

February 27, 2013

The Board of Finance held a special meeting on this date at the Police Department meeting room. Members present were Glenn Frishman, Chairman; John O'Brien, Secretary; Dudley Wheeler; John O'Brien, Bryan Bentz; Sandy Grimes and June Strunk. Also present Maryanna Stevens, Director of Finance; Board of Selectmen, Town staff and residents.

Mr. Frishman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Previous minutes

Mr. Wheeler made a motion to accept the minutes of the February 13 meeting.

Mr. O'Brien seconded the motion and voting was unanimous.

Bid Waiver/Additional Appropriation

Public Works – Fertilization Program for Athletic Fields- Director Joe Bragaw addressed the Board. He stated that with the Memorandum of Understanding for the Maintenance of Town owned Athletic Fields in Stonington signed in the present fiscal year the Highway Dept. does not have the funds in the existing budget to cover any fieldwork. He requested a bid waiver to use Fairplay Turf Services to fertilize and aerate the athletic fields. He also requested additional funds for \$12,225 to cover the cost through June 30, 2013. Mrs. Stevens mentioned that a transfer of funds might be available instead of an additional appropriation. Mr. Grimes stated that he had spoken with School Superintendent Dr. Riley. He stated that Dr. Riley had offered to pay half of the costs associated with the fields. Mr. Bragaw replied that it was his understanding they had already helped with previous aeration costs. Mr. Bentz made a motion to approve the bid waiver for Fairplay Turf Services to perform fertilization and aeration of the Stonington fields. Mr. Grimes seconded the motion and voting was unanimous.

Public Works – Crack Sealing- Director Joe Bragaw stated that last year the Highway Dept. received a bid waiver to use Sealcoating Inc. as the crack-sealing vendor for the season. He added that they were very happy with the product and service. This year Sealcoating Inc. provided pricing for the Capitol Region Council of Governments bid. Due to the volume of work proposed, he stated that he has been able to negotiate a much lower price per gallon from last year, a 12% reduction. Mr. Wheeler made a motion to approve the bid waiver for Sealcoating Inc. as the crack-sealing vendor. Mr. Grimes seconded and voting was unanimous.

At this time, Chairman Frishman asked Mr. Bragaw for an explanation of the Capital Project Request form just received regarding the drainage issue at Church Street in Mystic. Mr. Bragaw stated that this is not a new problem but residents say it is much worse. He stated they are not certain of the causes for these heightened flooding issues. The department is in the process of investigating and identifying some short-term mitigation measures with costs along with a longer-term fix and costs associated with that. He asked for \$1.00 for the CIP line, as these costs have not yet been determined. He added that there might be a Hazmat or FEMA grant to help with costs. He added that Department of Environmental Protection permits are almost guaranteed. Mrs. Stevens added that it might possibly go through LOCIP. Mr. Frishman, with unanimous approval from the Board asked Mrs. Packer, Clerk to add Repair drainage issue at Church St. Mystic to the Capital Improvements budget for \$1.00.

Budget Hearings FY 2013-2014

Police – Chief Darren Stewart introduced the members of the Police Commission present as well as Captain Desmond and other members of the department. Chief Stewart spoke to the addition of the *School Safety Personnel* line of the budget. Chairman Bates added that this is to review the emergency protocols, improving infrastructure and increase police presence at the schools. Mr. Frishman explained his plan for an Executive Session to address the School Safety issue and garner more information. He asked the members for their input. After a brief discussion it was determined that any further discussions on this subject should include the Board of Education members. At this time the Chief went over the highlights of his budget and objectives for the coming year. He addressed the increase in the Retirement Fund; Mrs. Strunk asked if it was underfunded to which Mrs. Stevens replied that this is a State program. She added that the 30-year plan is up in FY 14-15 which will reduce the cost about \$107,000. Special events have increased within the Town, which generates the need for increased police presence, thus the request for an additional Reserve Officers. Captain Desmond negotiated an excellent gas contract.

