



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 February 1, 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, David Stavens – Deputy First Selectman, John Turner – Board of Selectman, Ronald Stromberg – Board of Selectman, Melinda Ferry – Board of Selectman, Dr. Scott Nicol – Superintendent, Elizabeth Nord – Board of Education Treasurer/Finance Liaison, Miriam Underwood – Crystal Lake School Liaison/CREC Liaison, Brian Greenleaf – Director of Finance and Operations, Ken Radziwon – Department of Works Director, John Rainaldi – Assessor, Karl Newbecker – Assistant Chief, Robert Smith – Deputy Chief of Apparatus, Michael D’Averso – Fire Officer, Tom Palshaw – Resident, Cynthia Soto – Resident, Swetabehen Shah - Resident, Sue Philips – Hall Memorial Library Director via zoom, Mary Blanchette – Hall Memorial Library Board of Trustees Chairman via zoom, Mike Madru – Board of Selectman via zoom, Jack Rich – Chief via zoom, Lisa Houlihan – Town Planner via zoom, Tracey Deptula – Board of Education Executive Assistant via zoom .

Call to order

Chairman Michael Purcaro called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman’s Report

Mr. Purcaro stated he had the pleasure of attending the Board of Education’s recent meeting where the superintendent presented his budget. He stated these numbers are a starting point to make the budget more affordable. He thanked Jen Dzen – Board of Education Chair for her leadership and collaboration.

The chairman stated he looks forward to hearing from Mr. Olender in regard to the ARPA funds. We are earning thousands of dollars in accrued interest which is being put into the ARPA fund to help approve our community. He stated we will also talk about the Windermere School project and figure out how to address new funding problems that have come up.

Presentations

a. Board of Selectman Present Capital Improvements FY2023-2024

Mr. Stavens presented the capital improvements for FY2023-2024 to the board as follows.

Road Overlay \$650,000, Local Capital Improvement Program \$108,297, Unimproved Road Improvement \$30,000, Sidewalks \$40,000, Large and Small Bridges \$30,000, Real Estate Purchase \$50,000, Capital Improvement Construction Projects BOE \$95,000, DPW Town Hall Renovation/Addition \$30,000, Senior Center Energy Project \$32,033, DPW Senior Center Café Updates \$20,000, DPW Facility Maintenance \$20,000, DPW Hall Memorial Library \$100,000. EVFD HVAC 29 Main street \$140,485, DPW Parking Lot Renovations \$40,000, Elderly Housing Study \$20,000, Assessor Reevaluation \$67,000, EVFD Refurbish Heavy Rescue Truck \$300,000, BOE Equipment Upgrades \$105,000, DPW Snowplow Dump Truck Replacement \$250,000, DPW Pick up Truck Superintendent \$50,000, DPW Roadside Mower \$245,000, EVFD/CLFD Replacement Fire Hose \$56,357, EVAC Ambulance Replacement \$325,000, CLFD SCBA Fill Station Replacement \$25,000, CLFD Replacement Hydraulic Rescue Tools \$125,000, Board of Education Vehicle Replacement \$30,000, DPW Police Cruiser \$50,000, 5 Year "Lease" 0% Interest \$32,033, Ambulance Fee Fund \$80,000, LOCIP \$108,297. Total \$3,588,455, Net Cost to the Town \$6,226,697.

Citizen's Forum

None came forward.

Financial Report

Mrs. Pignataro provided the board with a highlighted summary of the monthly fiscal period that ended December 31, 2022. She stated the property tax revenue collection is on target through the end of December. As of December 31, 2022, \$33,064,455 or 65.7% has been collected including \$219,491 of back taxes. Looking at State and Federal grants \$3,118,705 or 28% of the budget has been collected. Due to the short-term investment fund interest rate changing \$66,878 has been earned in investment income. These funds have been allocated for future ARPA projects. Mrs. Pignataro stated having this ARPA money sitting in this account is a strategic investment plan.

New Business

a. Appropriation Request – Route 83 Sidewalk Easements

Mrs. Pignataro stated there was a request for sidewalk easements. She stated this would be a 100% reimbursement for the town. We would receive the reimbursement in a 4–6-week time. Mrs. Houlihan stated the town applied for sidewalk and pedestrian crossing improvements. The project was brought about during a road safety audit with the Department of Transportation. The plans have been approved hoping the job will go out to bid this year.

The following motion was made and approved at the February 1, 2023, Board of Finance regular meeting.

MOVED (OLENDER) SECONDED (HARDING) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO MOVE TO APPROPRIATE AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$97,500 FOR UPFRONT COSTS FOR EASEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH LOTCIP STATE PROJECT NO. L047-002 FROM THE UNDESIGNATED FUND BALANCE TO THE LOTCIP STATE EXPENDITURES ACCOUNT 410-60286, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMAN.

b. FY2023-2024 Budget - Board of Finance Budget

Mrs. Pignataro reviewed the board of finance budget requests.

The following motion was made and approved at the February 1, 2023, Board of Finance regular meeting.

MOVED (OLENDER) SECONDED (HARDING) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO MOVE TO SET THE BOARD OF FINANCE FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024 BUDGET AS FOLLOWS: ACCOUNT 120 - \$13,390; ACCOUNT 121 - \$59,000; ACCOUNT 122 - \$1.00; ACCOUNT 1010 - \$200,000; ACCOUNT 1011 - \$200,000; ACCOUNT 1045 - \$100,000; ACCOUNT 1046 - \$100,000.

c. Health Insurance/Dependent Audit

Mr. Purcaro stated as the budget process is starting the board is looking at creative ways to try to find every penny to provide a balanced budget. They have proposed for the Finance Department to explore if there's any opportunity with self-insured health insurance costs. Over time there may be changes in people's lives and they are looking at the potential of doing an audit of the town employees to make sure we aren't covering anyone our taxpayers shouldn't be paying for. Mrs. Pignataro stated on average there are 100 people on the insurance plan and the cost will be \$8,000 to \$10,000 to run the audit with a savings of up to \$10,000. She stated the town may not benefit from this at the time. Mr. Purcaro stated they aren't looking to backpay any of the town employees if they proceed with the audit.

Committee Updates

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Mr. Olender stated they sent the Senior Center fitness room project to the Board of Selectman for approval. Including \$60,000 for exercise equipment and \$100,000 for a pavilion. He thanked Mrs. Pignataro for investing in the short-term investment fund which has earned approximately \$67,000. They now have approximately \$220,000 to go toward other projects. He stated the task force members have decided to open ARPA applications to the public until February 28th.

Shared Services

No update.

Deferred Compensation

No update.

Ad Hoc Emergency Services

No update.

Permanent Building

i. Windermere Building Project – Budget Update

Mr. Fay stated the schematic design is set and they have gone through preliminary budgets. He stated they are looking at going over the budget between 3-7.5 million dollars. The biggest expense is going to be the remediation of the old building's exterior walls. They are doing their best to allocate costs where possible.

Unfinished business

a. Tax Relief for Seniors

Mrs. Pignataro stated the Board of Selectman is still waiting for resident interest in sitting on a board. If you are interested please reach out to the Board of Selectman's office.

b. Daycare Tax Abatement

Cynthia Soto of 4 Charter Road had spoken in favor of Public Act 22-81. In the last Board of Finance meeting, the board asked Mr. Rainaldi to look into how much land the homeowners use for their daycare. He reached out to these centers to obtain estimates and received a legal opinion regarding the Act. Which stated the town would have to decide if they wanted to tax 100% of the property or the portion used for daycare. It also states the town can't renew the abatement after 5 years. Mr. Purcaro asked if we could run a 2-year pilot program to see how it would go giving the daycares the abatement. He would like to see metrics before going for the full five years. Mrs. Busse stated one of the biggest problems is adult care and childcare. The number one prohibited factor is cost and if this abatement isn't going to bring down the cost, she would like to see a pilot.

c. 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 recommended doing an audit program. Mr. Purcaro asked about how long this would take. Mr. Rainaldi stated funding would be available July 1st at the latest. The audit would go back three years, and anything picked up would be retroactive.

Approval of Minute

MOVED (HARDING) SECONDED (OLEDNER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 4, 2023, MEETING MINUTES.

Adjournment

MOVED (BUSSE) SECONDED (HARDING) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Elizabeth Phelps, Recording Secretary