

**Board of Finance January 10th, 2024,
Regular Meeting Minutes**

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Minutes of Board of Finance January 10th, 2024, Regular Meeting - 01/10/24

Date and time: 01/10/24 5:30 PM to: 01/10/24 6:25 PM

Present: Brooke Stevens, Rec Secretary (* Ms. Stevens was not in attendance), Denise Hall, Chairperson, Jay Ginsberg, Richard Steel, Lauren McNamara, John T. Birmingham, Absent:, Paul Maxfield

CC: Kevin Gervais, Finance Director, Dan Cunningham, First Selectman

Location: East Lyme Town Hall, Upper Conf. Room, 108 Pennsylvania Avenue
Niantic, CT, 06357.

Link: <https://app.meetingking.com/meetings/409619>

Topics

1. Call Meeting to Order & Pledge

Note Ms. Hall called the January 10th, 2024, Regular Meeting of the Board of Finance to order at 5:30 p.m. and led them in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Delegations

Note There were none.

3. Approval of Minutes

3-1. Regular Meeting - December 13th, 2023

Note See attached minutes.

 [BOF-December-13-2023-Regular-Meeting-Minutes.pdf](#)

Decision MOTION (1)


Mr. Birmingham moved to approve the Meeting Minutes of December 13th, 2023, as presented.

Mr. Steel seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-0-0.

3-2. Special Meeting - December 21st, 2023

Note See attached minutes.

 [BOF-December-21-2023-Special-Meeting-Minutes.pdf](#)

Decision MOTION (2)

Mr. Birmingham moved to approve the Meeting Minutes of December 21st, 2023, as presented.

Mr. Ginsberg seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-0-0.

4. . Reports

4-1. First Selectman

Note Mr. Cunningham reported on the seawall repair, PFAS in water supply, as well as data center concerns, and offered some of the following remarks:

He wants to thank the Board for their swift action in approving the repair money for the seawall.

We had another major impact last night, fortunately, the temporary wall held.

Public Works also did some additional bolstering they thought appropriate.

Eventually we are going to need to get a permanent a 100-year wall in place.

For the time being, the parking lot is secure.

As they're all aware, we detected PFAS in our water supply.

Even though the Water & Sewer budget is separate from ours, it will have an impact.

It could affect the General Fund, depending on where this goes.

We did the prudent thing; we alerted the public.

The next step is to figure out what the process is going to be for a permanent fix.

There are different modalities of ways to clean water up.

The costs are not yet known.

We want to start now and be prepared, so we can be in compliance if those levels change.

He spoke with the CEO of the water company in New London, and they are willing to help us to the extent they can.

They probably don't want to accept our water for a while, but they will continue to sell us water if we need it.

He attended the data center meeting in Waterford.

They're actually trying to build two data centers.

One may very well be visible from Niantic Bay.

It's 24-7, with high frequency noise.

There's a concern about the noise and the light.

He doesn't know what we can do to try to modify what they want to do.

But we need to be aware that it could have long-term effects on our income streams.

You can hear it two and a half miles from where it's built, which is significant.

We have a lot of things that we have to take care of in this town, we need new roofs on many buildings and adequate staffing for our emergency services.

We should take care of what we have first and look at other big projects later.

Note Mr. Cunningham and the Board briefly discussed the potential data center in Waterford.

4-2. Director of Finance

Note Mr. Gervais detailed the repairs to the McCook's seawall.

Note See attached balance sheets that were discussed.

 [Balance_Sheets_01-09-2024.pdf](#)

Note Mr. Gervais reported on various financial matters including tax collection and an ARPA update. He mentioned that Mr. Steel asked last month for an update on the sub-recipients that received funds and he's having the Town Hall Floater compile letters, do follow-ups, and hopefully we'll have that information within the next two months.

Mr. Gervais recognized the staff of the Tax Collector's Office, noted that tax collections are on target, and will be putting on a tax sale; we have 23 properties that have the potential to be sold, 2 properties have been paid off so far, so there's 21 remaining.

He added that hopefully we can collect the \$300,000 due in back taxes, which would make a tax sale unnecessary.

Note Mr. Gervais also recognized the Assessor's Office, who just finalized the motor vehicle list, which is around \$45.8 million, and they're expecting to bring in \$600,000 for motor vehicle supplemental.

Note Mr. Gervais detailed the Munis implementation, noting it's a robust accounting system that is going to affect most of the offices in Town Hall.

Note Mr. Gervais gave a financial statement update and explained that they're wrapping up the 2022 audit and will start the 2023 audit once it's completed.

Note Mr. Gervais briefly discussed the need for a Coastal Resiliency Fund, his plan to establish a fund and include it in the budget.

Note Mr. Gervais also discussed the challenges with fire department staffing and overtime, and the plan to hire additional full-time and part-time firefighters. He provided clarification on the relationship between the fire department and ambulance services.

Note Mr. Gervais mentioned some of the following budget items:

Some departments are having challenges with postage.

We have a \$20,000 postage budget and the majority of that is Pitney Bowes.

Mistakenly the entire line was sent to Pitney Bowes, which leaves nothing for Fed Ex or the like.

The balance will remain with Pitney and will be utilized as needed and next month they'll be requesting a transfer from the legal advertising line in the amount of \$1,000, to non-Pitney postage.

They'll also be requesting some amounts for part-time clerical, to cover the costs associated with running the video equipment for their meetings.

One big ticket item is for the curator at Brookside Farm.

We budgeted \$6,000 for that and Brookside Farm budgeted \$25,000 for the curator.

Now that a curator has been selected, we have to transfer the funds from the salary contingency line.

They have some salary adjustments to make and are keeping a close eye on the fire departments.

He did an analysis of the fire department.

It could be as bad as \$100,000 with the overtime and the part-time, and they're trying to hire six new fire fighters to wrangle in that overtime.

Note Mr. Gervais and the Board further discussed the coverage for the fire departments and concluded that a visual aid to illustrate department overtime and problem areas would be helpful for the budgetary process.

Note Mr. Gervais and Mr. Cunningham discussed their hope to negotiate a contract that is acceptable to the firefighters, and for the two fire fighter departments to work together.

Note Mr. Ginsberg wondered if it would be advantageous to contract with an ambulance service and Mr. Gervais discussed how that would be an expensive proposition. Mr. Gervais detailed the current setup of the Ambulance Association.

Note See attached budget vs actual report that was discussed.

 [Budget vs. Actual General Fund 01-09-2024.pdf](#)

5. New Business

Note There was none.

6. Unfinished Business

6-1. Annual Finance Calendar

Note The Board briefly discussed the Annual Finance Calendar and Ms. Hall noted it will be helpful to get the dates for their budget meetings.

Task Mr. Gervais said he will distribute the current draft of their Finance Calendar.

Owned by *Kevin Gervais, Finance Director* due 01/10/24

7. Public Discussion

Note There was none.

8. Board Comments

Note Mr. Steel said he would like to thank Alex for her assistance running the camera and recording equipment for their meetings, and Ms. Stevens for increasing the content for the recent set of meeting minutes.

9. Adjournment

Decision MOTION (3)

Mr. Birmingham moved to adjourn the BOF January 10th, 2024, Regular Meeting at 6:25 p.m.

Ms. McNamara seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-0-0.

Note Respectfully Submitted,
Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary

Task Summary

New Tasks

Task Mr. Gervais said he will distribute the current draft of their Finance Calendar.

Owned by Kevin Gervais, Finance Director due 01/10/24