

**EAST LYME BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, SEPTEMBER 8th, 2021
Via Zoom**

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
Jeff Newton, Superintendent of Schools
Annaliese Spaziano, Asst. Superintendent
Karen Galbo, Town Clerk
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 7:04 PM.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Alberti led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

FILED
Sept 16, 2021 AT 10:02 AM/PM
Brooke Johnson ATC
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

C. Delegations

Ms. Alberti called for delegations.

Tim Yuhas said that he represents the American Legion and would answer any questions regarding the American Rescue Funds for them.

D. Minutes

- Regular Meeting – August 11, 2021

Ms. Alberti called for a motion for approval or any changes to the Board of Finance Regular Meeting Minutes of August 11, 2021.

****MOTION (1)**

Ms. Cicchiello moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of August 11, 2021 as presented.

Mr. Steel seconded the motion.

Vote: 4 – 0 – 2. Motion passed.

Abstained: Ms. Alberti, Mr. DeRosa

E. Reports

- Board of Education

Mr. Newton introduced Annaliese Spaziano of Clinton as the new Assistant Superintendent replacing Amy Drowne. He said that she took over as of July 1, 2021.

Ms. Spaziano said a few words and thanked everyone. She said that she was very much looking forward to this.

Mr. Newton said that they started classes in the end of August and have had three (3) cases of Covid so far. It has been a great start. Also the numbers of those vaccinated per the governor's orders are looking good. Of concern and interest is the baseball field, particularly the outfield which is in need of repair. They discussed either redoing it or going to turf. A study was done and two options were presented – outfield

reconstruction or surface rehabilitation. The BOE voted on the 'real' baseball outfield reconstruction at a cost of up to \$175,000 for the project. They decided to take some of the ARP funds that were not allocated to other items. This would be a permanent fix and they are looking at the fall for doing the project. A turf field would have cost \$1M. He also reported that a diversity equity report would be presented at the next meeting of the BOE. They are not doing CRT and it is not in the curriculum.

Ms. Santoro asked if there was any additional SPED funding from ARP or are they working with the same numbers.

Mr. Newton said that they are still working with the same funds – just waiting for them to be approved.

Ms. Santoro asked for a spreadsheet on where the funding was being spent.

Mr. Newton said that he would get that to them.

Mr. Steel asked about the audit report.

Mr. Newton said that the audit report would be made public after the Monday night meeting and then available to/for everyone.

Ms. Alberti asked if any raw data would be available.

Mr. Newton said that they have the questionnaires.

▪ **First Selectman**

Mr. Nickerson reported on the 'would be' hurricane and the serious rain storm which caused a lot of damage. They also missed a day of school. He thanked the Public Works and First Responders for their help with the storm drains and the many flooded areas and flooded basements.

▪ **Finance Director**

Ms. Johnson noted that the reports went out with the packets. She said that the undesignated fund balance was \$190,000 greater than she had previously estimated and that this was another banner year. She reported that the revenues so far, are in line with what they projected.

Ms. Alberti asked about the status of the software changeover.

Ms. Johnson said that she has been working with them and that they are looking to do the changeover to Munis for July 1, 2022. Covid put them behind. She said that they are going over the processes that we have and what we are looking at – the new system will keep everyone updated. The payroll and HR components and utility billing are next up. Once everything is set up and established they will go into training the end users.

Ms. Cicchiello asked if this new software covers only the Town or the Town and BOE.

Ms. Johnson said that she would have to discuss that with Ms. Stevens as it would make sense.

F. New Business

a. Special Appropriation – \$133,553 American Rescue Plan Funds

▪ **\$54,638 Ledge Light Health District**

Mr. Nickerson noted that LLHD is not getting any ARP funding so they asked each Town that they cover to donate 1% of their budget so the \$54,638 is exactly 1%. He said that Steve Mansfield is getting on board with hiring specific people to help carry them through.

Ms. Alberti asked if the clinic vehicle was being repurposed.

Mr. Nickerson said yes.

Ms. Alberti asked about all of the extra people being hired and how the positions would be supported when the dollars are no longer there. Also, how would that affect our per capita fees on the taxpayers.

Mr. Nickerson said that he would not think that our fees would be burdened as they tend to shed those people that are not necessary.

▪ **\$25,000 East Lyme Giving Garden**

Ms. Alberti noted the letter that she had received and provided them with from the EL Giving Garden Board of Directors. (Copy attached to Minutes)

Ms. Santoro asked about the partnership with the United Way that they have.

Mr. Nickerson said that they are growing as much food as they possibly can. They may be tied in with United Way but are with Shoreline Food Pantry which goes to many Towns. He noted that the initial amount was \$15,000 but the BOS bumped it up to \$25,000 as this is a much needed item.

Mr. Birmingham asked about the back-up water supply and if they would need permission to tie in to the sewer.

Mr. Nickerson said that they are on the line and there is a whole host of things that can happen – they do have water there now and these are future items.

Mr. DeRosa said that he agrees that this is a wonderful project and asked if they have an idea of how much food they are producing and what the dollar amount/semantics of it would be.

