

**EAST LYME BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, OCTOBER 14th, 2020
Via Zoom Meetings**

Members in Attendance: Camille Alberti, Chairperson
Ann Cicchiello, Vice-Chairperson
John Birmingham
Peter DeRosa
Anne Santoro
Richard Steel

Also In Attendance: Kevin Seery, Deputy First Selectman
Jeffrey Newton, Superintendent of Schools
Maryanna Stevens, School Finance Director
Anna Johnson, Finance Director

Absent: No One

A. Call Regular Meeting to Order

Chairman Alberti called this Regular Meeting of the East Lyme Board of Finance to order at 7:01 PM. She noted that Mr. Steel would be joining them shortly.

FILED

B. Delegations

Ms. Alberti called for delegations.
There were no delegations.

Oct 20, 2020 AT 10:01 AM/PM
Brooke Hansen
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

C. Minutes

▪ **Regular Meeting September 9, 2020**

Ms. Alberti called for a motion for approval or any changes to the Board of Finance Regular Meeting Minutes of September 9, 2020.

Ms. Santoro asked that on Page 1 where Mr. Larcen is speaking in the second to last line that the word 'not' be deleted.

Ms. Alberti asked that on Page 2 where Ms. Johnson is speaking in the middle of the page that the line is changed to read: 'Ms. Johnson said that the remaining balance is \$10,000; without the \$14,000 encumbrance.'

Mr. Steel asked that on Page 6 in the third paragraph that the \$120,000 be changed to read \$125,000 and in the next paragraph where Mr. Nickerson is speaking that 'they do not have' is changed to read: 'the BOF does not have....'

****MOTION (1)**

Ms. Santoro moved to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of September 9, 2020 as amended.

Ms. Cicchiello seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

▪ **Special Meeting September 17, 2020**

Ms. Santoro noted that she thought that a page was missing.

It was decided to hold off on this until their next meeting so that they would have all the pages.

(Note: Mr. Steel joined the meeting at 7:09 PM)

D. Reports

▪ **Board of Education**

Mr. Newton, Superintendent reported that he had two (2) items to update them on – the first - with respect to the middle school renovation projects it appears that they will not have to bond \$210,000 on those projects. They should be closing it out this week as the Town Building Committee will be taking over the PS Building project.

Second, he apprised them about the Covid expenditures offering an update from what he had provided in the previous month. With the new PPE numbers they have purchased all that they need – that figure went from \$187,000 to \$190,000; however they also went down by \$3000 on instructional supplies to \$27,000.

Regarding staffing, the High School has been working remotely and will continue to do so until next Thursday. They filled two (2) positions which came to \$150,000 for those SPED positions. With the virtual learning they will have to see if they will have to add more para-professionals. The expenditures show an increase of \$170,217 from the previous report which he had sent them. The new total – after the grant funding has been applied is \$1,046,841.60. He said that he hopes that with a grant of \$460,000 and the \$500,000 that they returned to the general fund last year they should make it.

He said that he would send them the updated document (not received, not attached). Staffing is the biggest component but he noted that he anticipates saving \$400,000 with the freeze that is in place now.

Ms. Santoro asked about the transportation piece and if there is anymore wiggle room there or will they keep the dialogue open on that.

Mr. Newton and Ms. Stevens said that they are willing to keep the dialogue open and that they have seen reductions.

Ms. Stevens noted that they had just received the September & October bills however she has not had the opportunity to review them as they just arrived.

Ms. Santoro asked if they could use smaller buses.

Ms. Stevens said that they contract for the buses size and how many and that it is not something that they can just change.

Mr. DeRosa noted that this type of question was brought up with the SEAT buses and the response was that the expense is more of the people and not the difference in the size of the bus.

Ms. Alberti asked if the devices have been coming in.

Mr. Newton said that they should have all of them shortly and that they will start dispersing them soon.

Mr. Birmingham asked how many devices.

Mr. Newton said 2500. They start at the lower grades and work up. They have given out 400-500 so far.

- **First Selectman**

Mr. Seery reported that the contract with Noble Construction is in hand and signed for the PS Building. The project has been turned over to the Town Building Committee. Also, Mr. Bragaw and Mr. Nickerson met with some Eversource reps on communication issues on power restoration and trees being removed that are blocking roads. Tomorrow there will be a ceremony at McCook's at 5 PM for police retirements and appointments. Also, they are seeing double the number of absentee ballots and Parks & Rec feels that they will end the year with around a \$30,000 deficit due to not selling the out of town passes. They are hoping to be able to cover this. There will be a Light Parade with floats set up around McCook's so people can drive around by car to see them.

