

Town of Southington
Board of Finance
Wednesday, February 13, 2013

STENOGRAPHER'S NOTE: The Minutes are now being prepared in summary style. Please refer to the audio or videotape for more details.

Appropriations from Contingency Account:

Approved to date	\$ 62,265
Approved this meeting.....	0
Total Appropriations.....	<u>\$ 62,265</u>

Appropriations with Revenue Offsets:

Approved to date	\$ 199,678
Approved this meeting.....	<u>167,996</u>
Total Appropriations.....	<u>\$ 367,674</u>

Chairman John Leary called the meeting of the Town of Southington Board of Finance to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Town Hall, 75 Main Street, Southington, CT.

The following members were in attendance:

Anthony Casale, Jr., Sandra Feld, Joseph Labieniec, Edward Pocock, Jr. and Wayne Stanforth. A quorum was determined.

Also in attendance: Emilia Portelinha, Finance Director
Garry Brumback, Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was recited by everyone in attendance.

JOHN LEARY, CHAIR, Presiding:

III. Public Hearing Item:

Chairman Leary introduced the public hearing item for an appropriation of \$498,496 to the Capital Fund new account "Safe Routes to School Project" which will be offset by an appropriation of \$498,496 to the Capital Fund revenue account

"Federal DOT Grants". Because it is a new line item, we need to have a public hearing.

Mr. Jim Grappone, Acting Town Engineer, gave a presentation to explain the request. The Town of Southington was awarded a Federal grant not to exceed \$498,496 for a pedestrian safety improvement program, namely the Safe Routes to School. The 100% Federal award includes \$40,000 for DOT review costs and incidentals. The town is responsible for completing the design and right of way costs above the awarded amount.

Mr. Grappone presented maps to expand sidewalks around DePaolo Middle School and pointed out the location of the current and proposed sidewalk improvements. There are two parts to the project. The Town is proposing 1,350 L.F. extension to go from 454 Woodruff Street westerly to the intersection of Skyline Drive. The second section of 850 L.F. will connect the Crest Road neighborhood existing sidewalk through Memorial Park to connect with Woodruff.

Other improvements are safety medians for traffic and some speed sentry units. These are display signs that show how fast a vehicle is traveling. They are powered by solar energy. We are also proposing a sidewalk crosswalk on Hobart Street at Mountain View Road. It is a safety program and was a competition. We sought help from CCRPA and a school committee among others. We expect to construct the project within the anticipated budget.

Mr. Casale asked if this would create more students walking rather than busing. Mr. Brumback said 10 to 15 children that are currently being bused would be immediately affected. Activate Southington and residents were also involved in the process. There was some discussion on how success would be measured. Will there be less busing? Mr. Brumback said there was an extensive amount of work done to begin that exact outcome. Dr. Erardi and his staff will evaluate post construction to accomplish the goal. We are guessing on the low side. It is not just a safe route to DePaolo. It is also a connection to the park which activates children. There is a program in place to evaluate it.

Mrs. Feld asked if we had an idea what our labor costs would be. Mr. Grappone said they did the design work fairly easily. He did not believe town labor costs would be very much. He estimated that if a consultant were to do it, the cost might be around \$30,000.

At this time the public hearing was opened to the public. No one spoke for or against the appropriation and the public hearing was closed.

IV. Old Business

1. Approval of minutes of the January 16, 2013 meeting. Mr. Casale moved to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by Mrs. Feld. Motion carried unanimously.

V. Assess current financial state of the town

1. Review revenues vs. budget: Chairman Leary was interested to hear about "found money" or "lost money" at this time. Ms. Portelinha said that right now it is found money. Prior year tax collections were approximately \$180,000 above budget. Interest on taxes is \$50,000 above budget, building fees \$87,000. Interest on investment was \$72,000 below budget. Town Clerk fees were \$80,000 above budget.

2. Review expenses vs. budget: Ms. Portelinha said she was already contacted by the Highway Superintendent. He will come back to the board next month for overtime costs. He is OK with contractual services. Mr. Brumback said 75% of storm costs for 48 hours are reimbursable by FEMA, and we get to choose the 48 hours. As a result, we will take the most intense 48 hours for reimbursement. Mr. Pocock asked if we ever received money from last year's storm. Ms. Portelinha responded that we have been reimbursed by FEMA for the debris removal costs for Storm Alfred. We were not eligible to apply for any FEMA money for Storm Sandy.

3. Discuss unplanned items that impact revenue or expenses.
Nothing to report.

4. Sub Committee Reports:

A. Sewer Committee

Mr. Stanforth stated the committee did not meet this month.

