

Town of Southington
Board of Finance
Monday, April 15, 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	\$ 204,265
Approved this meeting.....	<u>161,704</u>
Total Appropriations.....	\$ 365,969

Appropriations with Revenue Offsets:

Approved to date	\$ 477,472
Approved this meeting.....	<u>0</u>
Total Appropriations.....	\$ 477,472

Chairman John Leary called the Regular Meeting of the Town of Southington Board of Finance to order at 7:02 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall with the following members in attendance:

Sandra Feld, Joseph Labieniec, & Edward Pocock, Jr.

Also in attendance: Robert Blum, Treasurer
Emilia Portelinha, Finance Director
Garry Brumback, Town Manager

Absent: Anthony Casale, Jr. & Wayne Stanforth

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

Moment of Silence observed for the Boston Marathon explosion tragedy.

(Silence, silence)

JOHN LEARY, CHAIR, Presiding:

III. Public Hearing Items

None

IV. Old Business

1. Approval of Minutes from the meeting of March 27, 2013.

Mr. Pocock made a motion to approve which was seconded by Mr. Labieniec. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

INTRODUCTION:

Mr. Brumback introduced Robert Blum, a Southington resident who is our new treasurer. He joined us just about two weeks ago and has hit the ground running doing a wonderful job. Hopefully, you won't see him often but when you do it will be for good news and professional expertise. As the treasurer he will be predominantly working on cash flow and investments and those kinds of things.

Welcome, Bob!

V. Assess current financial state of the town

1. Review revenue vs budget

Ms. Portelinha pointed out prior year's tax collections are about \$78,000 above budget compared to our estimated.

Our interest on taxes is now trending downward at \$24,000 under budget based on estimates for this time frame.

Our building permits and fees are higher by \$100,000. I looked at this month's fees to see if there was a predominant fee that came in but it's just basically major activity going on in town. Good news.

Our interest on investments is trending at \$83,000 below budget. But we are \$30,000 higher than we were at this time last year.

As we move forward, the grants are coming in as expected.

Our town clerk fees are showing an increase in activity. We are currently \$127,000 above budget.

We are expecting the municipal revenue sharing to give us that extra payment at the end of the year which we utilize the next fiscal year for balancing the budget. We are hoping to get approximately \$400,000.

VoAg tuitions appear to be coming in pretty much as planned.

As to other revenues, I remind you that we received a DOT refund --- we had two projects started approximately 15 years ago with the state. We gave them demand deposits and they finally closed out the projects and gave us almost \$227,000. Discussion.

We actually received \$385,000 almost \$386,000 from the BRRFOC (Bristol Resource Recovery Operating Committee) and TROC. They redistributed moneys back to the communities who participated in the form of rebates. That's our portion. Mr. Brumback further explained his is as the result of a new 20 year lease they've signed with the coalition of 14 towns that do their waste to energy plant. It's transitioning from the 14 communities owning it to Covanta owning and taking it over as a contract. As a result they are distributing now, prematurely, and the actual contract doesn't take effect until June, 2014. This is an early distribution of some excess undesignated fund balance.

Mr. Pocock asked what happened with the sale of scrap? Ms. Portelinha stated the minus here means a positive, though. We've already brought in \$20,000 worth of scrap as estimated. We actually brought in \$20,073. Steve handles that and he brings me the check when he sells it. This is a good amount.

Discussion.

2. Review expenses vs budget

Looking at the expenses, Ms. Portleinha stated we currently have been meeting and speaking with departments and any shortages that they see at this point we can cover through transfers with the exception of an item on today's agenda. I am not aware of anything that we can't cover through transfers.

3. Discuss unplanned items that impact revenue or expenses

Nothing to report.

4. Sub Committee Reports (Emphasis on financial aspects)

A. Sewer Committee

Mr. Stanforth is not here this evening to report.

