

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

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

BOARD OF FINANCE

Regular Meeting
Hybrid- In Person and Online

October 20, 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
Geoff Prusak
Christina Mailhos
Joe Sherrell
Stephanie Summers
Elisabeth Woolf (alt)
Jim Gilligan (alt)

Also Present:

Erika Wiecewski-First Selectwoman
Donna Latinsics-Finance
Troy Sposato-Public Works
Chief Alex Moore-WFD#1
Phil Stevens-Superintendent
Members of the Public

Chairman Mike Makuch called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

SEATING OF ALTERNANTES:

Geoff makes a motion to seat Jim Gilligan for Pete Tanaka
Joe seconds
All in favor
Motion passes

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Geoff makes a motion to approve the minutes from 9/15/22
Mike seconds
Correction: Change date from 9/19 to 9/15
Geoff, yes, Joe, yes, Christina, yes, Jim, yes, Stef, abstain, Mike, yes
Motion passes

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PRESENT TO SPEAK:

Nick Tella 49 Myrtle, "So in regard to the Board of Finance approving any money from here to the school I just feel as though the SBC should be stating line items of what this money is going to be used for, not just stating 'hey we're going to go to Colliers and they are going to get \$50,000 or we're going to go to Eagle, whoever. What exactly is this money going to? And so that is one thing I think should be clarified. I understand you guys don't determine how the school spends their money I have an issue when I was looking at the ed spec (?) site Willington spends approximately \$1,400 per pupil on maintenance while the State is spending \$1,600. I understand that for parents that have kids in school they're saying kids aren't safe with mold and this and that it's just the way they are spending money I have a concern with that. And I know that the school project is going to be discussed later the Board of Finance needs to take into consideration what is going to happen to the town for an expense when they have to close down Center in January of 2021 the presentation said it was 7.9 million dollar upgrade to that building. I get that that was for the use of the school however again that's a reference point is it 4 million or is it 8 million that the taxpayers are going to have to pay again that's not being explained by the SBC. The BOF maybe needs to have that conversation, but we need, as taxpayers, to understand that when that new school gets pushed through, we still have the expense- if it is a new school- we still have the expense of Center School on our plate. It needs to be considered and talked about. That's all I have for now."

Peter Latincsics, 97 Trask Road, "If you could include me on the agenda item to share an update from SBC sub finance committee to address what Mr. Tella just asked for, the expenditures and revenues we are operating on, share that information with the board and answer any questions."

Erika "I'd like to ask you to consider moving item 6 of old business to the top of your agenda so that our public works director can get to another meeting." Mike replies "OK, once we are in business, we will make a motion to move that up."

Nick Tella 49 Myrtle, "Just to add one more point in regard to potentially a truck and such, I just want to be on the record I do not think the town should be giving money to a \$250,000 truck, now probably a \$300,000 truck."

OLD BUSINESS:

- 1) Mike: "At the request of the First Selectwoman, unless there's an objection amongst the Board, I'd like to move item 6 to the beginning, I don't think we need a motion for that, we can just move it up."

CIP DPW Dump truck

Erika: "The CIP plan included a replacement of a public works vehicle, the 2012 International, and that request for CIP that was approved at town meeting was for \$225,000 for the 22/23 fiscal year. When the Board of Selectmen went to approve the vendor and award the contract, we were given information that the cost of vehicles had dramatically increased and at that point it would cost \$265,050 and that price would only be good until August 7 and he believed there would be another price increase. Because of that the BOS came to you with a request to approve with a 10% contingency so it was \$291,050. This board asked us to consider going out to bid, we did, we received one bid that was opened this afternoon, the price was \$265,050. So the price did not change....As you know, the lifespan of our vehicles is not that of a normal vehicle, these are trucks that are used every day, both for hauling off-winter season and then as plow trucks in the winter and it is imperative that we have working vehicles in order to plow snow from the roads." "With that we ask that you reconsider our original motion, but not asking

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for the contingency.... Because we know the price as of today, the contingency isn't warranted.... That is \$40,050 more than budgeted for in CIP last year.... We put \$10,000 worth of maintenance in this (the current) vehicle since July, it is a troubled vehicle...the idea is to trade it in and any funds would go back to the Reserve Fund.... to offset any additional funds. (Coming from the Reserve fund to pay for the increase for the new truck)" Mike asks if they know what the trade-in value might be, Troy says no because it is dependent on the condition the truck is in at the time of trade in and it will likely be used this winter season causing more wear and tear. It is clarified between Geoff and Troy that this price is not contingent on a trade-in, but the International truck will be traded in or sold once the new truck is delivered. Mike and Stef discuss the numbers coming to the conclusion that the total price for this new truck will be \$265,050 with up to \$169,046 from the Capital Reserve which would be the down payment plus the first year lease payment- which was constructed months ago in the BOF as to not affect the budget all in one year- the remaining would be in leasing in the outyears and would show up in the operating budget and the CIP as leasing. Down payment is \$140,050, \$125,000 is leasing. Mike states Troy explained to him that Freightliner is territory protected, so one Freightliner vendor will not bid against another one. The reason we are using Freightliner is Troy believes for the durability of the fleet we should have all similar trucks.

