



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

MICHAEL J. PURCARO
Chairman

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DAVID J. OLENDER
Vice Chairmen

BOARD OF FINANCE

PEGGY A. BUSSE
JAMES F. FAY
DOUGLAS B. HARDING
BARRY C. PINTO

Meeting January 4, 2023

MINUTES

Members Present: Michael Purcaro -Chair, David Olender, Peggy Busse, James Fay, Douglas Harding, Barry Pinto.

Others Present: Tiffany Pignataro-Finance Officer/Treasurer, Lori Spielman – First Selectman, John Rainaldi – Assessor, Diane Lasher-Penti-Youth Services Director, Tom Palshaw – Resident, Cynthia Soto – Resident, Perry Dikeman– Resident.

Call to order

Chairman Michael Purcaro called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman's Report

Mr. Purcaro stated they need volunteer committee members for the senior tax relief program. There is a charter requirement stating we must have a committee to review the proposed tax relief for the seniors in the community. If you have an interest in this topic, please reach out to the Board of Selectmen's office.

The Chairman stated federal tax tables have changed and at to keep an eye on your payroll taxes, you may want to adjust your withholdings.

He stated we will have a presentation from our Youth Services Director, Diane Lasher-Penti requested by the Board of Finance following last year's Shared Services Meeting. She will provide the board with information on what they're doing and budget requests for the upcoming cycle.

Mr. Purcaro thanked Mr. Rainaldi for attending the meeting. At the last meeting, he asked Mr. Rainaldi if he could look at utilities to make sure assets are being properly reviewed and if we may be able to capture additional assets.

Episode 3 of 5 of the budget educational services is airing on CBC. If you are interested in learning more about the budget process, he highly encourages you to check them out.

The Board of Selectmen's Capitalized Improvement Meeting was held the night before. Mr. Purcaro asked Mr. Olender to give a quick update on the meeting. Mr. Olender stated there's nothing new that stood out, but it will be a work in process. Mr. Purcaro stated the budget memo will be coming out shortly with a 1.5-million-dollar goal for capital improvement.

Presentations

a. Youth Services

Diane Lasher-Penti – Youth Services Director has been working for the Youth Services Department for 21 years. She shared a presentation with the board highlighting exactly what they do for the youth in our town. Mrs. Lasher-Penti stated she has three year-round workers and many seasonal employees depending on the programs going on. She stated to the board she would like to take her part-time Program Coordinator and make her full-time. This would help increase youth access to resilient skill training and protective factors.

Citizen's Forum

Cynthia Soto of 4 Charter Road had spoken in favor of Public Act 22-81. She stated if the abatement was available to home daycare owners this still would not allow them to lower their rates. They would be using the extra money from the abatement for more art supplies, etc. She believes center daycares would not be able to lower their rates as well due to low staff, etc. Mr. Purcaro stated they are looking at what's in the best interest of all taxpayers before any decisions are made.

Financial Report

Mrs. Pignataro included a summary through November 30, 2022. The property tax revenue collection is about 58.1% of the budget. Looking at State and Federal grants we received the Education Cost Grant. From the department, standpoint a lot our doing well with their collection. Due to the Short-term Investment fund interest rate changing, we are significantly over budget. She stated all ARPA funds are in a separate pool and she was happy to report through the pickup in that interest rate they have another \$49,000 for ARPA to spend on projects. Mrs. Busse asked how much was put into the budget for potential referendums. Mrs. Pignataro stated the budget provides for approximately 3 referendums or 3 primaries.

New Business

a. Study of Utility Provider Assets

During the Board of Finance, December 14, 2022, Special Meeting Mr. Purcaro asked Mr. Rainaldi to further investigate how we are adequately assessing all the property value from our utility companies. Mr. Rainaldi stated there are 16 accounts on personal property for utility. Eversource is on the top 10 list with over 24 million on the grand list. CT Water Company is about 9.5 million assessed and Yankee Gas is about 5.4 million. Of the 16 accounts, they make up about half of the personal property on the grand list. Mr. Purcaro stated the goal is if there are taxes to be paid that we haven't captured over the years they need to be fleshed out.

Committee Updates

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

No update.

Shared Services

No update.

Deferred Compensation

No update.

Ad Hoc Emergency Services

No update.

Permanent Building

No update.

Unfinished business

a. Tax Relief for Seniors

Mrs. Pignataro stated the Board of Selectman has requested 5 residents to sit on the committee for consideration for the tax relief for seniors. She stated it was advertised in a press release; they are still waiting on interest.

The First Selectman stated the proposal of \$150 a year isn't enough to keep our seniors in town. She worked with Mr. Rainaldi to pull some numbers and put together a new proposal to present to the board. She has suggested freezing the mill rate once the resident turns 75. There are a lot of questions and logistics that need to be answered before moving forward.

The following motion was made and approved at the January 4, 2023, Board of Finance regular meeting.

MOVED (HARDING) SECONDED (FAY) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO RECOMMEND THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN REVISE THEIR MOTION FOR TAX RELIEF FOR HOMEOWNERS AGE 65 AND OVER TO INCLUDE THE STUDY OF OTHER OPTIONS AND TO REVIEW THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE.

b. Daycare Tax Abatement

Mrs. Pignataro stated Mr. Rainaldi pulled a data dump for the home and center daycares in town regarding potential tax abatements. He stated Public Act NO. 22-81 is broad, allowing for policy decisions. The first question that needs to be asked is whether it applies to the whole property or just the space used for daycare. Using last year's grand list, the average personal property tax bill is \$123 per year and for real estate, the average is about \$4,100 for home daycares. The estimated property tax savings at 35% is about \$7,800, 50% \$15,000, and 75% \$ 23,000. Mr. Olender asked if it could be a fixed amount, and Mr. Rainaldi stated he has seen abatements done both ways. Mr. Purcaro asked if they could do an additional survey of the home daycare providers including the square footage used of the house and how much of the yard is used for their daycare. The survey information will be shared with the board once received.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Approval of Minutes –Meeting October 5, 2022

MOVED (HARDING) SECONDED (OLENDER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 5, 2022 MEETING.

Approval of Minutes – Special Meeting December 14, 2022

MOVED (HARDING) SECONDED (PINTO) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 14, 2022, SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES.

Adjournment

MOVED (HARDING) SECONDED (OLENDER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Elizabeth Phelps

Elizabeth Phelps, Recording Secretary