Mr. Steel asked if the BOS has looked at anything with regard to trick or treating – such as a drive-thru.

Mr. Seery said that they have received information from the CDC and DPH that trick or treating is a high risk activity.

Ms. Alberti said that back in January that Mr. Nickerson had said that there was a lot of interest in the Bob's store – she asked if there was anymore news on that.

Mr. Seery said that he has not heard anything but would check and they would have that information for their next meeting.

- **Finance Director**

Ms. Johnson said that through September that they are holding their own. The revenues this year versus last with regard to taxes are a bit lower but they are attributing that to Covid. She said that with a very rough projection that she thinks they may use \$600,000 of the \$900,000 from fund balance to balance out the year.

She noted that tree cutting was increased to \$50,000 due to the number of dead trees that they have and that this may need another \$25,000 in the spring added to it. There are two (2) trees at the Town Hall that are rotted and need to come down.

Ms. Johnson noted that she had provided them with information on the Fund Balance – she added that the \$7.9M will be reduced to around \$7.4M when the BOE looks for their \$500,000 back.

With respect to the help that the Town Clerk has had for the ballots, they will ask to transfer funds from the tax department to the Town Clerk to reflect actual funding. Public Works overtime is up but she expects it should be taken care of by retirements and new hires coming in at less.

Ms. Santoro asked for a methodology to catalogue sources of funding for Covid and other dollars that we receive as she thinks that this would be useful to them.

Ms. Alberti suggested that Ms. Santoro could work with Ms. Johnson to help out with this as it is a rather special request.

E. New Business

a. Special Appropriation and Transfer – Human Resources \$3576.18

Ms. Alberti noted that the HR person reports to the First Selectman and that he is not present this evening. She said that she has some questions for him and suggested that they could hold this until their next meeting for him to be here.

Ms. Cicchiello suggested that they ask Mr. Seery and Ms. Johnson their questions and if they could not answer then they could hold this over to their next meeting.

Mr. Seery said that they have had unexpected work – Covid, retirements, updating time off sheets etc.

Ms. Cicchiello asked how many hours per week HR works now.

Ms. Johnson said 30.

Ms. Alberti recalled that they had increased the hours from 20 per week to 30 per week just this past January.

Mr. DeRosa asked if this is a one shot or if this will be a permanent increase in the hours

Mr. Seery said that it would be permanent.

Ms. Alberti recalled that at the January meeting it was also mentioned when Ms. Cicchiello asked about this, that there would be a regional Hr Director from SECCOG and also that Covid would be covered from there.

Mr. Seery said that he was sorry but he could not answer that.

Ms. Johnson said that she also could not answer that.

Ms. Alberti said that it was an \$80,000 position that was to be made available to them – she noted that there is a SECCOG meeting two (2) days from now.

Mr. Seery said that Mr. Nickerson is the Chair of SECCOG and that he would make sure to ask him about this.

Ms. Alberti continued that the data on the transmittal does not show comparatives on the items cited say over the past five (5) years time; or of cuts that were made in other areas of Town Hall such as the Building dept where she has heard from outside people about waiting on permits and paperwork to be processed.

She said that she is not sure how one would be more important than the other.

Mr. Seery said that they did not ask for the hours.

Ms. Lucovich, HR said that she had not put together the comparative numbers but would get them. She indicated that her work had increased with setting up packages for new employees and various protocols.

Ms. Alberti said that she does not doubt the need but they had just increased these hours from 20 to 30 per week so she would like to table this until next month pending further information.

Ms. Cicchiello agreed.

Ms. Santoro said that she would also like to know about the SECCOG resource and what we could get from them.

Ms. Alberti said that she would like to know more information on all of this and if the work is increasing in line with the way that the hours have been increased.

Mr. DeRosa said he would be interested in the resources available from SECCOG with respect to the number of municipalities it serves.

Mr. Steel noted in looking over the list of items cited as justification for more hours that they had recently increased their IT support dollars for the PD and that some of the items on the sheet look like they actually belong with that support and the work that was cited for those departments.

Ms. Alberti said that she had also suggested to Ms. Johnson that they do not have to move the dollars now as they could cover it at the end of the year as they do with Police overtime, etc.

Ms. Johnson said that if the payroll account expenditure is over budget towards the end of the year that they could not process payroll.

Ms. Alberti asked if they have been working over the 30 hours now.