B. Public Works Committee

Mrs. Feld said most of the meeting was about the streetlights and primarily consisted of what the Police reported. We have requested regular reports from the contracted

company. Additional work was the request for a zero turn mower. It was originally budgeted at \$15,000 but came in at about \$11,500. It was approved and is going to the Council. The committee did not get to the Capital Improvement Program or road improvement program. The committee also discussed scanners for the bulky waste transfer station. Jay Baker did some research and can get two scanners for about \$1,650 each and necessary programming for another \$3,000. It got approval from PWC for an amount not to exceed \$6,000 for the work. It will go to the Town Council. Mr. Pocock asked about the make of the mower and hoped it would not be an obsolete model. Mr. Brumback will get the information to him.

C. Middle School Building Committee & Education Capital Building Committee

Mr. Pocock stated that we have the Referendum on the Middle Schools on Tuesday, March 19. Most everything is status quo. Tomorrow there is a meeting in Hartford, which was rescheduled due to the storm. Fred Cox, Newfield Construction and Fletcher Thompson will attend.

The Education Capital Building Committee had one major item they are addressing and working on. It is a considerable amount of money.

D. Open Space Committee

Mr. Pocock reported that the committee will be looking for some seed money so that we can explore buying some land. It helps the town; it is a big asset. He stated that presently at no cost to the town, UConn Forestry is doing a study at Crescent Lake.

E. Self Insurance Committee

Mr. Labieniec reported that claims came in just over \$1.6 million, approximately \$280,000 under budget for December. It was \$480,000 under budget compared to FY 2012. We are tracking this fiscal year 6 to 7% higher year to date. We are now under budget but that could change. We will get the January numbers soon. We are monitoring it.

F. Gura Building

Mr. Brumback said we probably won't see anything for about 18 months.

G. Other Committees

There were no other reports.

7. Board Communications

Mrs. Feld said she believed everyone got an email from Ms. Frechette. This person collected 107 signatures to maintain the half-day Kindergarten program. She assumed it also went to the Board of Education. It is really their issue.

Mr. Labieniec wanted to have an open discussion. It is a critical time for the budget. We need to figure out how to move forward. He proposed that all questions go through the Chair and that a grid be created. All questions would go on the grid. He believed it is a more efficient process identified by the Town Manager and the Superintendent. It allows all members to see the question, and it keeps a central storage house of all the questions and answers. Last year he used the grid frequently to review answers to some questions. He is in favor of maintaining the grid.

Mr. Casale understands the purpose of the grid. It is not established this budget season yet. He and Mrs. Feld have asked the BOE questions but they have not responded. There was discussion about being able to get answers as an elected official working for the community. He believed that he would get an answer if he were a parent asking a question. He is not entirely in favor of a grid but needs information for the people.

Chairman Leary said the BOE will present their budget tonight. Soon after, the Town Manager will present his budget. What method do we want to use?

Mrs. Feld felt the grid is cumbersome. She would rather have an individual ask a question, get an answer, and then email the BOF so everyone gets the question and the answer.

Chairman Leary said we really don't want to get too many emails back and forth. He prefers the grid. He proposed creating a Word document with boxes. He would gather questions and enter them on the grid on Sunday night, including who asked the question, Town or BOE. It would go to everyone. We would request an answer or a response by end of day on Thursday. If something is not clear in the grid, the question and answer

could be expanded and the document would grow. He would put questions along the top of the page and the answers would go in the boxes below. Boxes would get larger as information is added. The Chairman asked that questions be emailed to him with a copy to Mr. Labieniec in case one of them is unavailable.

Mr. Stanforth believed the advantages of a grid outweigh any disadvantages. Last year it was awkward because it was small.

Since the BOE Chairman was in the audience, Mr. Leary asked if this process would be OK with him. Mr. Goralski stated that communication is key. The bottom line is for us to be efficient with our staff. Questions must go to the Superintendent. He likes the grid and the sharing of information. Questions should go to Dr. Erardi with a copy to Mr. Goralski because he is an elected board member.

Mr. Brumback said he is OK with the process as well.

Chairman Leary proposed creating a grid going out on Sunday night with questions to be responded to by Thursday night. A person would follow up as necessary if the response was unclear. He asked for a motion.

Mr. Stanforth made a motion to accept the proposal. Mr. Labieniec seconded.

Discussion. It is specifically for the budget process. Mrs. Feld appreciates getting everyone in on it. She was elected to try to do her best. All these rules and regulations are more than she cares to deal with. Mr. Pocock said he reviews the budget pages very carefully. He would use the grid for something really out there.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Mrs. Feld	no
Mr. Stanforth	yes
Mr. Casale	yes
Mr. Pocock	yes
Mr. Labieniec	yes
Mr. Leary	yes

Motion passes 5-1.

