

Minutes

Board of Finance Meeting

December 18, 2012

Room 206 7:30 PM

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Liz Mao at 7:32 pm. All members of the Board of Finance were present. Also in attendance was Kate Clarke Buch, Finance Director. The meeting was taped for broadcast over Channel 79.

REQUEST FROM NOROTON HEIGHTS FIRE DEPARTMENT FOR REPLACEMENT OF TRUCK (FIRE REPLACEMENT FUND)

First Assistant Chief Jim O'Brien and Engineer Pete Ham of the Noroton Fire Department joined the meeting. Chairman Liz Mao opened the discussion by indicating that the Town had decided to engage a consulting firm to help reconsider the strategy for purchasing fire vehicles. Mr. O'Brien, assisted by Mr. Ham, then gave an overview of the Department's request, which was to replace Pumper Engine #31. His slides provided an overview of the vehicle's service as well as the rationale for and benefits of replacement, which would run about \$700,000. He also described the efforts of the Department's nine-member pumper replacement committee to meet with other fire houses and carefully consider replacement strategies and alternatives. Mr. O'Brien stated that he was seeking Board of Finance approval to proceed with developing specifications and seeking bids, likely three or four.

After extended discussion, the Board decided that it would make sense to get a quick perspective from the consulting firm as to whether the replacement should proceed or be delayed. Gwen Mogenson moved to table consideration of the replacement truck until the January meeting; passed 7-0.

TRANSFERS UNDER \$5,000

- **Elections – Part-time – \$2,500**

The Registrar of Voters requested a transfer from Professional Services to Payroll to cover additional staffing costs related to the 2012 Presidential election. Jon Zagrodzky moved approval; passed 7-0.

- **Department of Public Works – Seasonal & Temporary – \$2,000**

The current budget was not sufficient to fund the supplemental help needed for FY 2013 with regard to filing dump stickers, researching sewer permit applications, processing accounts payable and filing copies of COEs and invoices. This work remains behind schedule, requiring additional part-time help. Gwen Mogenson moved approval; passed 7-0.

CONTINGENCY TRANSFERS

- **Payroll transfer – Salary Contingency – \$145,411**

This transfer was required to fund increases (which were previously budgeted) in wages granted by the Board of Selectmen, Police step increases and/or increases due to upgrades or promotions. Not all Police step increases have gone into effect yet, so there will be an additional transfer later in the year. Lori Bora moved approval; passed 7-0.

- **Human Resources – Professional Services – \$3,000**

The Department exceeded the budgeted amount for professional services in the current fiscal year due to attorney's fees associated with a heart and hypertension claim for a police officer. Gwen Mogenson moved approval; passed 7-0.

- **Noroton Fire Department – Boat pump motor repairs – \$14,481**

This request had been tabled from the November 27, 2012 meeting, during which the Board asked whether some of the funding could come from unused funds in other Department capital accounts. This was indeed possible, as \$6,500 was available from the Department's small capital account. Lori Bora moved approval of the repairs, with \$6,500 coming small capital and the remainder from contingency; passed 7-0.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Kate Clarke Buch reviewed a schedule of RFCNRE accounts that could be closed and transferred to RFCNRE Contingency or other RFCNRE accounts. She noted that several accounts had no recent activity, and that under the Board's recently adopted policy for closing RFCNRE accounts

would be subject to automatic review. Jamie McLaughlin moved approval of closing and transferring these accounts; passed 7-0.

Ms. Buch then provided the monthly financial report, with the following highlights:

- Patrol overtime is running above-budget due to Hurricane Sandy (FEMA reimbursement being sought).
- Police station utilities are significantly over-budget (>\$60,000).
- Some EMS Post 53 bills have come in all at once, after no bills being submitted for a while. It was noted that recently, some Post 53 bills had been submitted more than once, an error that has been corrected.
- Approximately \$22,000 in FEMA reimbursements were made to the Town for the fall 2011 snowstorm.

MINUTES

The Board reviewed the draft minutes for the November 20 and 27, 2012 meetings. Lori Bora moved approval of both with minor corrections; passed 6-0-1 (Joe Duwan abstained due to absence).

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS, COMMITTEE REPORTS, CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Liz Mao reported that there was a meeting to discuss suggestions regarding budget format. One specific change discussed was eliminating the requirement that reports must include a column for fiscal year-to-date expenditures, which are often not useful for analyzing current spending.

At this meeting, First Selectwoman Jayme Stevenson proposed a joint Board of Selectman/Board of Finance meeting to review and decide on major elements of the Town budget (e.g., Public Works, Police, Parks & Recreation and the Library). Doing so would speed the process by eliminating redundant budget reviews.

Board members expressed a willingness to try this approach, with the caveat that the Board of Finance would retain its decision-making authority. Potential dates discussed for the meeting included February 4th, 5th and 6th.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Lori Bora made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded and approved 7-0 at 9:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Zagrodzky
Clerk