The Chief stated that the department has met with Superintendent of Schools, and the Principals from both St. Michael School and Pine Point to address their strengths and weaknesses with regard to safety. There has been an increased presence at the schools with 128 separate visits. Come September they will need funding to continue with training, drills and possibly substations at the schools. Mrs. Strunk mentioned Old Mystic Fire Chief Ken Richards who spoke before the Board last week requesting funds for safety training. She asked if this is an overlap or a combined effort. The Chief stated that it was a different training program from Massachusetts. Captain Desmond added that he really wasn't sure and would look into it further. Chairman Bates stated that he feels these issues should be handled through the Police Department. Mr. Bentz stated that he feels \$100,000 is a suitable amount to address these critically important issues and asked why it is now at \$1.00. First Selectman Haberek stated that he

cut the line to \$1.00 because he wanted more detailed information to substantiate the amount requested.

General Government – First Selectman Ed Haberek stated that for the past three years the budgets had virtually no increase and passed on the first referendum. He added that Stonington has the lowest mill rate in Southeastern Connecticut. He addressed some of the challenges faced in 2012, particularly the storms; reorganization of two town departments; SeeClickFix reporting; athletic fields, property revitalization, Edythe K Richmond grant and collaborative initiatives. Mr. Haberek thanked the Town employees and volunteer members of the Boards and Commissions. Director of Administrative Services Vincent Pacileo addressed the Health insurance changes coming up. The Labor negotiations line includes all four contracts, which expire June 30, 2013. Mr. Frishman asked if he has looked at other towns. Mr. Pacileo said yes, the average is 2.25% through CCM with an increase in the employee cost share. The Property & Liability line has increased; Mrs. Stevens explained that a large part of this is that of the 11 Underground storage tanks within the town only one is covered. Mr. Frishman asked DPW Joe Bragaw to do an assessment and report to the Board. Mrs. Stevens addressed the Debt Service; in March 2012, the Town issued \$12,000,000 of the \$18,325,000 approved by voters in November 2010. On October 17, 2012, voters approved \$3,500,000 for road improvements and \$2,700,000 for Athletic Field and Facilities Improvements. Mr. Haberek stated that he has added back the Director of Planning line in a more broad position. He also cut the Technical Assistant for the Building Official line by \$15,000.

Capital Improvements – The Board reviewed the items in the proposed CIP. Mr. Grimes questioned the classification of the Police Fleet as an A. Mrs. Stevens reminded the members that this was questioned last year as well and following the departmental priorities instructions an A. is a committed project, one that the Town has already agreed to undertake. Mrs. Strunk had several questions regarding the fleet that were address by Captain Desmond and Sergeant Bryan Schneider. Captain Desmond provided the members with a list of the fleet detailing the mileage and hours of service on the road. Sgt. Schneider stated that the replacement system ultimately keeps maintenance costs down. Chief Stewart added that the vehicles brought in \$58,000 through Outside Service projects. Mr. Grimes asked why the Chief and Captain use the police vehicles for personal use. Captain Desmond replied that they are essentially on duty 24-7. If needed and proper they will respond anytime. Also discussed, Police Services technology upgrade, Meadow Ave. drainage and the Public works backhoe. Mr. Bragaw stated this item was critical in storm cleanup and there is a possibility FEMA reimbursement may cover the cost.

Director of Finance – Assessor Marsha Standish spoke regarding the October 1, 2012 Net Grand List information. She informed the members that Davis Standard failed to file for the manufacturing exemption of \$4,456,608. The Grand List includes this as taxable. She added that the exemption can still be granted but this would require a request to the Board of Selectmen followed by a Town meeting.

Mrs. Standish stated that there are several different proposed Motor Vehicles tax changes out there.

New Business – Nothing to report.

Subcommittee reports – Mr. Grimes reported that the Athletic Fields committee would be voting Friday on which turf to use.

Correspondence – Letter from the Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc. request support of the Community Redevelopment and Conservation Act allowing communities to impose a conveyance fee of up to 1% on buyers of real estate for spending on local redevelopment and conservation projects.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Grimes made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Wheeler seconded the motion and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


John O'Brien
Secretary

lp