Stef would like to mention that she has some concern about the long-term practice of not having a 3 bid minimum and being over specific with bids. It is her understanding that there is no rule stating that the town must always choose the lowest bid. She thinks it would be nice for the public to see choices to help make smarter purchases. She doesn't want the opportunity to arise for potentially monopolistic bidders who don't have to worry about being competitive. Mike agrees and states that because of the economic repercussions from the pandemic, maybe we should be open to more options.

Mike makes a motion to have the Board of Finance recommend to the Board of Selectmen to call a town meeting to appropriate up to \$160,946 from the Capitol Reserve fund for a down payment of \$140,050 and a first-year lease payment of up to \$20,896 for a 2024 Freightliner 114 SD single axle plow truck

Stef seconds

Discussion: Jim questions that the model year is a 2024 and it is expected to be delivered in March of 2023. Mike replies, May of 23. Mike asks if there might be any benefit of saying "new" instead of "2024" just in case a 2023 becomes available, Jim agrees saying that was the purpose of his question. Stef and Mike agree to amend the motion to read "**.... for a new Freightliner 114 SD single axel plow truck.**"

Christina is wondering if whatever the value is from selling the old truck would go back into the Reserve Fund since the extra cost for the new truck would come from that fund and it would help to replenish it. There is some discussion between Mike, Donna and Erika that there isn't a policy stating where the money would have to go, so you can choose which fund it would go into. They also decide not to add that extra information to the motion for the sake of flexibility.

Geoff, yes, Stef, yes, Christina, yes, Jim, yes, Joe, abstain, Mike yes

Motion Passes as amended

2) Budget status financial report

Donna says on the revenue side of the budget the category for licenses, fees and permits has exceeded the budget due to the Loves permit they didn't anticipate. They budgeted to collect \$129,000 and have already collected \$131,000. They have also exceeded the budget for Investment Income, they budgeted

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for \$5,000, earned interest income at \$15,000 as well as other revenue they budgeted \$37,800 and have collected \$43,000 due to back rent collected from M and J bus lot on Ruby Road. There are no expenditure concerns. Stef has a question about where the scrap metal credits is located on the report and Donna says it is located within "other revenue". Christina is asking didn't we know about the Love's permit and Mike said they had an inkling about it, but they weren't sure when it was going to happen, so it wasn't budgeted for.

3) Update from the School Building Committee Representative

The SBC is getting close to putting out some significant community outreach. Mike invites Peter to discuss information related to the SBC's finance sub-committee. He shares a document breaking down various expenditures from the first \$100,000. In review: paid YTD \$32k Encumbrances: \$54k. He reminds everyone they are getting closer to the potential project and will need the next \$100,000 to help pay for consultant fees, land assessments, etc. Any funds that are not used will be returned to the town. Part of the next \$100,000 will likely also go to due diligence with more information being presented to the taxpayers for either a new school or a renovation. Peter also mentions that the information for how the money is being used will be online on the school's website which is linked to the town's website. Stef would like to know if the SBC not getting approval for the next \$100,000 at the town meeting slowed down their process at all. Mike said no, because they still have roughly \$14,000 remaining from the first \$100,000. She would also like to ask for a paper document to be available for the next town meeting, having a website with the information is helpful, but she thinks the townspeople would more appreciate a piece of paper to refer to, especially when asked to vote on a topic.

4) Review and update on School Building Committee request for CIP funds to continue consulting and related services

Stef makes a motion to seat Lisa for Christina

Mike seconds

All in favor

Motion passes

Mike moves that the board of finance recommends that the Selectmen call a town meeting to see if the townspeople will authorize the appropriation of \$100,000 from the Reserve Fund to project number 04-4041 for School Building Committee consultants as previously approved by the voters at the annual town meeting for 2022/2023. The funds will be utilized to hire consultants to assist the school building committee with the review of options including but not limited to renovations, addition or new school and other items to assist the School Building Committee in performing their charge.

Stef seconds

Erika states that she asked the town attorney if they could bring a once denied request back to town meeting to be reconsidered again and he said yes they can.

Stef, yes, Lisa, yes, Joe yes, Jim, yes, Geoff, no, Mike yes

Motion passes

5) ARPA Update

The rest of the funds have arrived, projects who were waiting have been told they can begin their purchases and they have reopened submissions with a deadline of November 3. Projects with funds previously allocated that are completed have been closing, some underbudget with balances returnable. Stef, Mike and Erika discuss the cost of the skid steer, concluding it was \$67,283.