B. Public Works Committee

Ms. Feld advised they met April 3rd. The scanners have arrived. The leaf program had nothing to report. The retention/detention pond maintenance is ongoing. They're cutting trees at Memorial Park and working on the maintenance of the tennis courts and preparing their equipment to begin mowing that week. No report from the police. Snow removal updated on the budget. Overtime is underfunded by a couple of thousand dollars and contractors will need an addition \$5,000 to \$6,000. Still some invoices to come in. They do expect the Governor's expansion of the emergency period from two to three days should cover it. As for storm drainage, they started working on the catch basins. They're getting ready for the road pavement program. They will look at the drainage, as well as the asphalt when they get to the road maintenance program. Street lights reports are getting much better. We got one today and we're getting them in between public works meetings which is really good.

The water department reported they're having a public hearing on the rates which they had that night. Their rates were raised. Water department, engineering and highway are working closely together.

The town manager gave an update report on the fact that budget allows for \$12,000 on downtown maintenance but there are some cracked bricks and street frontage lamp posts that need to be painted. The priority for this year for downtown is to fix the two cross walks on Center Street.

The trench bids are going out this week or next with the bids being opened the first of May. Sweeper bids had a recommendation of CSS Industries and Rafferty as the lowest and second lowest bidders.

Safe Routes School which is a \$487,000 grant to do additional sidewalk and crosswalk work around DePaolo and along Pleasant Street and Woodruff Street and also a path to connect

Crest Road to Memorial Park. There is a new requirement that the town put a 60' bridge over a 5' stream. We have to work with DOT to see if we can find a compromise. The way it exists right now, it may be so expensive that it may not be possible to get that Crest Road to Memorial Park piece done. It depends on how effective we can be with the DOT.

The road improvement program continues. Planning to partner with Meriden going out to bid and the only issue is that the contractor be state pre-certified even if they're not on the state contract.

Next meeting is the first week in May.

C. Middle School Building Committee & Education Capital Building Committee

Mr. Pocock reported they are on stand-by right now. We're waiting for a couple of permits to come in but we are all set to go.

We haven't expended any money on the Capital Building Committee. We haven't had a recent meeting.

D. Open Space Committee

Mr. Pocock reported that is quiet. There are a couple of things going but we're waiting on that, too.

E. Self Insurance Committee

Mr. Labieniec reported no meeting between our last meeting and this meeting. The next meeting is May 2nd. Nothing to report at this time.

F. Gura Building Plan Review

Nothing to report.

G. Other Committees

Nothing to report.

7. Board Communications

Ms. Feld brought up the workshop. We need to schedule a date so we have a quorum.

Discussion.

This is for looking at the charter in terms of the board of finance items that are in the charter and seeing if there is anything we may want to revise as charter revision is occurring.

It was decided to do it at 6:00 pm on Thursday, May 2nd.

VI. Public Communications (Excluding Public Hearing Items)

Mary Baker, 50 Burning Tree Drive. Chair of the Fire Commission to represent the voice of the commission and to explain that we already voted unanimously at our meeting to send this appropriation before you tonight regarding the salary cost.

We feel compelled to have the minimal coverage by the administration for the shifts and that is the six men and women. That is two officers, four fire fighters. To accomplish that, the administration has been proactive in sending budgets to you annually for what that cost is.

She explained this appropriation is really less than past year's. We feel that the administration is doing a good job with regard to looking at costs through this fiscal year. We are bound by the current contract and the town is a part of that and we agreed to certain shifts and how they're made up and comprised and the coverage that exists.

We can move forward given that we have received the final draft of the ICMA Report and I'll look forward to doing that with the town manager, Chairman Leary and the chairman of the town Council to understand what the town's expectations are. Understand that the administration and the fire fighters and commission members are being very proactive in reviewing that report. We have an excellent staff at the fire headquarters, administration and fire fighters. They work very hard at extra duties other than their current coverage.

I feel that you should look favorably upon this appropriation tonight. It meets expectations of our coverage that the town is expecting to receive from the fire department.

Thank you.

Arthur Cyr, 103 Berlin Avenue. The high school robotics team won the regional competition again and they are off to the nationals. They challenged the BOE to contribute \$500 to the fund. On Thursday, at the BOE conversation was we count for every dollar we spend and we don't know where we're going to get \$500. I would ask the BOF and the Council to come up with the \$55 or whatever it takes to get this team to the nationals. I believe it is obscene for them to say they don't have the money on an \$82 million budget. Robotics is not a sports team, but they deserve it.

