

**TOWN OF SALEM
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2019 – 7:00 P.M.
SALEM TOWN OFFICE BUILDING**

PRESENT

William “Skip” Dickson, Chairman
Deborah Cadwell
Janet Griggs
John Houchin
Hernan Salas

ABSENT

Marshall Collins, Clerk
Corinne (Cory) Bourgeois, Alternate
Maryann Casciano, Alternate
Michael Jensen, Alternate

ALSO PRESENT

First Selectman Kevin Lyden

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Dickson called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS: *none*

SEAT ALTERNATE IF NEEDED: *none*

COMMUNICATIONS: *none*

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: *none*

AGENDA:

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: JUNE 13, 2019, REGULAR MEETING

M/S/C: Griggs/Houchin, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of June 13, 2019.

Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

2. TREASURER’S REPORTS

A. REVENUE SUMMARY

B. TRIAL BALANCE

C. FUND BALANCE

D. OTHER

Treasurer Pam Henry reviewed the *Balance Sheet* and *Budget vs. Actual* Reports with the Board, stating that there were no unusual occurrences. The Pequot/Mohegan Funds (Line Item 420000-009) have been received in full and approximately \$3,000.00 was received from the Department of Emergency for 2016 (Line Item 4-097 – Miscellaneous). No additional Educational Cost Sharing (ECS) funds were received. A better sense of the final amount for FY2018/19 will be presented in the near future. In response to Board Member Houchin, the movement of any funds from/to the Town’s Unassigned Fund Balance to balance the FY2019/20 Budget will be indicated on the report for accounting purposes.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS: *none*

4. SELECTMAN'S REPORT

First Selectman Lyden reported on a very spirited discussion at last night's Board of Selectmen Special Meeting regarding the issues at the State-owned Gardner Lake State Park. He recited the letter that was sent to the Town's News & Announcements Subscribers and the accompanying letter that was sent to the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) Commissioner Katie Dykes regarding the severe overcrowding at the Park. The suggested actions are supported by both State Senator Paul Formica and State Representative Holly Cheeseman. The lack of enforcement of the boating rules and severe overcrowding has led to numerous safety issues and concerns. In an attempt to remedy some of the issues, the Zoning Enforcement Officer has spoken with the resident located on Old Colchester Road regarding the use of the property to accommodate the overflow of parking for a fee; the property owner has agreed to cease the practice. The Town will also be mailing a survey to those residing on Lakeview Avenue to gauge their interest in instituting a "No Parking/Tow Away Zone" from June 15 to September 15. In addition, he has requested that the Gardner Lake Authority (GLA) send a letter stating their concerns regarding the boating activities and water quality issues to CT DEEP. The alcohol-related issues have greatly diminished since its ban from the Park two years ago. He emphasized the importance of controlling the overcrowding, clarifying the rules, and engaging in proactive solutions to avoid the occurrence of any unfortunate incidents. In response to Board Member Salas, First Selectman Lyden stated that water testing is conducted by the State and is paid for by the GLA. In response to Board Member Houchin, he stated that the Town does not and will not be receiving any of funds received from the towing of vehicles.

A letter regarding the receipt of a Member Equity Check for approximately \$9,660.00 from the Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency (CIRMA) was received. The funds will be deposited into the Town's General Fund.

He attended a very nice Salem School eighth grade graduation last month and expressed his pride in all of the children.

Per the Town Charter, the additional appropriation of \$100,000.00 to the Board of Education (BOE) was approved at a recent Town Meeting. The amount was reduced by \$10,000.00 after verification by the Town's CPA.

A very nice meeting and luncheon, hosted by the Salem Volunteer Fire Company and the Witch Meadow Campground, was held for the Salem Seniors.

He, along with Head Librarian Vicky Coffin, have met with the County's Census Bureau Representative to discuss the importance of the Report, which determines the amount of funding they will receive. A notice will be placed in the next issue of *Our Town Salem* to remind the residents to respond to their mailing. He will be requesting that the Census Takers stick a magnetic sign to identify their vehicles when they visit the residents.

