

Town of Willington

40 Old Farms Road
Willington, CT 06279
(860) 487-3100
(860) 487-3103 Fax
www.willingtonct.org

BOARD OF FINANCE

Budget Meeting Minutes
Virtual Meeting via ZOOM

March 10, 2022
7:00 PM

**Minutes are not official until approved at the next regular meeting*

Members Present (a quorum of 4 members is required to conduct business):

Mike Makuch – Chairman
Peter Tanaka– Secretary
Christina Mailhos
Stephanie Summers
Joseph Sherrell
Jim Gilligan – Alternate

Members Absent:

Geoff Prusak – Vice Chairman
Lisa Woolf – Alternate

Also Present:

First Selectwoman Erika Wiecewski
Business Manager Donna Latinsics
Department of Public Works Director Troy Sposato
Human Services Director Jennie Arpin
Parks & Rec Director Alan Humphrey
Revenue Collector Janice Clauson
Superintendent Phil Stevens
Town Clerk Robin Campbell
Willington Fire Department #1 Chief Alexander Moore
Members of the Public

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Makuch called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

SEATING OF ALTERNATES

P. Tanaka moved to seat Jim Gilligan in place of Geoff Prusak.

S. Summers seconded the motion.

5 Yes (C. Mailhos, M. Makuch, J. Sherrell, S. Summers, P. Tanaka), 0 No. Motion carried.

Chairman Makuch introduced Samantha Sperry as the new recording secretary for the Board of Finance.

PRESENT TO SPEAK

None.

OLD BUSINESS

1) ARPA Process

C. Mailhos spoke about the most recent submissions that the ARPA Commission has reviewed, as well as the submission process. A public hearing for the current submissions will be held on Monday, March 21st at 6:30pm as well as a SPECIAL ARPA Commission meeting following the hearing. Discussion followed on the information that is forthcoming from the town attorney.

J. Gilligan inquired about the submissions to the ARPA Commission versus the number of submissions for the public hearing. C. Mailhos stated that the six submissions for the public hearing are priority items that are from the Capital Improvement Plan, as well as the radios submission for the fire departments/public works as that item is going to increase in price significantly after April 1st.

M. Makuch inquired about the need to get money to the residents, as well as the businesses in town. C. Mailhos replied that the Economic Development Commission has submitted a request for \$300,000.00 for grants to small businesses in town.

There are two potential ARPA projects for funding that will have impacts on the operating budget; the salary increases in the Human Services Department, which is a 3 year phase-in plan for the increase of salary for the director and assistant into the town operating budget. In Year 1, 75% of the cost is to be covered by ARPA funding, 50% of the cost to be covered by ARPA funding in year 2, and 25% of the cost covered by ARPA funding in Year 3. The second request that has a potential impact on the operating salary is the request for a second ambulance for Willington Fire Department #1.

Chairman Makuch questioned that ARPA funding cannot be used to pay for salaries and First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated that it would not be submitted under the premium pay category, but this would be covered under the revenue loss category (anything that the municipality would budget for on an annual basis). The Human Services Department has been heavily affected by COVID with the clientele and needs increasing over the last two years. The assistant would move from eight hours a week currently, to thirty hours a week in the next fiscal year and then the assistant duties would also include overseeing the senior center as well, as the current volunteer senior coordinator is no longer able to perform these duties.

S. Summers asked if there is a plan to be submitted to ARPA to help those in need and what is the process of the Human Services department to help those who need it. Human Services Director Arpin stated that there are grants being applied for to help with energy assistance, food, housing, etc. to help those in need. The town does have a fuel fund and a food pantry that is available to all residents.

Discussion was held on the revenue loss category and what that would mean for the town. The ARPA funding is considered rescue/recovery/repair funding that is to benefit the town. Discussion continued about the salary increases per year and if it would be possible to only consider one year for an increase at this time. The ARPA submission total for this was \$34,379.00 and the Year 1 amount is \$16,098.00.

There is an ARPA request for a second ambulance for \$100,000.00 from Willington Fire Department #1 as a spare ambulance if the current ambulance is down and to also be used at night if there is more than one call occurring. Discussion continued on the purchase of a new second ambulance and the possibility of purchasing a used ambulance as is at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

1) Budget Discussion

With the current presented budgets from Region 19, the Education budget K through 8, and the general government budget, if we apply a fund balance of \$355,000.00, this would equal a mill rate increase of 1.91

mills for the next fiscal year. This mill rate increase would be \$190.57 per \$100,000.00 of assessed value. One option is to increase the amount from the fund balance which would decrease the amount required from taxation. Another option is cutting expenses and individual department budgets. There has not been a tax increase over the last 5 years and it has remained static since 2017.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski inquired about the Board of Finance budget being included in the overall budget. Chairman Makuch stated that this will be reviewed later in the meeting.

C. Mailhos inquired about salaries and First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that the union has not ratified the contract as of yet. Salaries were discussed across the board between union, non-union adjustments without specifics due to the contract not being finalized. Discussion in regards to the revenue collector salary increase occurred. Currently the certified revenue collector makes less than the assistant revenue collector who is not yet certified, but is in the union. The Town Clerk salaries have been trued up to the people currently holding those positions.

P. Tanaka questioned the 20% increase in senior center operations and the 11% increase in the public works budget. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated the public works increases are comprised of fuel increases, maintenance and supply cost increases, additional funding for tree removals, and the shoring up of the laborer position to the driver position. The senior center operations increase is in the maintenance category for paving and restripping a portion of the parking lot for the senior center and then the increase of heating fuel.

Chairman Makuch inquired about the fuel line item in the Public Works budget and if that is in the fire department budgets as well, but First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that it is strictly only in the public works budget, but the fire departments do use the fuel as well.

Chairman Makuch inquired about the Board of Finance budget. There is \$500.00 for legal counsel and \$1,000.00 in the BOF miscellaneous budget. Discussion was held to keep these placeholders the same for the next fiscal year.

CORRESPONDENCE

All correspondence has been forwarded.

PRESENT TO SPEAK

Superintendent Phil Stevens: The Board of Education did re-approve the budget as it is shown currently.

Chief Alex Moore: The Ambulance repairs have been completed and it did come under budget from the original estimate. The Department has not yet received the final bill. The Department will need to do a budget transfer for that expense as previously discussed. We believe it should be much less than anticipated.

GOOD & WELFARE

Chairman Makuch welcomed Samantha Sperry as the new recording secretary.

With the lifting of restrictions, in the next regular meeting the Board will need to discuss how future meetings will go.

P. Tanaka made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:39pm.

S. Summers seconded the motion.

All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Kelsey Allard

Interim Recording Secretary

RECEIVED
WILLINGTON, CT.
2022 JUL 12 P 3:31


TOWN CLERK