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6) Annual Reports

Mike worked with the town clerk to see what the legal requirements are for annual reports, because they are behind on them, they went over what years were missing and what years they had. Donna gave him a bunch of helpful information to look over. In the next few days, they will get requests out to the budgeting agencies, and they will get the annual reports caught up.

NEW BUSINESS:

Board of Education request to place funds in non-lapsing fund

Phil mentions that the non-lapsing fund is used for emergency or unanticipated education costs. The current balance is \$153,249 the max is \$272,240. The BOE is requesting to transfer \$105,000 of the \$179,638 that is being returned by the Board from the 21/22 budget, bringing the balance to \$258,249. He mentions they were returning the \$179,638 because there were positions that couldn't be filled, some new staff was hired at a lower salary, there were savings from hiring paraprofessionals from the union versus outside contractors, not being eligible for cyber insurance so they didn't purchase it, and insurance savings from staff who didn't want the insurance. They are asking for the request because of an increase in kindergarten enrollment and a new teacher.

Stef moves to request \$105,000 of the \$179,638 returned by the Board of Education be placed in their non-lapsing fund for Board of Education policy number 3171 and Connecticut general statute 10-248a

Mike seconds

All in favor

Motion passes

Sewage disposal system and renovations to the Old Town Hall, including STEAP grant fund and potential motion to fund the project via town meeting

Erika mentions they performed a successful perk test today, next Carl will perform a survey and drawings and it will go out to bid.

Mike moves that the BOF recommend that the BOS call a town meeting to appropriate \$128,205 from the STEAP grant to contract number 2022-01.09 for construction of a new sewage disposal system and renovations to the old town hall building

Stef seconds

Mike mentions that this is not coming directly from taxpayer funding because it is a STEAP grant, and they have been discussing this project for quite a while. It first surfaced on CIP roughly around 2017.

Stef, yes, Lisa, yes, Jim, unresponsive on zoom Joe, yes, Geoff, no, Mike yes

Motion passes

PRESENT TO SPEAK:

Erika encourages to get back to in person meeting and hybrid should be used only for the public, but it is important for all members to be in person.

Nick Tella, 49 Myrtle, "Touching base on that, a hybrid option I agree with, tonight downstairs it was only in person. I hope this board never goes to that situation because what now happens is people at home cannot participate, they can watch on YouTube, but say if they wanted to participate the hybrid

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option should be the option. Also perception that grant money is not tax payer money I heard this tonight, just now, and I heard it in the night we were voting from the gentleman in the crowd. If this is not taxpayer money, then where is this money coming from? Because its coming from property tax, income tax, sales tax, some kind of tax that we are either paying locally or to the state. The perception that it is not taxpayer money- it is taxpayer money, it's not free. Personally I'm not on board for the \$100,000 just seeing the cost from the options we were seeing last night between the new or the renovation options that were there. I think the school should be doing the building upgrades to each that approach it seems to be many millions less than what it would cost what was presented. We are looking at potentially, with waivers, at best \$32 million considering potentially with Center being upgraded to a town hall. Even if it's not upgraded to a town hall, \$28 million at best for new and that's with no auditorium. Renovations for Hall with no auditorium around \$36 million without taking consideration of Center School. Construction costs from 21/22 from what I've seen were about 15% for building upgrades. So January of 2021 on the presentation it was shown that upgrades was approximately \$13.9 million dollars for both schools with a 15% increase, you're looking at almost \$16 million dollars to me its more responsible to the taxpayer, spending \$16 million and I'm sure that number may be higher, but its not going to be close to the \$28 million for no auditorium for the new school. I personally would like to see if we could get the invoice number 7295 which was the property evaluation I don't know if that could be made to the public. Going to the truck, maybe contracting out snow plowing for the winter instead of using our vehicles, I don't know what the cost is or if that has been analyzed or at least take a look at it. For the 23/24 vehicle, those features should be the same as a 2012 I don't understand if it is or isn't. And last point here I understand that the truck is needed, but as the town has a lot of expenses coming up we are already in a recession, I understand some people may say we are not, we don't know where this is going I think we should just slow down on our spending, we could be heading into some issues here, our people needing a break from taxes, who knows down the line. We may be needing to get innovative in ways of helping people out. Putting ourselves in a position where we are just spending and not going to be able to help people later on I think its just I think we got some issues coming up that's it."

Lisa Woolf "I just want to thank you very much for your involvement in the bidding process. I do think it is your place and it should be commended that a volunteer wish to get engaged, be educated, learn from the process, and see what he can do to help the town be more fiscally responsible, so I just wanted to say that and thank you."

GOOD AND WELFARE:

There is a parks and rec Halloween party at River Road from 4-6 on Halloween. Also in the next couple weeks keep an eye out for the public outreach.

Geoff makes a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm.

Mike Seconds this motion

All in favor

Motion passes

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Sperry
Recording Secretary

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WILLINGTON, CT.
2022 NOV -4 A 9:09

TOWN CLERK