We seem to have a lot of town vehicles that use a lot of gasoline. Gasoline usage jumps all over the place. While we are keeping track of finances I wondered how we could track gasoline. Discussion.

That not only includes the vehicles parked down at North Main Street but also our buses that are supposed to be parked up at Calendar House but seem to have disappeared, again. And, any other town vehicle that is given to anybody to drive home at night and on weekends. We seem to be lapse in keeping track of our pennies and dollars. Conversely, our budgets continue to grow. Discussion.

Discussed a call he got about a senior bus rolling on Saturday. Who is tracking mileage? I've seen the white BOE trucks on Saturday. I don't expect to see town vehicles rolling on Saturday and Sunday. Maybe as a fiscal oversight board you need to ask the town operations to put GPS on the vehicles or track mileage or at the very least track the gasoline usage.

Lastly, somebody mentioned the Educational Capital Bonding Committee. Their last meeting was January 24th and the agenda was longer than the Minutes --- really obscene. That's a \$750,000 item at the high school. It yet it disappears off people's budgets and agendas. Are they all of a sudden going to surprise us with another project they need done in three months? I feel this should not be bonded. I would request that Capital Bonding do a better set of Minutes on an expenditure like this. Especially when the BOE cries their \$82 million or \$84 million budget is insufficient.

Mr. Pocock added he made the suggestion to mark the Calendar House buses front and rear. We have a lot of buses around town not marked at all. Ours are on the side up there. I strongly agree with the GPS being on our town vehicles. I'm in

favor of that also as that solves a lot of problems in a hurry. The buses don't run on Saturday but it is easy to mix them up with other buses. They'll be marked in a month or so.

VII. Review Long Range Plan and Priorities

1. Review status of LRP items in current fiscal year budget

A. Status /Reprioritizations

B. Strategy Discussion - Utility Rates

Mr. Brumback said the sewer committee discussed last week is the sewer rate structure. We tried to automate the billing system for the sewer rates and based on a lot of the idiosyncrasies and individual computations that currently take place; I'm recommending that we actually do a complete evaluation in conjunction with the rest of the Sewer Act. We're looking at how we do sewer assessments to make sure that is more fair and equitable. It appears as though we're going to have to do something also with our rates.

Our goal in the first year is to make it where it is as close to revenue neutral as possible but to standardize the structure across the board and bring it back to you to explain. Then standardize it to automate the billing process. The existing process is unwieldy at best and very difficult to manage and maintain. Discussion.

VIII. Conduct Administrative Business

1. Consent Agenda

A. Appropriation \$ 862 * Youth Services - Kristen's Closet (Spec. Rev)

B. Appropriation \$16,000 * Library - Family Literacy in the 21st Century grant (Spec Rev)

C. Appropriation \$ 500 * Kristen's Closet (Spec Rev)

Ms. Feld made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Pocock seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

2. **Manager's Memos**

1. Transfer \$1500 Zoning Board of Appeals -
Temporary/Seasonal

Mr. Labieniec made a motion to approve. Mr. Pocock seconded.

Ms. Feld wondered why there was extra money in the overtime account. Mr. Brumback said because the previous planning director had intended to digitize a lot more of the records than they were able to get to. Because of her moving on and the work being done by those filling in, that work was not able to be done this current fiscal year which made some of this money available. Ms. Feld said the money was given specifically for the digitizing. What happens now? Mr. Brumback said it goes into fund balance. She's not going to be using it. The project will continue next year. We have to get some stability in the planning department. Losing the department head made that significantly more challenging than it should have been.

Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

2. Transfer \$ 500 Police Dept. - dues &Conferences
Transfer \$6,000 Police Dept. - Supplies -
Repairs & Maintenance
Transfer \$5,000 Police Dept. - Building
maintenance

3. Transfer \$96,000 Police Dept. - Overtime

Mr. Labieniec made a motion to approve Items 2 and 3. Ms. Feld seconded.

