

BOF November 13th, 2024
Hybrid Meeting Minutes

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Minutes of Board of Finance November 13th, 2024, Hybrid Meeting - 11/13/24

Date and time: 11/13/24 5:30 PM to: 11/13/24 6:18 PM

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

CC: Kevin Gervais, Finance Director, Christine Dixon, Tax Collector, Absent:, Dan Cunningham, First Selectman

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

Topics


1. Call Meeting to Order & Pledge

Note Chair Hall called the November 13th, 2024, Hybrid Meeting of the Board of Finance to order at 5:33 p.m. and led them in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

2-1. October 9th, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Note see attached minutes.

 [BOF-October-9-2024-Minutes-2.pdf](#)

Decision MOTION (1)

Mr. Maxfield moved to approve the Meeting Minutes of October 9th, 2024, as submitted.

Mr. Birmingham seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

3. Delegations

Note There were none.

4. Reports

4-1. First Selectman

Note Ms. Hall mentioned that Mr. Cunningham could not be present at tonight's meeting. The town is receiving recognition for acquiring the Oswegatchie Hills property, demonstrating its dedication to conservation and open spaces. Mr. Cunningham is at the Kate Theatre in Old Saybrook, receiving the award on the town's behalf.

Note Mr. Cunningham informed Ms. Hall that the topics he intended to address are included in the Finance Director's report.

4-2. Finance Director

Note Various reports and updates were provided by Mr. Gervais, including updates on town hall activities, IT staffing, MUNIS implementation, and union contract negotiations. He shared and discussed the following with the Board:

Note a. Town Hall Updates-

Non-affiliated description of benefits discussions started last week.

Discussions have started with the aim to finalize in time for the upcoming budget season.

The Capital Improvement Committee inaugural meeting is scheduled for November 14, 2024.

The Committee aims to create a current and long-term capital projects list, with collaboration from multiple boards.

b. IT Staffing Update-

Jason Finnegan has been hired as an IT Engineer who will be focusing on Public Safety. He will be transitioning from Dispatch to IT sometime in the next two weeks.

c. MUNIS Implementation-

Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, and General Billing have been implemented.

Payroll implementation has been delayed; they're awaiting on a response from the vendor.

The town is exploring streamlining HR and payroll functions.

d. Union Contract Negotiations-

UPSEU union contract negotiations are starting soon.

The current contract expires on June 30th, 2025.

e. Pension & Payroll Issues-

Consultation with a tax attorney is ongoing to resolve these issues.

Police officers were incorrectly taxed on health insurance premiums and pension contributions.

Their aim is to resolve the tax and pension contribution issues for the police officers.

Discussions with Fiducian, the investment advisor, are ongoing to streamline employee pension fund offerings.

f. Tide Radio System Discussion-

The town is considering whether to maintain its current radio system or adopt the state system for better communication.

g. Fire Service & Overtime-

The Fire Department is experiencing high overtime due to numerous brush fires.

h. Dominion Building-

Mr. Cunningham is meeting with Dominion Building representatives regarding Brownfield action items.

i. Budget Discussions-

Discussions are ongoing to manage budgets effectively.

Departments are facing budget constraints and need to manage creatively.

Efforts are being made to create efficiencies and synergies with the library.

The library is concerned about a large budget increase; an 11% increase is expected.

Park & Rec dealing with staffing challenges for property maintenance.

j. Coastal Resiliency Fund & OPEB Trust-

These issues have not been addressed yet and require attention.

k. Audit & Financial Statement Updates-

Work is ongoing to finalize financial statements and prepare for audits.

The town is working on finalizing financial statements for 2023 and planning for future audits.

l. Capital Improvement & Financial Planning-

Efforts are being made to increase cash capital and reduce reliance on debt.

The town needs to increase cash capital to reduce debt service.

Madison sets aside \$5.5 million annually, while East Lyme sets aside 10% of that.

m. Time & Attendance Software-

Exploration of new software options is underway.

Current software is sunseting, and alternatives are being explored.

n. ARPA Fund Allocation & Usage-

The ARPA funds have been largely allocated, but there are concerns about the compatibility of purchased

equipment and the need to fully encumber remaining funds by the end of the year.
The remaining ARPA funds need to be fully encumbered by December 31st, or they will be used to offset revenues.
\$5,463,000 allocated, \$4,997,892 spent, \$238,000 in encumbrances, \$426,000 left to spend.
The town purchased Harris Radios for \$466,000, which were incompatible with the state system, leading to a need for firmware updates
\$466,000 set aside for radios, \$1,000 spent on incompatible radios.
There is ongoing work to upgrade the radio system, but it is currently piecemealed.
Significant funds were allocated to water and sewer projects.
\$775,000 for a pump station upgrade, \$600,000 for a water tank painting, nearly \$1 million for other upgrades.

o. Grant Status & Fund Management-
A neglected cemetery grant in the amount of \$1,000 was fully expended.
Two early voting grants totaling \$10,000 were fully expended.
Two grants from the TVCCA for aging and social services were mentioned.

5. New Business

5-1. Discussion and Possible Action – Tax Collector – Suspense List

Note see attachment.

 [Tax Collector Suspense List 11-06-2024.pdf](#)

Note The Tax Collector presented the annual suspense list for businesses and individuals with uncollectible taxes from 2020 to 2022, totaling \$37,955.53.

Note Ms. Dixon detailed the process for managing the suspense list and explained that the list includes out-of-business entities, deceased individuals, bankruptcies, and undeliverable mail.

Decision MOTION (2)

Mr. Maxfield moved to accept the tax suspension list in the amount of \$37,955.53.
Mr. Birmingham seconded the motion.
Motion carried, 6-0-0.

6. Old Business

6-1. Discussion and Possible Action – Capital Improvement Committee –Public Representative

Note Mr. Steel detailed Barry Sheckley's experience both with the Board of Education and the Charter Revision Commission.

Decision MOTION (3)

Mr. Steel moved to appoint Barry Sheckley of 21 Compass Court as the Public Representative for the Capital Improvement Committee.
Mr. McAllister seconded the motion.
Motion carried, 6-0-0.

7. Public Discussion

Note There was none.

8. Board Comments

Note Mr. Maxfield referenced the ARPA Funds, and the radios purchased that didn't work noting that he and Mr. Steel were bot part of the ARPA Funds Committee. He said it would have been nice to know that the radios didn't work out. The Board briefly discussed how there is a need for transparency and assurance that nonprofits and businesses used the ARPA funds appropriately. They will look into ensuring that the ARPA funds were used appropriately.

9. Adjournment

Decision MOTION (4)

Mr. Maxfield moved to adjourn the BOF November 13th, 2024, Hybrid Meeting at 6:18 p.m.

Ms. McNamara seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

Note Respectfully Submitted,
Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary