

BOARD OF FINANCE
TOWN OF SOUTHTON
SEPTEMBER 9, 2020

The Board of Finance of the Town of Southington held a Meeting on Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at the Town Hall Council Chambers, 75 Main Street, Southington, CT. John Leary, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 o'clock, p.m.

There is a line open for absent board members and a separate line open for the public.

Appropriations from Contingency Account:

Approved to date	\$	0
Approved this meeting.....		<u>2,102</u>
Total Appropriations.....	\$	2,102

Appropriations with Revenue Offsets:

Approved to date	\$	0
Approved this meeting.....	\$	<u>37,898</u>
Total Appropriations.....	\$	37,898

The following board members were present:

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

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

Absent: Kevin Beaudoin, Board Member

A quorum was determined.

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

III. Public Hearing Items

None.

IV. Old Business

1. Approval of Minutes of July 29, 2020 meeting

Mr. Pocock made a motion to approve the Minutes of July 29th, 2020 with a second by Mr. Morrison. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

2. Carryforward to Education Non-Lapsing Account 2020 (up to \$1,963,779 (per CT Statute - 248a Unexpended Education Funds Account)

Sherri-Lyn DiNello presented on behalf of the Board of Education. At the last BOF meeting, you did approve the establishment of the account. That was different from funding the account to my understanding.

The BOE has closed out their year with just over \$2.1 million. However, \$400,000 was committed to purchase Chromebooks and delivery had not been received prior to closing out year end. We are asking for that amount to be carried forward (later in the agenda).

Our actual close out balance is just over \$2.5 million of which \$400,000 would be carried forward and that would leave well over the \$1.9 million we had requested to be placed in the 2% nonlapsing account.

We plan to come back to you with more information in regards on how we plan to utilize the money for a safe reopening of our schools. I do want to ensure the actual account would be funded with the 2%-dollar amount. Is there other information you need from me to make that happen?

The Chair asked how the surplus was arrived at, just broad-brush? Ms. DiNello said it was because of the fact that school was closed from mid-March thru the end of the school year. Savings from supplies, the spring sports schedule, transportation. A variety of line items we were able to realize the savings from.

The Chair reaffirmed the nonlapsing account was established and we will fund it with the surplus as defined. Are there further questions?

The dollar amount we are limited to is the \$1,963,779. (Two percent)

The Town Manager Mark Sciota clarified that in October we are going to get the number from the BOE with the categories to equal that number. It was decided it will be provided in October.

Discussion.

Discussion about whether to take action tonight or wait until the October meeting.

With Unanimous Consent, Manager's Memo #3 was moved up.

3. 2019/2020 Carryforward Request \$400,670 Education-Chromebooks

Mr. Sciota explained this is a timing issue. We did our carryovers in July and the administration fully supports this.

Mrs. Zoni made the motion to approve which Mr. Pocock seconded.

Mrs. Zoni commented she was really sorry it took Corona Virus to get Chromebooks into our schools. We've needed them for a long time. I'm thankful they are there now.

Mr. Morrison asked if that was all that was needed for the school year? This is just what you ordered last year, right? Ms. DiNello said the ordering of the Chromebooks was really the first step in planning for the 2020-21 school year in light of COVID. When we submitted our budget last December and you acted in the spring, it was all well before we knew what the year 2020 would bring to all of us.

Through the CARE Funds effort, the district received just over \$400,000 that we chose to utilize for the purchase of Chromebooks. We matched that with funds that were left in the operating budget so we can ensure we'd have a 1:1 device plan in place for the 20-21 school year.

Since that time, there is a whole host of expenses that we'd have to endure to make sure we have a safe reopening for staff and students.

Mr. Morrison asked if there would be any more expenditures on Chromebooks? Ms. DiNello said it was her understanding that just over the \$800,000 would fund the 1:1 device plan in place. This is accomplishing what they needed to do to be able to have the instruction they wanted this fall.

Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

New Business

V. Assess current financial state of the town

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

Ms. Portelinha advised she has provided the revenue information. One piece not here, which is kind of a temporary measure, but as far as our current year tax collections, we are about \$8 million under

budget for the first few months. But we expected that. That's about 6.35% which is very good considering we've given people three months to pay their taxes. I'm hoping a good portion of the \$8 million will come in this month. That isn't on this spreadsheet as it is a temporary measure and not something permanent.

Looking at the items on here, I was hesitant to put prior years' taxes and interest on taxes because again it is low right now because we are not charging people interest until October 1st. We are currently about \$60,000 under budget for those two accounts for the period.

Building permit and fees were \$50,000 above budget. Interest on investment for the first two months is doing fairly well at \$10,000 under budget.

We're doing very well with town clerk fees. A huge demand for housing, mortgages and people buying homes. It's a seller's market at this point. We are about \$80,000 over budget with that.

We usually get a CIRMA equity check. We had over estimated how much we would be getting. We'll be \$44,000 short on that.

A net of \$16,000 only two months into the year.

After reviewing the expenditures, to date there is nothing jumping out that would require any large appropriations.

The Chair noted the \$40,000 for the election and the COVID. Ms. Portelinha said she is trying to clean up last year by having an appropriation for Emergency Management with the grant to match. Initially we had a lot of expenses out of different accounts which made it difficult when requesting funds from FEMA. It's easier to consolidate into one department and then do the request. The first three months was time consuming to compile and submit. We're hoping the next quarter will be a little easier. We have submitted our first quarter ending June 30th, but haven't yet heard anything.

3. Review Capital Projects in Budget (Quarterly)

Report next month.

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

A. Sewer Committee (Tony Morrison)

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Mr. Morrison advised no meeting in August. The next meeting is tomorrow (September 10th). Nothing to report tonight.

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

Mrs. Zoni advised they met over the phone. Leaf and snow bids were finally coming in. We would have them at our next meeting. The new roof on the police station is going to be (inaudible).

Just some overtime expenses from the storm, but it took them about two extra weeks. They were catching up. Nothing huge.

Mr. Sciota advised overtime was not used for the transfer station. We did it during the work day.

C. Open Space Committee (Ed Pocock)

Mr. Pocock reported an active meeting, but (inaudible). The Chair asked if people are using open space. Mr. Pocock said to his knowledge, Crescent Lake (inaudible comments).

(People speaking through their mask are not audible.)

Mrs. Zoni added she saw people going to and from the Curtis Property with fishing rods. It's nice to see.

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

Mr. Labieniec said one month into the new fiscal year, we have our meeting next week. It was a month significantly under budget, about \$530,000 and around \$500,000 under prior. The thinking is still there is a big delay in there rather than a true reduction in expenditures. We'll be tracking that as we go along and relying heavily on our consultant and what his estimates are. That's where we stand for the first month of this fiscal year.

E. Committee of the Chairs (John Leary)

Nothing to report.

F. Economic Strike Committee (Tony Morrison)

Mr. Morrison reported on the open-air dining on Center Street. It was agreed to be extending until January 1st. Usually, they'll cut it off October 31st and they'll extend that into November and the barriers will be removed with the first snow event.

You'll be able to have outdoor dining on the sidewalks until January 1st, and the business will be liable for any damage that a plow causes.

As soon as it gets into November, you probably won't see too much outdoor dining. Hopefully, by then, there will be enough indoor dining.

Briefly, there was a working session on the marketing plan. I couldn't attend, but an update was given. The marketing company will start their work and come back with some ideas and plans in a couple of weeks.

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

A. Investment Committee (Kevin Beaudoin)

Nothing this evening.

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

Nothing this evening.

C. Other Committees

Nothing this evening.

6. Board Communications

Mr. Labieniec said the executive session is on contractual and security tonight. I know it was mentioned we should look to have some type of discussion as to whether it is a strategy session or a workshop on the upcoming budget year and the challenges we'll have. I think you had said a strategy session. That would be worthwhile to get scheduled.

Mr. Morrison said we're going to have expenses from COVID that we hadn't anticipated. We've heard numbers. I think we need to discuss how we will fund that. It's worth talking about maybe in another month. Maybe the next meeting would be good for that.

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The Chair at the next meeting we should get the update from the BOE. We could start it there and if it runs over, we'll continue it in a separate meeting.

Ms. Portelinha was asked to add a strategy session on the upcoming budget for the next meeting agenda with an emphasis on the COVID-19 impact.

Mr. Pocock thanked the fire department. They had something like 91 calls from 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm along with the police department and a host of people involved including town hall staff. Everybody had to be onboard to get this hurricane under our belt as well as dealing with the virus. I want to make sure the public knows there are people out there to get it done as quick as they can. I think they did a fantastic job considering the circumstances.

VI. Public Communications (Excluding Public Hearing Items)

Nothing this evening.

VII. Review Long Range Plan and Priorities

1. Review status of LRP items in current fiscal year budget
 - A. Status / Reprioritizations
2. Strategy Discussion

No discussion this evening.

VIII. Conduct Administrative Business

1. Consent Agenda

A.	Appropriation	\$1,621 *	Youth Services - Enhancement Grant (Spec Rev)
	Appropriation	\$ 325*	Youth Services - Outside Programs (Spec Rev)
	Appropriation	\$ 160*	Youth Services - STEPS Donations (Spec Rev)
	Appropriation	\$ 65*	Youth Services - STEPS - Gala Donations (Spec Rev)
B.	Appropriation	\$ 200*	Fire Dept - Vehicle Maint-Loss/Damage (Spec Rev)

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C.	Appropriation	\$ 275*	Police Dept - Vehicle Maint-
	Loss/Damage (Spec Rev)		
D.	Appropriation	\$ 200*	Highway/Parks - Vehicle Maint-
	Loss/Damage (Spec Rev)		
E.	Appropriation	\$ 1,000*	Police dept - K9 Program
	Supplies (Spec Rev)		
F.	Appropriation	\$75,000*	Emergency Management - Program
	Supplies		

Mrs. Zoni made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda in its entirety. Mr. Pocock seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

2. Manager's memos

1. Appropriation \$76,827 Fire Dept - Fire Suppression Grant (Spec Rev) (90% Federal Grant)

Ms. Portelinha explained they are receiving a grant for fire suppression. I want to be clear on how I listed it. In total the expenditure would be \$76,827. We are receiving 90% as a grant and the other 10% we'll transfer from their operational account so that everything is together.