Chief Daly requested all transfers. He explained the individual transfer accounts.

(Pause)

Ms. Feld asked about the \$96,000 from salary increases, why was there so much left? Chief Daly answered when we originally did the budget we hadn't finished negotiations for the contract

so we put the estimated raise amount into the salary increase line. When the contract was settled that money availed itself to be transferred. It won't be needed in the salary line but it is needed in the overtime line.

Motion passed 4 to 0 on a roll call vote.

The Chair thanked the Chief and his department for the fine work they do.

Mr. Labieniec said he forgot to mention, but the only appropriation out of contingency on the agenda tonight was the \$161,704 so that takes contingency from \$645,000 down to \$484,000 which we heard Emilia say today everything looks to be in pretty good shaping going forward. It looks like we have enough money in the fire overtime account with the appropriation through the end of the year.

4. Transfer \$58,240 Misc - Accumulated Payout

Ms. Portelinha explained this is for retirees. I only request the money I know we are definitely going to need. We need this to pay out three individuals. It is contractual.

Discussion of accumulated vacation time.

Tracking on the MUNIS system was discussed.

Mr. Labieniec made a motion to approve which Ms. Feld seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

5. Transfer \$14,000 Unemployment Compensation

Ms. Portelinha advised we are self insured for unemployment compensation purposes. If someone is unemployed, the state pays them and bills the town. They're usually about two months behind from the point they pay the individuals and then bill us for that. We have an individual we had to let go because he didn't meet certain requirements. He didn't qualify for a disability pension, so therefore, the state has picked him up on unemployment and we are now responsible for paying that.

Ms. Feld made a motion to approve. Mr. Pocock seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

6. Transfer \$34,775 Environmental problems - Legal Fees

Mr. Brumback said this represents a lot of extra work being done on DePaolo Landfill, Old Southington Landfill and some residual work on the North Center School and some of the pcb issues with North Center School we had not predicted.

The second piece of that is to Shipman & Goodwin which is averaging about #3400/month related to a lawsuit I would be happy to discuss in executive session.

Discussion of why there was money in the account to transfer from.

Ms. Feld made a motion to approve which Mr. Labieniec seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

7. Transfer \$2,000 Sewer fund - Plant - Meal Allowance

Ms. Portelinha said it was a contractual cost. Mr. Brumback said the wastewater treatment plant hadn't been paying this for incidentals and they are required to and therefore they need to. The reason there is \$2000 left in the account transferred from is the cost came in and it was cheaper than we thought.

Ms. Feld made a motion to approve which Mr. Labieniec seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

8. Transfer \$1,400 Sewer Fund - Admin- Overtime

Mr. Brumback explained this is a 2-person operation and one person has departed leaving regular wages available and the other person having to do overtime in order to keep the work flow going.

Ms. Feld made a motion to approve and Mr. Labieniec seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

9. Transfer	\$400	Dept of Assessment-	office Supplies
Transfer	\$900	Dept of Assessment-	Travel Reimbursement

Mr. Brumback said the Assessor didn't realize the cost of advertising. We lost the deputy assessor last year and the advertising to replace that position cost more than predicted. And, because of the capabilities of the deputy assessor, he has spent a lot more time out in the field and this is the account that pays for the travel reimbursement as he is traveling more and doing hands on assessments.

He had hired a deputy assessor to cover the gap in the time and that money became available for transfer.

Ms. Feld made a motion to approve. Mr. Pocock seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

10. Appropriation \$161,704 Fire Dept - Overtime

Ms. Feld made a motion to approve and Mr. Labieniec seconded.

Chief Clark explained our fire fighter replacement costs have gone up. We did cut some money out last year in hopes the study would find some place to make savings. The study has just come out and we're in the process of reviewing the aspects of it. A whole lot to absorb and vet out. We're working diligently to do that.

Going forward this year we had two large expenditures. One was for a long term illness or workers comp claim that is still being disputed for \$52,000.

Costs for Storm Charlotte of \$22,000. That \$75,000 that was not planned on for this year. Surprises we didn't take into account for.

