passed 6-0.

OTHER BUSINESS – BOARD OF EDUCATION

Martha Banks moved discussing Other Business; passed 6-0. The purpose of the session was to hear an update on planned capital expenditures by the board of education. Liz Mao welcomed BoE members Elizabeth Hagerty-Ross (chair) and Clara Sartori. Ms. Hagerty-Ross offered the following comments:

- Security – installation of cameras and outside public address speakers is proceeding. Speakers are installed in the elementary schools.
- Middlesex Middle School roof – completion delayed to August 24th due to June rains.
- Oil tanks – the work has been bid out. Tanks at Hindley School have been removed; tanks at the other schools will be removed soon (August for Holmes and Royal).
- Generators – the Hindley generator project is underway (completion by December 1st); the generator for 35 Leroy is not ready (on hold, working with contractors).
- Poison Ivy removal – work to be awarded shortly; August 22nd completion.
- New Truck – received; old truck is surplus.
- Royle School black top – work has been awarded; starts July 22nd.

Ms. Hagerty-Ross also commented on enrollment projections, noting that a presentation to the Board of Selectmen on this topic is planned for July 22nd. She indicated that enrollment is

growing, with 15 additional students at Middlesex. In terms of additional capacity, she stated that eight new classrooms are planned for Tokeneke and that space will be reconfigured at Royle to add an additional five classrooms.

Lori Bora asked about the potential for additional expenditures arising from disputes over Special Education. Ms. Hagerty-Ross stated that the BoE will be engaging the services of a private investigator and that an interim Director of Special Education will be hired. She also indicated that the cost of complying with FOI requests could be non-trivial, and that a paralegal may need to be hired.

CONTINGENCY TRANSFER

- **Building Inspections – \$11,200**

Increased building activity in Darien has exceeded the ability of the limited inspection staff to respond to project permit reviews and inspections for new construction. Funding is needed for additional per diem inspectors, which will allow for permit plan reviews to be completed during the busy construction season. The request covers two part-time inspectors who will work two days per week.

Joe Duwan moved approval; passed 6-0.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Kate Buch provided the monthly financial report, with the following highlights:

- Building permits continue to exceed budget.
- Allen O’Neill – pilot project grant received.
- Solid waste tipping fees are over-budget; tonnage dumped has exceeded estimates. Hazardous waste disposal has also exceeded budget.
- The Town’s auditors will begin their preliminary work August 22nd; it is expected that their regular work will be conducted between September 9th and September 23rd.

In addition to the monthly report, the Board also discussed closing out unspent balances in RFCNRE. Ms. Buch indicated that she would come to the next Board meeting with accounts to close out. In the meantime, the Board considered two unspent amounts in the Senior Center accounts, one for door replacement and repair (\$7,210) and another for window repair (\$2,500). Gwen Mogenson moved transferring them to a separate account to hold these amounts for future Edgerton building demolition costs; passed 6-0.

MINUTES

The Board reviewed the draft minutes for the June 18, 2013 meeting. Lori Bora moved approval without edits; passed 5-0-1 (Joe Duwan abstained due to absence).

DISCUSSION OF DRAFT AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST ORDINANCE

Liz Mao led a discussion of the draft affordable housing trust ordinance. The board noted that Section 55-4 (b) (Authorization) as drafted permits (i) accepting gifts of property without board of finance or RTM approval and (ii) the purchase of property with only RTM approval.

Board members expressed concerns about acquisitions not requiring BoF approval, as even gifts of property could still result in future expenses for remediation, repair or upkeep costs. The board also pointed out that the lack of required BoF approvals in Section 55-4 appears to be inconsistent with Section 55-2, which requires BoF approval for any appropriations exceeding \$20,000.

The board proposed revising Section 55-4 (b) as follows:

Section 55-4. Authorization. **[BoF REVISED]**

(b)

Any acquisition that is made pursuant to Sections 55-1, 55-2 and 55-3 of this ordinance by gift, devise or any other form of conveyance, whether or not it requires any payment by or other compensation from the Town, shall be forwarded to the board of finance for their consideration. If approved by the board of finance, the board of selectmen shall present such recommendation for a vote at a duly warned and noticed meeting of the representative town meeting. If the representative town meeting approves an appropriation of funds for such acquisition, such appropriation shall be deemed to constitute approval by the representative town meeting of the acquisition itself, provided no other compensation in addition to the amount of the appropriation will be required by the town.

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS, COMMITTEE REPORTS, CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Gwen Mogenson and Martha Banks have been working with the Charter Revision Commission. They reported that the Commission is not changing any board authorities or powers in the Charter and is instead just cleaning up and refining language.

Separately, Martha Banks reported that an update on the Fire Consultant study is expected soon.

Liz Mao commented briefly on a letter from Town Counsel about FOI requirements; she urged board members to read the letter carefully. One suggestion in the letter was that board members should have “Darien.CT.gov” email addresses to facilitate compliance with future FOI requests. Kate Buch will pursue this.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, Jon Zagrodzky made a motion to adjourn; passed 6-0 at 8:39 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Zagrodzky
Clerk