

**EAST LYME BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, NOVEMBER 12th, 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: Mark Nickerson, First Selectman
Jeffrey Newton, Superintendent of Schools
Maryanna Stevens, School Finance Director
Mike Finkelstein, Chief of Police
Mike Macek, Police Sergeant
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 7:02 PM.

B. Delegations

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

C. Minutes

▪ **Special Meeting – September 17, 2020**

Ms. Alberti called for a motion for approval or any changes to the Board of Finance Special Meeting Minutes of September 17, 2020.

****MOTION (1)**

Ms. Cicchiello moved to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of September 17, 2020 as presented.
Ms. Santoro seconded the motion.
Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

▪ **Regular Meeting - October 14, 2020**

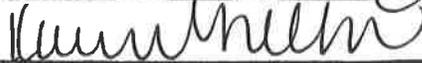
Ms. Alberti called for a motion for approval or any changes to the Board of Finance Regular Meeting Minutes of October 14, 2020.

Mr. Steel asked that on page 2 in the middle of the page that 'for his' be changed to: 'for him'.
Ms. Alberti asked that on the top of Page 2 that the word 'middle' be deleted before school renovation.
Mr. DeRosa asked that where he is speaking in the second paragraph on Page 4 that it be changed to read:
...he would be interested in how the staffing of East Lyme for human resources compares with that of other Towns of similar size.'

****MOTION (2)**

Ms. Santoro moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 14, 2020 as amended.
Mr. DeRosa seconded the motion.
Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

FILED

Nov 19 20 20 AT 10:20 AM/PM

EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

D. Reports

▪ Board of Education

Mr. Newton, Superintendent reported that they are looking to get the kids back into the schools after the holidays as he wants the K-6 students to be safe. They have an estimate for the K-4 foldable Plexiglas panels that they would need to bring them back and it is around \$27,000.

Ms. Stevens reported that there is no longer the need for extra busing so those dollars will cover some of the PPE items that they need; but not all of them.

Mr. Newton said that they would have a December budget workshop and that he would provide them with the date as soon as he gets it so that the Board of Finance could attend if they wished to. He noted that they are not looking to add more staff.

Mr. Steel said that several of the staff and students are getting tested and asked if there are special provisions that the school has to make appointments for the testing.

Mr. Newton said no; LLHD makes recommendations on where the testing is being held and so far he has not heard of any delays. Also, the results are getting back to them very quickly.

Ms. Cicchiello said that she had been approached at the polls by someone asking if the school is providing the devices (computers) and why the students can't use their own at home.

Mr. Newton said that they are provided so that they are uniform and to have a secure platform so that everyone has the same as well as security.

Ms. Cicchiello asked if they have tech support or if they had to hire someone for that.

Mr. Newton said that custom computers have been a great help and this has been working out well. There is also a help hotline to call and it is used frequently.

▪ First Selectman

Mr. Nickerson reported that he is watching the numbers in the region with regard to the Town and employees and right now our numbers are good. We had one week in the red, it then went to orange and now we are out of that high range so it is being watched carefully. He said that they might close the Town Hall to the public without notice if necessary. He advised if you do not have to come to Town Hall that you please do not come. He also gave 'kudos' to the Town Clerk's Office and the Registrars for the great job that they did during the election season.

On Saturday the 14th Guy's Oil will hold the Rotary Food Drive – please try to drop off what you can as there are many people suffering in our area. The Holiday Stroll will be held although it will be downsized. It will also be held during the day. The tree lighting will be a virtual one held on November 28, 2020. There will also be a reverse Light Parade held at McCook's Park where the floats will be parked there and the people will drive by to see them. This will be on December 12, 2020.

The Town received a STEAP Grant in the amount of \$128,205 from the State. This will go to the Transfer Station for the vehicle scale and scale house.

He lastly said that he continues to work with SECCOG, LLHD and the DOL through all of this.

Ms. Alberti asked if it was correct that the STEAP Grant is only possible when the POCD is updated every 10 years.

Mr. Nickerson said that updating it is important for many grants – in its own way it forces the Towns to update it every 10 years and to keep it updated.

Ms. Alberti commented that she thought that the POCD update came up with some excellent recommendations.

▪ Finance Director

Ms. Johnson said that she had provided them with the Covid expenditures on the Town side from March thru June 30, 2020. She noted that they were receiving PPE supplies from the State for a period of time although that has stopped now. In the quarter from July 2 thru September 30 it has cost another \$9000.