Mr. Nickerson said that it was significant and that they are also doing a fall planting.

▪ **\$8,965 SECT Council of Governments**

Mr. Nickerson said that they are asking for 1% that would help cover the period of 7/1/21 – 6/30/22. They are like LLHD in that they are not eligible for any ARP funding on their own.

▪ **\$12,500 Save the River/Save the Hills**

Mr. Nickerson said that the pump out boat is very important to the health of the river. They do have some state grants that will cover 75% of the new boat and the rest they are asking us to fund 50% of \$25,000 or \$12,500 and Waterford will fund the same.

Ms. Alberti said that she was confused with the numbers.

Mr. Nickerson said that the increase in the boat price was coming from other sources that they have and that he has a verbal agreement with them on this.

▪ **\$7,500 East Lyme Town Clerk**

Karen Galbo, Town Clerk noted the project that she did last year putting the land records on line. With this funding she wants to put more on line.

Ms. Cicchiello asked how far back this \$7500 would allow them to go.

Ms. Galbo said that she does not know but they are now at 1959 and their records go back to 1839.

Ms. Alberti asked Ms. Galbo if she would have an estimate by mid-October with respect to how much it would cost to put everything on line.

Ms. Galbo said that she thought so.

Mr. Steel asked about the rolling shelves.

Ms. Galbo said that those would not qualify for the funding.

▪ **\$13,950 American Legion**

Mr. Nickerson noted that Mr. Yuhas was there earlier. They serve as public outreach and they are in need of a boiler.

Ms. Alberti asked if this could be categorized as lost revenue.

Mr. Nickerson said no – it is a volunteer organization and we are supporting their enterprise

▪ **\$9,000 VFW**

Mr. Nickerson said that this is for impact aid so they can go out and do what they have been doing in the community.

▪ **\$2,000 New London Homeless Hospitality Center**

Mr. Nickerson said that they are our homeless shelter and this is a request to continue the on-going support of the whole community.

Ms. Alberti asked if there were any general questions – and then asked Mr. Nickerson about the 'book of plans' that he had said he had and if they would see it.

Mr. Nickerson said that they had knocked down a considerable amount from the list and that he would have more for them in October. There would not be any in November as they will wait for the next administration.

Ms. Alberti called for action on the items they had just discussed but suggested holding the Town Clerk's \$7500 until October when they have one contract amount to do the whole project instead of potentially two (2) separate contracts.

Ms. Cicchiello agreed that it would be reasonable to wait.

Mr. Nickerson noted that it would be understood that it would be scratched here without prejudice.

****MOTION (2)**

Ms. Cicchiello moved to approve a special appropriation in the amount of \$126,053 for the following items with the source of funds being American Rescue Funds:

- **\$54,638 Ledge Light Health District**
- **\$25,000 East Lyme Giving Garden**
- **\$8,965 SECT Council of Governments**
- **\$12,500 Save the River/Save the Hills**
- **\$13,950 American Legion**
- **\$9,000 VFW**
- **\$2,000 New London Homeless Hospitality Center**

Mr. Steel seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

(Town Meeting Approval Required)

b. Executive Session – Personnel Matters

****MOTION (3)**

Ms. Cicchiello moved to enter Executive Session at 8:32 PM to discuss personnel matters inviting Mr. Nickerson and Ms. Johnson to join them.

Mr. Steel seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

****MOTION (4)**

Ms. Alberti moved to return to Regular Session at 8:54 PM with no action taken in Executive Session.

Ms. Santoro seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 -0. Motion passed.

c. Special Appropriation - \$7,500 from Contingency – Human Resources

Ms. Alberti called for a motion.

****MOTION (5)**

Ms. Cicchiello moved to approve a special appropriation and transfer in the amount of \$7,505 from account #01-01-120-200-500 (Contingency) to account #01-01-106-100-211 (HR Manager).

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

G. Old Business

There was none.

H. Public Discussion

There was none.

I. Board Comments

Ms. Alberti called for any Board Comments.

Ms. Santoro said that she was glad that they had moved through more ARP appropriations. She added that she hopes that next month they will meet in person as the other Boards and Commissions do.

J. 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 9:04 PM

Mr. Steel seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Zmitruk,
Recording Secretary

East Lyme Giving Garden
4 Church Lane, East Lyme CT

September 6, 2021

Dear Board of Finance Members,

Due to a long standing schedule commitment of our East Lyme Giving Garden (ELGG) Board Retreat, we will be unable to attend the BOF meeting this Wednesday, 9/8 where a \$25,000 portion of ARP funding to be allocated to the Garden will be considered for your approval. We could not realize our many future plans without this vital source of funding. Although our short term plan requires over \$40,000 of funding, the ARP award will go a very long way to making this a reality.

Attached are details of our intentions on how we plan to use the ARP funding if awarded. Feel free to contact any member of the Board with questions.

Please accept our sincere regrets in not showing our support in person. Thank you SO much for your generosity.

