



TOWN OF ELLINGTON

DOUGLAS B. HARDING
Chairman

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MICHAEL J. PURCARO
Vice Chairman

BOARD OF FINANCE

KEITH R. DURAO
DAVID J. OLENDER
BARRY C. PINTO
JOSEPH E. WEHR

REGULAR MEETING FEBRUARY 2, 2021 MINUTES

Members Present: Douglas Harding-Chairman, Keith Durao, David Olender, Barry Pinto, Michael Purcaro

Present via Zoom: Joseph Wehr

Others Present: Lori Spielman-First Selectman, Tiffany Pignataro-Finance Officer, Brian Greenleaf-Dir Finance & Opers-BOE, Chief Jack Rich and Elizabeth Feldman-EVFD

Via Zoom: Peggy Busse, Sue Phillips-Library Director, Jennifer Brown

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Citizen's Forum – (Non-agenda items)

Peggy Busse, 37 Abbott Rd stated that she would like to see improved technology to better enhance the Zoom meetings for the Town as the Board of Education has done. The audio and video is not up to par. She has also expressed this concern to the Board of Selectmen.

Approval of Minutes

Regular Meeting of January 5, 2021

MOVED (PINTO) SECONDED (OLENDER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 5, 2021 AS WRITTEN.

Financial Statements

Ms. Pignataro stated that not much has changed from last month. The Coronavirus Relief revenue for \$139,103 is on this list as well as the EMPG Covid 19 Stipend that was received since last month's meeting in the amount of \$17,468. She pointed out that the

January collections are on target. She also let the Board know that the Emergency Management Director spoke with Everbridge and they brought down the price for the 2021-22 budget. Mr. Purcaro asked if she had heard of any additional funding for Covid and she stated that she had only heard that the last funding received in December was extended through this next calendar year. Ellington had the costs to substantiate it in December. Ms. Pignataro stated that as far as the accounts that are over or close, she has been meeting with department heads and going line by line over this year's budget as well as next years for areas to reduce spending.

First Selectman, Lori Spielman stated that she has been working with the Tax Collector and she has a list of property sales. She sent out notifications and two have paid in full.

Mr. Purcaro asked about the revaluation that was completed and how it will affect this year's revenues. Ms. Pignataro stated that the deadline for the grand list is the end of February. As soon as that is completed, her department will be working to get that information into the budget process for March.

Mr. Wehr asked if they will be able to determine the increase in the grand list from items added in the last year. Ms. Pignataro stated that she will confer with the Assessor to see if she can get this information.

New Business

1. Appropriations:
 - a. Board of Education Medical Self Insurance Fund

Mr. Greenleaf stated that the Board of Finance returned an additional \$223,000 from projected back to the town and would like to use those funds to jump start this account. By doing this, they will be able to be self-insured sooner. Medical insurance is the BOE's second largest expenditure in the budget. Ms. Pignataro stated that the funds are available in the undesignated fund balance but her department is working on figuring out where this year will shake out. Mr. Purcaro stated that this is an investment that will save a significant amount of money in time and the Board of Education will gain more control over medical finances. Trends show that the savings in medical insurance costs could be up to 10%. Mr. Greenleaf stated that these funds can only be used for medical expenses.

After some discussion, it was decided to table this item until March to give Finance more time to determine where the current and next year budget stands to make sure the funds will be available. It was noted that this appropriation would also have to go to town meeting.

MOVED (PURCARO) SECONDED (OLENDER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO TABLE THIS APPROPRIATION TO THE MARCH MEETING.

- b. Board of Education Unexpended Funds Account

This fund was set up to help narrow the balance of the increased costs of outside tuition and transportation which is an unexpected cost. This was approved in 2018 but the funds were not transferred. The account is to be capped at \$500,000. Mr. Greenleaf was asked how many students this would fund and he felt that \$150,000 would accommodate up to 2 students on average. This account was set up to help with the planning of the operations budget. This is a restricted use fund and can only be used to pay for special education services. Mr. Harding stated that the Board established the account but never put any funds in it. Any portion of a surplus that the BOE may have at the end of each fiscal year can be put into this account.