She reported that the Town Clerk and the Registrars received some funding from the State for the election process and she will work with them on other reimbursements and also \$20,000 for Public Safety with the Fire Departments.

Ms. Santoro thanked Ms. Johnson for putting this information together.
Ms. Alberti asked Ms. Santoro; as she had requested this information, if she wanted to see it every month.
Ms. Santoro said that she would like to see it when there are changes.
Mr. Steel said that he would like to see the percentage of the overall budget that is being spent on this.

Ms. Johnson noted that they did receive some of the State funding and that the Building and Conveyance fees were very healthy and would exceed projections.
She said that for expenditures that they were trending a bit higher, however in a rough projection she felt that they would use a bit over \$600,000 from the fund balance by year end from the \$900,000 that they had put into the budget to use. She said that the large concern is the BOE being \$1.4M over their budget. She recalled that they had hinted at coming back to use the \$500,000 from the previous year – this would have a large effect on the year end figures.

Mr. Steel asked about Dispatch overtime.
Chief Finkelstein said that they have to have two people on and that when they have people out on medical; they have to fill the shift. They have been trying to cover with PT however if they can't, they have to use FT people at overtime.
Mr. Steel suggested they look at this during the next budget cycle.

Ms. Alberti asked for an update on the Auditor.
Ms. Johnson said that they will start on Monday November 16, 2020. If the Town Hall is closed to the walk-in public, they will be part of the staffing.

Ms. Alberti asked why the delayed start.
Ms. Johnson said that there were some items that she had to wrap up before they could come out.
Ms. Alberti asked if they would be able to finish by the end of the year.
Ms. Johnson said that she thought so.

E. New Business

a. Special Appropriation – Police Body Cameras \$279,549.08. Transfer first year \$151,601.08 from contingency

Chief Finkelstein said that he is looking forward to having these and that he feels that they will benefit everyone. He noted that they have looked at three (3) top products that are out there and they have also discussed with Towns that have them what they like or do not like about them. It is not an apples to apples comparison. They also had presentations by all three of the vendors (Axon Enterprises, Telrepc and Watch Guard). Additionally, they took into account the IT component.

Axon Enterprises is the one that they feel meets the needs of the department and the community and will serve them the best in the long-term. They are looking for 25 cameras and for 14 cars to be outfitted. Axon offers full change-outs and upgrades at the 2.5 year and 5 year mark where everything would be replaced with new equipment. He noted that they were able to negotiate a deal reduction of \$30,000. For the first year it would be \$151,601.08 and for years 2-5 it would be \$31,987.06 per year. This would bring them light years ahead of where they are now.

Mr. Steel thanked them for the information and fantastic job getting it all together. He asked about the system requirements and if it would be doable.
Chief Finkelstein said that Star Computers is taking care of all of that for them.

Ms. Cicchiello said that this is all very thorough – she asked about the 14 front facing and 14 back facing cameras.
Chief Finkelstein said that they are front facing and back facing. He noted that each officer only has access to his own camera information.
Ms. Cicchiello asked if this could go forward even before they get to the new building.
Chief Finkelstein said yes as it is all cloud based.

Ms. Cicchiello asked – in five (5) years when this contract is up – what would it cost.

Chief Finkelstein said that Axon said that there would not be a hardware cost – the yearly cost should be similar but it is not something that they are able to say at this time.

Ms. Cicchiello asked if after the five (5) years they would continue with the replacements at 2.5 and 5 year intervals.

Chief Finkelstein said that while he does not know for sure, he thinks that is what keeps people going with Axon as it is a great selling feature.

Mr. Birmingham asked about power usage.

Chief Finkelstein said that it is minimal.

Mr. Birmingham asked if it holds a 12-hour charge.

Chief Finkelstein said that there is a standby and active time and that in speaking with others who have this system – there has not been an issue. The officer uses the same camera all the time and they are not traded off.

Ms. Santoro noted that she had watched the BOS meeting presentation and that there was a video that was presented at that meeting that was excellent.

Chief Finkelstein showed a short clip of the clarity of the body cameras. He noted that they had also had the forethought that there are several other Towns in Southeastern Connecticut who are going with this product now – so they are looking if, in five years, if they all come up for renewal that they could group together and there could be savings in the numbers.

Mr. DeRosa asked about the other two (2) vendors.

Chief Finkelstein said that they are not apples to apples so it is difficult to compare. Watch Guard did not have any replacements and the Panasonic system lags way behind technologically. Further a lot of the regional departments are using Axon.