Mr. Pocock made a motion to approve the \$76,827. Mr. Labieniec seconded.

Mr. Pocock added he appreciated the town applying for the grant as it saved us a good amount of money. All good.

Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

2. Appropriation \$40,000 Emergency Management - Election Expenditures (COVID)

Possible State Reimb)

The Chair said the increase in the way the voting is being done, the town will need extra staff to count absentee ballots versus the in-person voting. They're estimating that would be \$40,000 to mail out the stuff and have the staff to collect it.

Ms. Portelinha was initially going to request the \$40,000 from contingency, but we've been notified of a state grant --- they've already given us \$5,300 for the primary and they'll be giving us another \$32,000 toward costs for this. I am asking that money be appropriated and the difference come out of contingency. I'm not sure of the exact number. Let's say we are approving a \$40,000 request from contingency less the grant we receive. We'll appropriate the grant to match the expenditures when we have a specific number. We won't take the full amount. Chances are we'll take \$2,000 to \$3,000 out of contingency and the rest will be grant to match. We do have to spend pretty quickly to prepare for the election.

Mr. Morrison brought up the assumption the state is making which is 80%.

Discussion.

The Chair noted the challenge with changing from the machines doing the count and having the manual count and making sure there is no double count. A lot of work.

Mr. Sciota advised, we don't expect to have, if it is 80% which is what the state tell us, the mail in ballots will not be done that night. It will take several days to get them done. If 80% of the number comes from mail in ballots, more than likely, we will be prepared to give our numbers on Election Night. It will be days later. We've been telling the public that. Close elections may be close for several days.

The Chair said this board's job is not to run elections. However, we want to do everything we can to make sure the money is available so everybody who votes could feel like their vote was cast, properly vetted and everybody else's was properly vetted, too, so that when the results do come out --- and their most likely probably will be a delay --- it is an honest, fair and well vetted election.

If something should come up where extra funds are needed, you have to bring it to us and let us know. We all have that interest. We want everyone's vote to be properly managed.

Mrs. Zoni made the motion to approve the \$40,000 for Emergency Management for the Elections. Mr. Labieniec seconded.

Mr. Morrison said ordinarily we wouldn't vote for this, at all. I think it is somewhat ludicrous to think that we can't go and vote in person. Because it is what we have to do because the state is mandating it, I guess we will have to make the money available. I certainly do it under protest. I think it is ridiculous.

Mrs. Zoni said she had friends who are immunocompromised.
(Inaudible comments)

Mr. Morrison questioned the 80% of the population. Mrs. Zoni responded we don't know what is going to happen and she wouldn't make that decision for anyone else.

He Chair explained his experience in the recent election. They've changed the way they handled the vote and the elections department has done a great job. Separate entrance/exit. All distancing is in place. All protocols seem to be in place. He was happy with how the voting went at the one location he went to. They took it seriously and handled it effectively. I would encourage everyone to vote in person, but if you need it, the absentee program has always been here and serves those who can't make it and we'll be ready to be sure we count that vote and have the resources to make sure it is counted properly.

Motion passed 5 to 0 on a roll call vote.

3. 2019/202 Carryforward Request \$400,670 Education-Chromebooks

Handled earlier in the Agenda.

3. Executive Session – Contractual and Security

Mr. Sciota advised for the first part of executive session we will be dealing with the fire department. We have the Chief, Assistant Chief and the Chair of the Fire Commission.

The second item will be on security and we'll have Jay Baker, the IT person for Southington with our insurance representative on the phone.

(The Board moved into executive session at 7:36 o'clock, p.m.)

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board of Finance of the Town of Southington entered into executive session on Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at the Municipal Center Assembly Room, 196 North Main Street, Southington, CT in order to discuss Contractual Matters and Security.

The following Councilpersons were present:

Mr. Morrison, Mr. Pocock, Mrs. Zoni, Mr. Labieniec & Mr. Leary, Chair

Also, Present:

Mark J. Sciota, Town Manager
Emilia Portelinha, Director of Finance
Fire Chief Butler & Assistant Fire Chief
Mary Baker, Chairman of the Fire Commission
Jay Baker, IT person for the Town of Southington
Insurance Representative via phone

The Chairman of the Fire Commission, Chief Butler and Ass't Fire Chief left when their matter was finished.

Mr. Baker and the insurance representative entered the executive session.

No motions or votes were taken.

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

(Whereupon, executive session was adjourned at 8:59 o'clock, p.m.)

REGULAR SESSION

Mr. Pocock made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Morrison seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 o'clock, p.m.)

Mark J. Sciota
Acting Secretary