

BOARD OF FINANCE
TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON
OCTOBER 9, 2019

The Board of Finance of the Town of Southington held a Meeting on Wednesday, October 9, 2019 at the Town Hall Council Chambers, 75 Main Street, Southington, CT. Acting Chair Joseph Labieniec called the meeting to order at 7:00 o'clock, p.m.

Appropriations from Contingency Account:

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

Appropriations with Revenue Offsets:

Approved to date.....	\$	
Approved this meeting.....	\$	<u>2,500</u>
Total Appropriations.....	\$	2,500

The following board members were present:

Joseph Labieniec, Edward Pocock, Jr., Tony Morrison & Susan Zoni

Staff: Mark Sciota, Town Manager
Emilia Portelinha, Director of Finance

Absent: John Leary, Chair
Kevin Beaudoin, Board member

A quorum was determined.

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

JOSEPH LABIENIEC, Acting Chair, presiding:

III. Public Hearing Items

None this evening.

IV. Old Business

1. Approval of Minutes of September 11, 2019 meeting

Mrs. Zoni made a motion to approve which Mr. Pocock seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

V. Assess current financial state of the town

1. Review revenues vs budget
2. Review expenses vs budget

Ms. Portelinha reviewed the expenses to date. We are three months into the year. Prior year taxes are about \$30,000 under budget. Interest on taxes \$10,000 under budget. Building permits and fees about \$50,000 over budget. Interest on investments currently at \$200,000 above budget. Town Clerk fees were \$20,000 over budget. A net of \$230,000 for those.

As for expenditures, we are on track for most items. I don't see any issues we are going to need to appropriate funds from. Mr. Sciota said later he would discuss one that he felt we would have to worry about later in the budget year.

3. Review Capital Projects in Budget (Quarterly)

Ms. Portelinha did not get a chance to complete her report for this meeting, but she will look to do that for next month.

4. Subcommittee and Liason Reports (Emphasis on financial aspects)

- A. Sewer Committee (Tony Morrison)

Mr. Morrison reported on the 19th of September meeting. We had a plant tour which was really good because it enables you to understand why the change orders are happening. Things like the fact the pipes are not in the right place, stuff like that, over time. Obviously, the plant maps haven't been kept up all that good or incorrectly years ago. That's one example.

All parts of the sewer complex are being updated at the same time as much as we can. The construction is 27% complete. Construction is 26% and the payments - 27% of the payments have been made including

change order. The change orders to date are about just under one percent of the five percent that we have in the budget. Doing great there.

There are two items: The first will come up later in the agenda. There is a memo to be voted on. It's \$100,000 is needed for continual pcb remediation. It's the area that hasn't been handled as part of the phosphorous building development. It's around that which we have not done, yet. It needs to be assessed and eventually remediated. We are asking for \$100,000 for the assessment and design. The money will come from the sewer contingency fund --- an important point.

The other item is the nitrogen credit exchange. This has been in effect for years. We take advantage of it in the sense that we've developed a facility already that handles nitrogen and the state has this mechanism by which --- it is not going to ask every single sewer in the corridor that enters into the Long Island Sound to change at the same time. The credit program is where you can, if you want to, it's a low-end remediation and you buy credits off those who have it. It's a way to ensure that the Clean Water Fund is not exhausted.

Southington has a full-blown facility that takes care of nitrogen so we can sell credits as necessary. There is \$171,000 worth of credits from last year which is going to go into the town sewer fund.

Mr. Sciota and Ms. Portelinha explained in the past when we were purchasing credits before the plant was built, because it was the sewer users, it came out of the sewer fund. So, this goes back in there. We've benefited over the past couple of years.

Ms. Portelinha explained we have gotten this credit for multiple years, but not to the extent of this year's credit.
Discussion.

B. Public Works Committee (Ed Pocock & Susan Zoni)

Mrs. Zoni informed the board there were a couple of things but nothing that affected us financially, but information for the public. Beginning in November, bulky waste is open only every other Saturday. The schedule for October is every Saturday. In November it is the 9th and 23rd. And, December the 7th and the 21st.

If you have questions on your leaf schedule pickup, check the town's website. That begins in a few weeks. Make sure you get your leaves out to the curb on time.

Mr. Sciota added the quadrants are on the website and if you go to the next level on the website, it says where your road is and what

quadrant you are in. Quadrant one is the only quadrant in town that gets picked up twice. All others are picked up once. The dates are right on there. Please get your leaves out on the curb at the correct time.

Leaf removal contracts were approved.

Snow removal contracts were approved. We're ready to go!

C. Open Space Committee (Ed Pocock)

Mr. Pocock reported he didn't attend but he didn't see anything in the Minutes that needed attention right away.

D. Self Insurance Committee (Joe Labieniec & Kevin Beaudoin)

Acting Chair Labieniec reported there was supposed to be a meeting today and we did not. It will be rescheduled for October 30th at 7:00 pm. I thank the finance director for her patience in rescheduling that meeting. We'll have an update for the next BOF meeting.

E. Committee of the Chairs (John Leary)

Mr. Sciota reported Chairman Leary spoke about the fact that he would be discussing with this Board, planning as to when your workshop meeting is going to be.

5. Board of finance Sub Committees and Liason Reports
(Emphasis on financial aspects)

A. Investment Committee (Kevin Beaudoin)

Mr. Beaudoin is absent.

B. Liaisons to Board of Fire Commissioners (Ed Pocock & Kevin Beaudoin)

Mr. Pocock said the new truck has been delivered. Mr. Sciota said it is in town but he wasn't sure if it had been commissioned, yet. Mr. Moise, from the audience, advised it will be probably next week. Mr. Sciota encouraged people to stop by, it is a beauty.

Mr. Pocock added a lot of good input and teamwork on this. It's user friendly and do extrication if needed.

Also, overtime has come down. It's somewhere around \$80,000. All looking good. Mr. Sciota said it will need to be watched but we are comfortable with it right now. Mr. Pocock said it is hard to tell with injuries and sick time.

Mr. Sciota advised the fire department received a grant you are all familiar with. A matching 10% grant from the town for training and materials for extrication especially for mountain rescue. The training will start when everything is in place. Senator Blumenthal was in the fire station on Monday congratulating the Chief and his staff for applying for and receiving the grant.

Ms. Portelinha reminded everyone it was approved by this board at the last meeting.

C. Other Committees

Mrs. Zoni had a few things to talk about here. Mr. Pocock and I are both working with the AHF finance committee. Mr. Lombardi from the town council is the chair of that committee. We want to mention how clean that committee runs. The procedure is to collect the finances from the soda, carnival and information booths. We count the money in the facility, double count it there with one of the representatives in the booth. We come back to the town wall, double count it again. Then we make deposits and record all the financial transactions. So clean and transparent. The town finance department is appreciative of the efforts of the total nine-member committee. We appreciate the police department for giving us official IDs this year.
Discussion.

6. Board Communications

Mrs. Zoni continued, also, because the election is coming up and we never know if we'll be here again, or not on this committee, I'd like to thank some people here.

Sandy Brunoli for running our video recording system every month, on time, carefully and cleanly.

Linda Gianoni for always taking care of our secretarial needs. Posting our Minutes, transcribing our Minutes and clarifying anything that needs it.

Emilia Portelinha, our finance department's head. She has been wonderful. I ask questions, she's there for me and for everyone. She's on time. She's efficient. She is polite, pleasant and I'm very appreciative of her hard work and efforts.

Mark Sciota, our town manager, who is here always. He's been there to answer questions, as well.

I, being new to this have learned so much from the others on this team, as well. I've appreciated the time and the effort of each and every one of the committee members.

Thank you to all of these people.

Another issue I'd like to speak about came from the town council. They were talking about the tax relief and it was mentioned they wanted to know the financial impact of the tax relief recommendations. This committee had forwarded that information in completion to the town council. It is up to the town council members to read that information, to study the information and to question the information with the members of the committee or members of this committee. It is not for them to just grandstand at a meeting.

It is important they not just go to public locations and talk and make a lot of noise to blow smoke. Now is the time for that tax relief bill to be passed by the council to make sure that everything goes through. The smoke can be there, but if they don't light the fire and make sure the fire is kept to help the people most in need in this community which is what that tax relief committee suggested, that's their job as town councilors. I want to make sure that they understand the information was there and it's their job to take care of it. Don't just make the smoke, but light the fire.

Ms. Pocock piggy back what Ms. Zoni said in regard to all the personnel with us here.

I was totally impressed, I thought I was back in my early 20's Saturday and I said this to Sue because I was an auditor working for a major company, and I saw such correctness and diligence in how the money was handled. I saw papers regarding extortions in other towns and committees, I really think, I know our auditors don't really look at that too much with all we've got scattered around. That's something that needs to be kept in mind. That was good. I was impressed.

This team, I've said it to a lot of people during my tenure here, we all work hard together and try to think and do the best we can for the Town of Southington and the people in the Town of Southington.

Mr. Sciota stated there is one person in the AHF part of it that works behind the scenes and we couldn't do without here and that's Ann Anop from the finance department. During the last two weeks and the weeks before that, she works her tail off working closely with the finance committee of the AHF. She's a key person on Emilia's staff. You don't see her very often, but she works diligently behind the scenes to make the AHF work from a financial standpoint. Ann Anop from the finance department does a fabulous job.

VI. Public Communications (Excluding Public Hearing Items)

John Moise, 238 Stonegate Road, here as a fire commissioner tonight. I wanted to update you on the overtime. From last year to date (10/6/18 to 10/5/19) we are \$81,000 down from last year. It was \$283,000 last and it's about \$201,000 and change this year. It is getting better. The two firefighters that were hired, after training, will be onboard in another few weeks. That'll help also with the reduction of overtime.

We were \$550,000 in the BOF budget and the council knocked it down to \$500,000. We're really concentrating on that and making sure that we come close to that number. Any overage, we think, will be absorbed within our own budget. I think we are in good shape there.

Thank you for all you've done in supporting us with the two new firefighters and the new engine.

The new engine is called a squad. It's a combo engine and rescue. The two rescue trucks we have now will no longer be in existence after we get this one. Rescue 3 is being purchased by the state for a minimal fee.

We'll have Squad 1 and Squad 5. Squad 5 will be a River Street and Squad 1 will be at headquarters. More efficient for sure.

If you want to stop by on Saturday and Sunday, the new Squad 5 will be across the street at Flair's where we are doing our recruitment activity. We have formed a recruitment and retention committee and it's gotten off the ground very well. We anticipate seeing some improvement on the volunteer force. We are going after the younger crowd of 18 thru 20.

Discussion.

I want to thank you all as we all worked very well together for the firefighters and the equipment and reducing the overtime. Your eyes on that really did help. I appreciate it.

Direct recruiting at the high school was discussed.

This is an active committee and we meet about once a month. Our big focus now is on the AHF. Try to get the word out.
Discussion.

I want to personally thank you for all the work you've done.

Mr. Morrison said the point was brought up by a volunteer of some of the things we offer such as the on-call amount and the tax credit. Is there any thought to changing that? Mr. Moise advised on October 16th the ordinance committee is taking up a tax abatement increase.
Explained.

Mr. Moise added the amount was increased to the volunteers by 10%, too. We look at all the avenues we can for retention and recruitment.

Mr. Moise explained the Chief changed the call matrix and it reduced the call volume for the call backs but it also reduced the amount of calls that went to the volunteers so they don't get overtired. Work well for both sides.

Mr. Morrison asked on the overtime, the difference of where we are now from last year can be explained by changes the Chief made, but my question is you have this \$500,000 number and there were no changes when the Chief was here to bring that down and I was wondering if any changes have been made since he was here to take you down to \$500,000 from \$550,000.

Mr. Sciota explained he meets with the chief every two weeks. The biggest change is the call protocols have been changed. When you send assets out for certain things, the chief has worked closely with his staff and volunteers that when they go on calls, the number of assets has been reallocated. The protocols dispatch uses for the fire department have been modified. The chief did this in conjunction with the commission as well as staff. We felt the protocols needed to be looked at very closely and that's what is happening. It still is going to be a learning curve. I put in my budget \$550,000 and it is down from there and we'll work with it. The chief and I are on the same page. He doesn't intend to ask me for any money out of my contingency. He is going to work within his budget and possibly a transfer here or there later in the year. He does not intend nor does the fire commission to ask me for any money from my contingency.
Discussion.

Mr. Moise concluded by saying right now we are in good shape.

VII. Review Long Range Plan and Priorities

1. Review status of LRP items in current fiscal year budget
 - A. Status / Reprioritizations
2. Strategy Discussion - Discuss and set dates for initial budget strategy workshops

After initial discussion, Mrs. Zoni questioned the reason for the meeting. Last year we gave a number to the BOE and they totally ignored it and the BOF agreed on a number and most of this board totally ignored the number we agreed on. What's the point?

After further discussion, Ms. Portelinha will check with Chairman Leary and Mr. Beaudoin about setting the workshop meeting for October 29th, 2019 at 7:00 and get back to the members. Chairman Leary will be asked if the town manager and superintendent of schools will be invited to attend.

The Acting Chair added the point Mrs. Zoni is bringing up may be better discussed at that workshop meeting.

VIII. Conduct Administrative Business

1. Consent Agenda

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|----|---------------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| A. | Appropriation | \$ 405 * | Youth Services - Outside Programs (Spec Rev) |
| | Appropriation | \$ 540 * | Youth Services - STEPS (Spec Rev) |
| B. | Appropriation | \$1,750 * | Capital Budget _Rails to Trails Project |
| C. | Appropriation | \$2,500 * | Fire Dept. - CRR Program Supplies (Spec Rev) |
| D. | Appropriation | \$5,600 * | Town Clerk - Program Svcs - Nominee Fees (Spec Rev) |
| E. | Appropriation | \$7,500 * | Town Clerk - Document Preservation Grant (Spec Rev) |
| F. | Appropriation | \$1,324 * | Highway/Parks - Property Maint - Loss/Damage (Spec Rev) |

Mr. Morrison made a motion to approve the consent agenda in one motion. Mr. Pocock seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

2. Manager's memos

1. Appropriation \$750 * Calendar House - Overtime

Mr. Sciota noted this is for overtime for employees and not bus drivers. Therefore, Mr. Pocock can vote on this for the quorum. Mr. Pocock said he was fine with that ruling.

Mrs. Zoni made the motion to appropriate \$750 for Calendar House overtime. Mr. Morrison seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

2. Appropriation \$100,000 Sewer Fund - Environmental Assessment/Remediation (from Seer Contingency)

Mr. Sciota said there are two areas that have to be tested. One area is called the lagoon and there is a section called Section 4. They need more testing and more classification. The reason why more testing is good is because when you clean up environmental issues, you want to test a lot because you know what does and doesn't need to be cleaned up. This is going towards that part of it. This is not the end of it. Once all remediation testing is done, a remediation plan will be put in place and when the project is over, we'll work closely with the EPA and DEEP to get a plan together to get it cleaned up.

Mrs. Zoni so moved the motion. Mr. Pocock seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

3. Transfer \$5,000 Library - Building Maintenance

Mr. Sciota explained this is going to be something you'll see more and more of. We are using band aids, spit and wire to hold together the HVAC system for air conditioning and heating. This work has to get done right now to get the heat operating in a manner where it is comfortable for the employees and patrons.

Remember the plan is to put this building for referendum in November of next year. If the public approves, we are talking about a 24-month design and build.

We will be living with this structure for three years. We're trying to best we can not to spend outrageous amounts of money but we have to keep the building safe and comfortable.

The system was installed in 1975.

Mrs. Zoni said as a person who uses the library personally two or three times a week and to tutor for literacy, she would make a motion to transfer the \$5,000. Mr. Pocock seconded.

Discussion about keeping the system going. When we get a design and go forward, if it's something we can spend money on and we know will be good for the next project, that'd be something to talk about stated Mr. Sciota. Right now, we don't know the plans for the building are so we don't want to put a lot of money into it.

Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

IX. Meeting Adjournment

Mrs. Zoni made a motion to adjourn which Mr. Pocock seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 7:42o'clock, p.m.)