With Gratitude,

ELGG Board of Directors

John Holtz, President
Liz Farley, Director of Farming
Bruce Cohen, Operations Director
Lindsay Rush, Secretary
Lisa Picarazzi, Treasurer

East Lyme Giving Garden
4 Church Lane, East Lyme CT

September 7, 2021

Dear Board of Finance Members,

The East Lyme Giving Garden (ELGG) was founded in early 2020 and recently received 501(c)3 status. During our first season, ELGG grew at the historic Samuel Smith House in East Lyme, which donated 20 raised beds for our use. All produce grown was donated to the Shoreline Food Pantry in Niantic, CT.

The Giving Garden has grown into a four-acre field owned by the Flanders Baptist and Community Church at 4 Church Lane in East Lyme, CT. This plot is more centrally located in town which allows for better community visibility and a significant increase in the amount of food potentially grown. For the 2021 season, twelve (12) rows (110' long) are being farmed. Crops grown include broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, bush/pole beans, cucumber, carrots, beets, potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, and zucchini.

With the planned increase in crop yield, we are currently in partnership with the United Way for donation of produce. United Way served over 3 million meals in New London County and has partnered with us to coordinate the specific need of fresh vegetables in the communities they serve. To date in 2021, over 3000 lbs of produce have been donated to the United Way by ELGG, which results in over 4,000 meals.

All the food grown will be donated to fight local food insecurity. East Lyme has an 8.7% food insecurity rate. Greater New London County has seen a 50% increase in food insecurity during the pandemic, to over 47,000 people. The CT Food Bank estimates 1 in 4 children in New London will face hunger this year.

The garden is organized and run exclusively by volunteers. With our expansion, ELGG has formed a five-person board of directors, which includes a president, treasurer, secretary, director of operations and a director of garden management. We also have an expanded management committee, which includes garden co-managers along with a safety officer. External volunteer support is an integral part of our garden. Groups who have donated their time include the Niantic Lions Club, Shoreline East Lyme Leos Club (high school students), the East Lyme Rotary Interact Club (high school students), East Lyme Girl Scouts (elementary students), East Lyme Daisy Troop (elementary students), and the Boy Scouts (middle and high school students). Our social media sites have a modest but growing audience (300+ followers on Instagram and 600+ on Facebook), which indicates strong community support for the garden project. With our more visible new location in town, we expect that our presence in the community will continue to grow.

Many of our volunteers are experienced gardeners, but we have also attracted novices who receive on the site training from our staff. We intend to expand this education effort in years two and three as we obtain the experience to understand the volunteer and staffing needs of our education efforts.

The growth of the garden in 2021 has only been possible because of extensive support from the community, manpower and fundraising. Sustainable CT sponsored two matched fundraising drives, which each raised \$15,000. The Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut (implementing the Neighbors for Neighbors Fund) awarded us a \$6,000 grant. The Connecticut Society for Women Environmental Professionals (SWEPE) awarded us a \$2,000 grant. Board member and in-kind donations total over \$20,000. That has allowed the garden to build the infrastructure necessary, including growing materials (seeds, row cover, weed mat, trellises), electricity, water conserving drip irrigation lines, an office shed, and a water pump shed.

Future needs of the growing mission are focused on components to efficiently grow food over longer time periods and support our volunteers. The educational mission will require a tool shed to store the equipment we will provide to novice gardeners, and a shelter to conduct classes and demonstrations, and this pavilion should also become the focus of a community gathering spot where Scouts, middle and high school students, and senior citizens come to learn and share their knowledge with the community. The needs for both of those missions include:

- 1. \$10,000 Equipment shed**
An equipment shed that is lockable is needed to securely store tools, as we are currently using a soft cover zipped storage system on loan from a garden member.
- 2. \$15,000 High tunnel**
A high tunnel will allow us to extend our growing season into the late fall / early winter and early spring periods when outdoor ground is unusable. This will let us continue to make food donations beyond our current capabilities. We will also be able to grow seedlings in the high tunnel, as this year we outsourced much of our seedling raising.
- 3. \$7,000 Pavilion (stage 1 of building)**
Long term goals of the garden include formal educational outreach events to youth and adults in town, on a range of topics including ecology, gardening, and healthy diets. A pavilion on-site would provide a more structured place with seats and weather protection during those events.
- 4. \$10,000 Tools**
Garden tools would enable efficiently scaling up from our current rows being farmed, to grow food more efficiently for donation. Most volunteers do not come with their own equipment and so additional basic tools like seeders, hand tools, hoes, rakes, shovels, wheelbarrows, buckets, and washing equipment would be beneficial. Power equipment such as mowers and weed whackers would also be very helpful.

5. **\$5,000 Backup water supply**

The Garden is currently irrigated through an on-site well which is powered by an electric pump. Should an extensive power outage prevail, the garden could be in serious jeopardy. Future plans include an emergency tie-in to the town water supply.

With Much Gratitude,

ELGG Board of Directors

John Holtz, *President*

Liz Farley, *Director of Garden Management*

Lisa Picarazzi, *Treasurer*

Bruce Cohen, *Director of Operations*

Lindsay Rush, *Secretary*