The audit of the Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company (GLVFCO) finances has been completed. He encouraged the Board to review their findings for discussion at their next meeting. He also requested that the Board review the Town's 17-year old agreement with the Fire Company for possible revision(s). He commended Selectman Ron LaBonte and the Fire Marshal team, comprised of Fire Marshal Donald Bourdeau, Jr., and Deputy Fire Marshals Mike Bednarz and John Cunningham, who are continuing to work together with the GLVFCO's Board of Directors, Salem Volunteer Fire Company, and the Fire Marshal team. They are currently in negotiations with the two full-time Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) and the Union as well as the part-time employees regarding an acceptable solution to ensure their compliance with the Federal Labor Laws. The current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will also be revised and updated. In response to Board Member Houchin, the effect and funding for the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) for Firefighters, which was recently passed by the Legislators, has not yet been discussed. Board Member Cadwell stated that there are free programs available and First Selectman Lyden stated that CIRMA is reviewing the item.

5. FIRST SELECTMAN TRANSFER REQUESTS

The First Selectman stated that additional transfers to cover the \$32,000.00 deficit for the Resident State Troopers will be requested next month.

M/S/C: Cadwell/Griggs, to approve the transfer of the following funds:

<u>From Line Item</u>	<u>To Line Item</u>	
5-100-201, Selectman, Membership Fees	5-810-830, Unanticipated Expenses	\$ 170.00
5-138-802, Employee Benefits, Medical/Dental/Life Insurance	5-126-208, Town Counsel, Town Issues	\$ 6,000.00
5-138-802, Employee Benefits, Medical/Dental/Life Insurance	5-157-822, Regional Services, Adult Education	\$ 160.00

Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

6. MANAGING STATE REVENUE UPDATES

Due to the expected State revenue reductions, the Board discussed the future of the Town's budget and various methods to deal with and approach the situation, including raising taxes, investigating particular areas in which the Town could save funds, and cutting the funding for all of the departments. Discussion included working cooperatively with the residents and the Boards of Education and Selectmen to begin strategizing and planning for the future.

Board Member Houchin reported that Board of Education (BOE) Chairman Sean Reith stated at the Town Meeting that they are currently in discussions with East Lyme regarding sharing resources, including the possibility of sharing a Superintendent. He stated the need for the BOE to find efficiencies, including the possibility of engaging in team teaching. He felt that the public should be educated on the services in which the government, including the School, provides.

Board Member Griggs added that the BOE's Future Needs Committee was also exploring the possibility of sharing Superintendents last year. She strongly felt that the Board should hold a Town Meeting in an effort to inform the public regarding the extent of the cuts, explain how their funds are being expended, and engage in a discussion regarding the situation and possible solutions. Most of the residents, she felt, are unaware of the effects of the State's cuts to the Town. She suggested the possibility of receiving comments virtually from the public during the meeting. Another point of discussion should include the dichotomy of the declining cost of educating a regular education student versus the rising cost of educating a special education student and the providing of services versus taxes. She felt that the Board's job is to engage in the least detrimental alternative, which would involve balancing the needs of the Town. She also urged the Board to review David Bingham's statistical analysis of the demographics of various towns and the impact of the State's current formula on a town like Salem that cannot be compared to those towns that have been deemed, similarly, wealthy. She felt that they should utilize the data to draft a letter to their Legislators for consideration as the State re-formulates the manner in which the Educational Cost Sharing (ECS) Funding is calculated.

Chairman Dickson added that, based upon their FY2019/20 Budget Public Hearing, it was clear that many were either uninformed or misinformed. The Board is not opposed to having a good school and providing a quality education, but the question is how to do it as economically as possible. He felt that all of the departments will need to engage in creative solutions, make budgetary adjustments, and find ways in which they could do more with less. The importance of having a balanced group of individuals to attend the meeting and provide input was discussed.

Board Member Salas personally felt, and Board Member Cadwell agreed, that the job of the Board is to make taxes as low as possible. Board Member Cadwell questioned whether those programs, which the BOE proposed to cut and which incited the passion of the parents, were actually cut and their resulting impact. Their job is to listen to all of the groups and gauge the wishes of the majority, not of those who are the loudest or the most passionate. Board Member Salas suggested the possibility of working backwards, i.e., determining their total budget (revenues), then determining the funding for each of the departments, rather than requesting that each department present them with a budget. Any department requiring additional funding could present their case to them. To this end, Chairman Dickson proposed the possibility of creating a ten-year plan based upon the numbers indicated in a chart reflecting each department's trend over the past ten years. Board Member Salas volunteered to work with a partner to create a budget for discussion.

OLD BUSINESS: *none*

ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C: Houchin/Salas, to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by: Agnes T. Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Salem