Ms. Cicchiello noted that all of the Police departments are probably scrambling to get body cams – she asked if they are available.

Chief Finkelstein said that they looked into that and getting them by January – there is also a 30% reimbursement which only comes once you have your system and it is in place. There is also only \$4M in that pot for reimbursement and once it is gone – there is no more – so they are in for that 30%.

Ms. Alberti asked Chief Finkelstein how much they would save by not having to outfit two (2) cars each year.

Chief Finkelstein said that two new cars each year is \$14,000 per year.

Ms. Johnson noted that the police vehicles are through the vehicle acquisition program each year.

Ms. Alberti said that they could look at the \$31,000 fee each year being reduced by the \$14,000.

Chief Finkelstein said yes, the \$14,000 is an expense that they would not have to make.

Ms. Alberti asked why they are appropriating the \$279,000, and don't they have to identify where it is coming from.

Ms. Johnson said that they are doing it for the full amount as they will be paying it out over the remaining years.

Ms. Alberti said if they approve up to \$279,000 tonight that they are locked into the \$31,000 each year over the four (4) year period.

Mr. Steel suggested that they go back to the contingency fund rather than the general fund.

Ms. Johnson said that it is identifying the general fund as that is where contingency is.

****MOTION (3)**

Ms. Santoro moved whereas, the Board of Finance has determined that a true and very real need exists for the acquisition of body cameras for the Police department as recommended by the Police Commission and approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Be it resolved to approve an appropriation in the amount of \$279,549.32 for the purpose of purchasing body camera equipment more particularly described in the 5-year quote summary prepared by Axon Enterprise, Inc. The acquisition of said equipment for purchase, for a total price of \$279,549.32 to be payable in annual installments as follows over a period of five (5) years: Year 1 - \$151,601.08; Years 2 through 5 - \$31,987.06

each. The First Selectman is authorized, in the name and on behalf of the Town, to execute and deliver any documents that may be required in connection with said transactions.

Whereas, the State of Connecticut has stated there will be grant funds in the amount of 30% reimbursement for said body camera purchases. The 30% reimbursement will be based upon the year 1 amount of \$151,601.08, estimated to be \$45,480.32. When grant funds are received, they are to be deposited to the general fund, (Contingency account). The First Selectman or his designee is authorized, in the name and on behalf of the Town, to execute and deliver any documents that may be required in connection with the grant application and reimbursement.

Whereas, the Town maintains a contingency account in the general fund which has enough resources available to make the year 1 payment in the amount of \$151,601.08. Therefore, move to transfer \$151,601.08 from account 01-01-120-200-500 (Contingency) to an account to be established titled, PS-Police Body Cams.

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. Steel seconded the motion.

Vote: (taken by roll call) 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

(Note: a five minute break was taken here)

b. Approve 2021 Meeting Schedule

Ms. Alberti noted that the meeting schedule is for the second Wednesday of the month in keeping with their designated date.

****MOTION (4)**

Mr. DeRosa moved to approve the Board of Finance Regular Meeting Schedule for 2021 as presented.

Mr. Birmingham seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed. (Copy Attached)

F. Old Business

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

Mr. Nickerson said that this was on the agenda last month and they had a question about the SECCOG hiring an HR person. Because the State was shut down they did not hire one as of yet. The thought is that they would be more of a compliance based person to keep them up to date on those items that come from the State. He continued that with the BOE being \$1.4M over budget that he does not think that they are looking for much with only \$3500 and three (3) hours per week.

Mr. Steel said that in the minutes of the last meeting that Becky was asked for comparative numbers from previous years – he asked if they have them.

Ms. Alberti said that she is sure that Ms. Johnson at times works up to 70 hours some weeks but does not get paid as that is the nature of the business – it ebbs and flows. Some months are less and some are more and that is how it goes. They just started a new fiscal year and she said that she would like to see how it goes as they just increased that position by 10 hours.

Mr. DeRosa asked how the staffing compares with other towns of similar size.

Mr. Nickerson said that it is FT in other towns.

Ms. Alberti explained that as she understood it – the previous person was 28 hours per week with 8 of those hours being for bank reconciliations. So, Becky came in at 20 hours and got 10 extra for 30 hours for the work without the bank reconciliations.

Ms. Johnson explained the history of the job from 2006.

Ms. Cicchiello asked if this would then go to 33 hours permanently.

Ms. Johnson said that the intention is to have that ability and that if only 31 hours is needed that is all that she would work.