MOVED (PURCARO) SECONDED (OLENDER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE TRANSFER OF \$150,000 FROM UNDESIGNATED FUND BALANCE TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION UNEXPENDED FUNDS ACCOUNT.

2. Purchasing Procedures Discussion

Mr. Olender stated that he would like to see the bidding process expedited. He receives notifications from the State of CT on RFP's coming available. He does not see the State spending funds on advertising in the newspaper and would like to investigate how the Town vs the State does their bidding processes. Mr. Harding stated that the Board of Selectmen controls the policies and procedures.

Mr. Wehr he stated that he started this discussion and that his goal is to enhance the Town's procurement ability by using the Board of Finance's knowledge and business experience early in the process. He felt that it would be a more proactive approach to getting bids. He feels that the expertise on this Board is valuable. He stated that the Purchase Policies and Procedures should be viewed as a minimum and the Town could save money by more competitive and affective procurement and be proactive in seeking bids to expand the bid pool. He would like the Finance Board or a subcommittee to review them early. He would like to find a way to get this Board engaged earlier in the process.

Mr. Olender asked where the RFP's are advertised besides the newspaper. Ms. Pignataro stated that all bids are on the Town's website. Lori Spielman stated that the Charter dictates that they be advertised in the newspaper and that they are posted on the Facebook page also. Mr. Duraio stated that it is not a law that it has to be done in the newspaper, only dictated by the Charter. Mr. Purcaro asked if the town subscribes to the State of CT biznet portal. Ms. Pignataro stated that the Town subscribes to it but doesn't post bids on it. Mr. Purcaro asked if the town tracks the bids done through normal channels, state contract, etc. Ms. Pignataro stated that we do not at this time but could in the future.

3. 2021-22 Board of Finance Budget

Mr. Purcaro asked if the Auditors fee shown is net of the Board of Education, and Ms. Pignataro confirmed that it was. Mr. Greenleaf will budget for it on their side. A

question arose about the OPEB liability and Ms. Pignataro stated that historically \$100,000 has been added to that account but she is not sure how close to the actual obligation the Town is currently. She is working to understand the true fund amount that is needed. There is no formal policy on this account. Mr. Purcaro thanked her for looking into it and working on it. He asked about the contingency and capital reserve accounts. Mr. Harding stated that the Town puts funds in contingency and capital reserve and adjusts at deliberations if needed. Ms. Pignataro stated that the capital reserve funds are for capital items only and as long as the 5% is covered, there is nothing in the charter that requires the Town to continue to fund it. Ms. Pignataro is recommending to continue to strengthen unrestricted fund balance and slow down on the capital reserve fund.

MOVED (PURCARO) SECONDED (PINTO) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO SET THE BOARD OF FINANCE BUDGET AS FOLLOWS: ACCOUNT 120-\$11,820; ACCOUNT 121 \$54,120; ACCOUNT 122-\$1.00; ACCOUNT 1010-\$200,000; ACCOUNT 1011-\$200,000; ACCOUNT 1045-\$100,000.

Liaison Reports

Mr. Purcaro stated that the Superintendent's budget is currently \$1.37 million or 3.38% over this fiscal year's budget. A final review will be made tomorrow night and they have been directed to make adjustments to reduce the increase without affecting programs.

Executive Session

Discussion of Potential Real Estate Acquisition

MOVED (OLENDER) SECONDED (PINTO) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 8:05 PM.


In Attendance: Douglas Harding, Michael Purcaro, Barry Pinto, David Olender, Keith Durao, Lori Spielman, Tiffany Pignataro, Lori Smith

MOVED (PINTO) SECONDED (OLENDER) AND PASSED TO COME OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 8:19 PM.

Adjournment

MOVED (PINTO) SECONDED (OLENDER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted:



Lori Smith, Recording Secretary