If you remove that from the budget and what we're asking for this evening, we would still be saving about \$28,000 under what I originally proposed. A lot is attributed to the way we're doing the new certification on line now.

Moving forward we have to concentrate on what is going to happen to next year's budget. We cut it by \$37,000 and I'm sure I can meet that number. I will work diligently to meet that.

I'll answer any questions on tonight's appropriation.

People on vacation, personal leave and sick time and call back account for overtime so we have an adequate number on staff. Discussion.

Discussion of the staffing needs.

Mr. Pocock said he questioned why he couldn't use the trainer or the other people during the five days. I feel as though the training officer can be out on the road helping during the daytime and I don't know if that occurs. We can't touch the long term illness, obviously. Down the road, I know we had the one grant that was refused and I wished I had had the expertise I do now on grants. We have to look at grants in the future. And, if we went back to Congressman Larson's office, we can make it work between him and his staff. The grant writers are going to have to look it over because you get that training paid for up front and paid replacement as Waterbury did, that would be a great help to us. Discussion.

The Chief said his department would definitely look at the different aspects of the grants and congress has reappropriated funds for that.

Mr. Pocock reminded the Chief he was going to look at billing some of the incidents and collecting.

Discussion of the FEMA reimbursement going to the general fund and not back to the fire department. Mr. Brumback pointed out reimbursement is usually in a different year than when the expenses are. Storm costs are artificially inflating his overtime costs. Discussion.

Ms. Feld asked about callback. The Chief explained the town is divided into four districts. The headquarters personnel are assigned to District 1. Anytime District 1 is dispatched to

an emergency, headquarters people have been allowed to respond to those calls. Volunteers are allowed to respond in full, too.

District 2, 3 and 5, they are not allowed to respond.

The Chief said the costs and benefits are being researched as well as another method where we would have a 5th district so District 1 would be dispatched and if we felt we needed more personnel we would bring in the 5th which would be the paid personnel. Discussion.

Mr. Pocock pointed out safety is paramount. We don't want to forget the service the fire and police department do for our town. Discussion.

Motion passed 4 to 0 on a roll call vote.

11.	Transfer	\$4500	Snow & Ice - Overtime
	Transfer	\$2500	Snow & Ice - Contracted Services
	Transfer	\$6,000	Highway Dept - overtime
	Transfer	\$2,500	Parks - Equipment Maintenance
	Transfer	\$17,500	Bulky Waste - Refuse/Recycling

This is a transfer all within the combined highway departments. It's \$33,000 in total. The chair read the accounts affected.

Mr. Brumback said this what Mrs. Feld was laying out which was the rebalancing of the accounts within the highway department.

Mr. Labieniec made a motion to approve. Ms. Feld seconded.

Discussion about the stockpiling of salt in response to a query by Ms. Feld.

Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

12.	Transfer	\$3,000	Calendar house - Vehicle maintenance
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Mr. Labieniec made a motion to approve. Ms. Feld seconded.

Ms. Feld asked what building maintenance was not being done. Mr. Brumback said he would have to get the answer to that.

The vehicle maintenance is the stenciling/ labeling of the vehicles on the front and back in order to avoid confusion.

Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Ms. Feld asked about the settlement the town just got in court. Was that Pondview? Mr. Brumback said the court ruled in the Pondview case in favor of the town for \$150,900. It is subject to appeal but at least we won the initial verdict. It had been with the judge for over a year. We are pleased that happened. What about the legal fees? Ms. Portelinha said probably over \$1 million.

Ms. Feld reminded the manager he was going to work with the highway department to do a study to see if it is economical to have the highway and parks do all the town's maintenance as opposed to how it is done now. Mr. Brumback answered he has not begun to work on that. We talked during the budgeting process and that process hasn't concluded, yet. Right now, quite honestly, all of Steve's resources are focused on doing the pavement management system and getting the parks ready for the spring. Later on in the summer we plan on looking at all the efficiencies we can. We'll be looking across the board.

IX. Meeting Adjournment

Ms. Feld made a motion to adjourn which Mr. Labieniec seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 o'clock, p.m.)