Mr. Birmingham said that he would rather have Becky come before them at their next meeting and defend exactly what she feels is taking up that time.

Mr. Nickerson said that she is not coming to the meeting.

Ms. Alberti said that she gave a list and that she does not think that it would change; but – she also thinks that they should stick to the budget that they set. Further – they just increased her hours by 10 to 30 hours.

Mr. Steel said that Becky was at the last meeting and was supposed to provide information – he agrees with Mr. Birmingham that she should break out her job time.

Mr. Nickerson said that he presented information, there is extra work with Covid and that he will cover the hours however he has or in whatever way he can do it.

Mr. Birmingham said that he needs more information but would listen to Mr. Nickerson.

Ms. Santoro said to Mr. Birmingham that he has said two (2) different things – he needs more information but he doesn't - . If they need more information then they need to be specific on what they are looking for. They could perhaps revisit this next budget season as there are a number of ways to look at it.

Mr. Steel suggested that they track any Covid items and they give that listing to Ms. Johnson to add to her list as it seems odd and a mystery that Rebecca could not come tonight or next month. He said that he is not thrilled about giving more.

Ms. Cicchiello asked Ms. Johnson if she could be reimbursed for this from FEMA as Covid.

Ms. Johnson explained that she already put in for some over the 30 hours per week and got some back through the Covid reimbursement. She explained that she had a line item in her budget that she could pay her from for some of the time. (Prior to June 30, 2020)

Ms. Cicchiello asked if they could do that again going forward.

Ms. Johnson said no as they have been giving her comp time so she was not paid for it. She would have to be paid in order for them to be reimbursed.

Ms. Alberti said that she is concerned that Ms. Johnson has said that she was paid from a whole different budget prior to all of this and then they were reimbursed.

Mr. DeRosa said that he would vote for this.

Mr. Steel asked Ms. Johnson how there was overtime payment through June 30, 2020 and then it was switched to comp time – why?

Ms. Johnson said that as of July 1 – HR was carved out to be its own department whereas before it was part of her finance department and she had a line item for additional work hours.

Ms. Alberti said that she prefers to see how it goes as she feels that it is premature. They should keep track of it and if they have to then they can come back for it from contingency. Give it a year and then revisit it with others for the next fiscal year.

Ms. Cicchiello asked Ms. Johnson about the payroll accounts.

Ms. Johnson said that it is only when it gets to an overdrawn situation that they would not be able to meet payroll.

Mr. Steel said that HR expenses are at 35% of the budget – he asked why she could not work for some 30 weeks in that account and deplete that and see how it is tracking and then ask for extra from contingency.

Ms. Cicchiello asked if they would have reassurance that they would not be coming back for more hours.

****MOTION (5)**

Ms. Santoro moved to approve a special appropriation and transfer in the amount of \$3,576.18 from account 01-01-120-200-500 (contingency) to account 01-01-106-100-211 (HR Mgr) to allow for up to an additional three (3) hours per week. This request comes during the fiscal year due to work-load.

Mr. DeRosa seconded the motion.

Vote (taken by roll call): 4 – 1 – 1. Motion passed.

For: Mr. DeRosa, Ms. Cicchiello, Ms. Santoro, Mr. Birmingham
Against: Ms. Alberti
Abstained: Mr. Steel

G. Public Discussion

There was none.

H. Board Comments

Ms. Alberti noted that this was the twelfth time that they have met and been together for their Regular meetings. They have covered a lot and they have had full and perfect attendance for all the meetings. She thanked everyone.

I. Adjournment

Ms. Alberti called for a motion to adjourn.

****MOTION (6)**

Ms. Cicchiello moved to adjourn this Regular Meeting of the East Lyme Board of Finance at 9:47 PM

Mr. DeRosa seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Zmitruk,
Recording Secretary

**Town of East Lyme
Board of Finance
Meeting Schedule
2021 Approved**

Meetings will be held at the East Lyme Town Hall
Meeting Room #1 – Upstairs
On the following listed Wednesdays at **7:00 PM**
(2nd Wednesday of the Month – unless otherwise noted)

January 13, 2021

February 10, 2021

March 10, 2021

April 14, 2021

May 12, 2021

June 9, 2021

July 14, 2021

August 11, 2021

September 8, 2021

October 13, 2021

November 10, 2021

December 8, 2021

FILED

Nov 13 20 20 AT 2:10 AM/PM
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EAST LYME TOWN CLERK