Ms. Lucovich said yes, she has been working over to get the work done and has been putting it in as comp time.

Ms. Alberti suggested that she could take the comp time during the holidays when people are off and it is slower.

b. Special Appropriation – FEMA funds to contingency - \$327,046.72

Mr. Seery said that there is a 30-50% reimbursement on the body cams. Also, with regard to the requests he said that the BOS wanted firm costs. The Public Trust requested dollars and Mr. Bragaw is requesting some for sidewalks. He said that the feeling of the BOS is that contingency is a good place to hold these funds as they would have to come back with requests for them which would have to come before both boards.

Mr. Steel noted that the Public Trust webcam is down.

Mr. Seery said that he would check into that and who can fix it.

Ms. Alberti commented on this saying that she is okay with the body cams; regarding the sidewalks she noted the travesty with Gateway – getting \$105,000 when it would have cost \$900,000 to actually do the sidewalks – she suggested that they do better negotiating in the future. She suggested \$30,000 to sidewalks and noted the Public Trust request of \$50,000 for the Boardwalk cracks, etc saying that they should honor this request.

Mr. Seery said that they have not come before the BOS yet with the request – however, he has not heard that they would be refused. He said that they are all aware of how much they have done for the Town and for the Boardwalk. All they have to do is request it and the BOS would be happy to move it forward to the BOF.

Ms. Alberti said that the decision tonight is if they want to put this into contingency.

****MOTION (2)**

Ms. Santoro moved to approve a special appropriation of the remaining FEMA Funding received from Storms Irene and Sandy in the amount of \$327,046.72 to account 01-01-120-200-500 (Contingency). This resolution is passed under the guidance of Executive Order 7S with no Town Meeting and being less than 1% of the current budget.

Mr. Birmingham seconded the motion.

Ms. Santoro asked what happens if this is voted down.

Ms. Johnson said that they have received the funds but without a place to receive them into, they would go into the General Fund and noted that it needs to be designated.

Mr. Birmingham asked if voted down – what happens if out of the \$327,000 you only use part of it – does the rest just sit there.

Ms. Johnson said yes, that would be the case.

Mr. Birmingham said that he would prefer that it go into contingency so that if some items come in at more or less – this would make it cleaner.

Ms. Alberti said that it is really no different than putting aside dollars to CNRE and not having the total amount.

Mr. Birmingham said that tonight they are talking about this item.

Mr. DeRosa said that he is not hearing any disagreement on the allocations but only on how it gets there.

Ms. Santoro agreed that it is really a process question that is before them. She said that she thinks that the Public Trust will come with their request and that they could go from there.

Mr. Steel said that he thinks that they need to have assurances that these projects that are being mentioned, that the money is used for that and not for departments that are running short. Contingency seems to be a good 'parking lot' for the dollars and he trusts that the BOS will bring the requests forth for the projects that have been discussed by them. He added that he would like to see the body cams fast forwarded.

Mr. Seery said that he thinks that they will be and that Sgt. Macek is already working on it.

Mr. Steel said that he thinks that this is the best place to put it however he does not want to see it raided.

Mr. Birmingham noted that it would have to be approved by the BOS and then by them and possibly also at Town Meeting.

Ms. Cicchiello said tht she wished that some of the dollars that Mr. Bragaw is requesting for sidewalks would have more information such as where they would be going. She said that she hopes that they would hear more about this at their next meeting.

Mr. Seery said that he would make sure to get that to them as soon as possible.

Ms. Johnson noted that the Police Chief has also been on top of the body cams.

Ms. Alberti called for a vote.

Vote: 4– 2– 0. Motion passed.

Against: Ms. Alberti, Ms. Cicchiello

F. Old Business

There was none.

G. Public Discussion

There was none.

H. Board Comments

Mr. Steel said that when they were discussing the PS Building that he had noted the deplorable conditions that the Police are working under at the Main Street building. He questioned if perhaps they could rent or use some of the empty store fronts or Bob's, if feasible for their paperwork or other items such as that.

Mr. Seery said that even when it comes to paperwork, that is of a highly confidential nature and they really need to have access to their computers and equipment.

(Note: the meeting abruptly shut down)

Meeting could be logged back into – four members did so.

I. Adjournment

Ms. Alberti apologized for the glitch and called for a motion to adjourn.

****MOTION (3)**

Ms. Cicchiello moved to adjourn this Regular Meeting of the East Lyme Board of Finance at 9:36 PM

Mr. DeRosa seconded the motion.

Vote: 4 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Zmitruk,
Recording Secretary