Mr. Pocock stated that the Town Manager did an excellent job of communicating with the board and others during the snow storm. There was a time when we said we are taking trucks off the road. There were a few emergencies, and they were taken care of. We were never without services to get the job done. The Highway Department with other help went out of their way to get the job done, and we should remember that.

Mr. Labieniec said the town did everything humanly possible to get the word out. What new areas can we explore to help get the word out more than it was? The town should be congratulated. Mr. Brumback said we have a great working relationship with the Police Department. We tripled our "likes" on Facebook. The Police have Facebook and Twitter. We have Facebook and the website. Dr. Erardi offered to use his calling system if needed. Now we are looking at some options such as a Reverse 9-1-1 system. As the virtual town hall advances, residents can sign up to receive updates. That is the next iteration. Mike Soltis from ESPN, who has a lot of experience in public communications, will assist us in looking for opportunities to get better.

VI. Public Communications

Art Cyr, 103 Berlin Avenue, commented that Mr. Pocock as chairman of the Middle Schools Building Committee has all attachments added to the minutes. He finds this very helpful and reminds people to look at the attachments when they have questions because the answer is probably there. He is requesting that every week or month attach the grid to your minutes until the day your budget is approved. It is important for communications. He likes having grids. He also likes having the Town Manager and Dr. Erardi at the workshop meetings because they can answer many of the questions that may come up.

VII. Review Long Range Plan and Priorities

In deference to the Board of Education who is waiting to present their budget, it was the consensus to table this item.

VIII. Conduct Administrative Business

1. Consent Agenda

A. Appropriation of \$650 to Youth Services-Outside Programs (Spec Rev). Mr. Feld moved to approve, seconded by Mr. Labieniec. Motion carried 6-0.

2. Manager's Memos

1. Transfer of \$5,648 - Library Temporary/Seasonal Wages. Motion to approve by Mr. Stanforth, seconded by Mrs. Feld and carried 6-0.

2. Appropriation of \$167,996 to the Capital Budget - Widen, Resurface, Drainage account. Mr. Brumback explained this is to reimburse what the town spent. We received money from Yarde Metals to do this. Motion by Mr. Casale to approve, seconded by Mr. Stanforth. Motion carried 6-0.

Appropriation of \$2,000 to Parks - Property Maintenance (Spec Rev). Mr. Brumback said this was a donation from the Calvanese Foundation. Motion to approve made by Mr. Pocock, seconded by Mr. Labieniec and carried 6-0.

Transfer of \$3,500 to Parks - Equipment Maintenance. Motion by Mr. Labieniec, seconded by Mrs. Feld to approve. Mr. Pocock asked if this was the motor that was used to make two instead of one; yes. Motion carried 6-0.

3. Public Hearing item - appropriation of \$498,496 for the Safe Routes to Schools Program. Motion to approve made by Mr. Pocock, seconded by Mr. Stanforth and carried 6-0.

4. Two transfers for the Building Department - \$700 to office supplies and \$600 to vehicle maintenance. Mr. Brumback explained these are transfers needed to operate. They also have some unscheduled maintenance for one truck. Motion made by Mrs. Feld to approve, seconded by Mr. Labieniec and carried 6-0.

5. Appropriation of \$380,000 to the Sewer Fund. Mr. Brumback said Mr. Stanforth and the Sewer Committee have been talking for a few months about this. This is needed for hauling away of sludge and digester going down. We are hoping this will carry us through the remainder of the year. Ms. Portelinha asked if we could change the title to "Plant Maintenance" rather than "Refuse/recycling". Mr. Stanforth made a motion to approve the appropriation to Sewer Fund - Plant Maintenance. Seconded by Mr. Labieniec. Discussion.

Mr. DeGioia said the primary digester has been emptied. The engineers are coming in this week to check the condition and see if we can fix it. By winning the phosphorus battle we can

push off the plant expansion. In response to a question, Mr. DeGioia said we dump the raw sludge in Hartford.

Mrs. Feld stated that she read an article in the paper about \$101,000 in nitrogen credits would be used for sludge. Mr. Brumback commented that the nitrogen credits go to a different account, a reserve account. The \$380,000 needs to come out of the reserve. The funds should be enough through June 30. Mr. Pocock asked how many trips a day we are making to move the sludge. Mr. DeGioia said 4 truck loads a day. We are paying someone to do it.

Motion carried 6-0.

IX. Meeting Adjournment

Mrs. Feld made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Pocock and carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.