

**TOWN OF SALEM
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.
SALEM TOWN OFFICE BUILDING**

PRESENT

William “Skip” Dickson, Chairman

Marshall Collins, Clerk

Corinne (Cory) Bourgeois

Deborah Cadwell

John Bernier, Alternate (*seated*)

Maryann Casciano, Alternate (*seated*)

ABSENT

Janet Griggs

Hernan Salas

Michael Jensen, Alternate

ALSO PRESENT

First Selectman Kevin Lyden

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Dickson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS: *none*

SEAT ALTERNATE IF NEEDED:

M/S/C: Collins/Cadwell, to seat Board Members Bernier and Casciano for Board Members Griggs and Salas. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.

COMMUNICATIONS:

1. A copy of a letter of resignation from Alternate Board Member Michael Jensen.
2. A copy of an e-mail from Salem Republican Town Committee Chairman Vernon Smith endorsing Dean Wojcik to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Alternate Board Member Jensen.

ALTERATIONS TO THE AGENDA: *none*

AGENDA:

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: FEBRUARY 13, 2020 REGULAR MEETING

M/S/C: Cadwell/Bourgeois, to approve the Board of Finance Regular Meeting Minutes of February 13, 2020. Discussion: Clerk Collins requested, and First Selectman Lyden agreed, to provide a summary of the In-Kind Services provided by the Town to the Fire Companies. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS: *none*

3. ACT ON PROPOSED APPROPRIATIONS FOR 2020-2021

A. #158 LIBRARY

Library Board of Directors Chairperson Sue Butler presented the budget request for Department #158 – Library, with an increase of \$1,075.00 or 2.93%, due to the inclusion of the replacement for two (2) additional computers, which are part of the Library’s five-year

replacement plan, and an increase in the cost of periodical subscriptions and Bibliomation services. She also reported that Library Director Vicky Coffin was able to secure the receipt of a print magnifying machine, free of charge, through the Connecticut Library Association.

M/S/C: Collins/Cadwell, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$37,725.00 for Department #158 – Library, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 19, 2020 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

B. #600 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)

EDC Chairman Ed Chmielewski presented the budget request for Department #600 – Economic Development Commission, with a decrease of \$85.00 or 5%. He reviewed the Commission’s FY2019/20 accomplishments: *Business and Services Directory*, which was subsidized by the revenue received from the selling of ads and identifies over 100 businesses located in the Town of Salem, and the *Surprising Salem Visitors Guide*. The Commission continues to support the Town’s local businesses and serve as the ambassadors for the Town in an effort to bring in new businesses.

In response to Clerk Collins, First Selectman stated that the revenue received from the selling of advertisements for the Directory was deposited into the Grant Fund and earmarked for the Economic Development Mailer, per the Auditor’s suggestion. Per Clerk Collins’ request, the revenue generated by each of the departments will be indicated in their respective budgets.

M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$1,615.00 for Department #600 – Economic Development Commission, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 19, 2020 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

C. #610 INLAND WETLANDS AND CONSERVATION COMMISSION

First Selectman Lyden presented the budget request for Department #610 – Inland Wetlands and Conservation Commission, with a flat budget. He explained that the GIS Expense (Line Item 5-610-523) is a constant expense that is divided between the Planning & Zoning Commission and Assessor’s Departments.

M/S/C: Collins/Bernier, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$3,200.00 for Department #610 – Inland Wetlands and Conservation Commission, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 19, 2020 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

D. #630 PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

Planning & Zoning Commission Chairman Vernon Smith presented the budget request for Department #630 – Planning & Zoning Commission, with a \$400.00 or 2.76% increase, due to the allocation of additional funds for preliminary work on the updates to the Town’s 2022 Planning of Conservation and Development. In response to Board Member Bourgeois,

Planning & Zoning Commission Chairman Smith stated that the \$10,000.00 for Line Item 5-630-224, Legal Services, is a placeholder.

M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$14,900.00 for Department #630 – Planning & Zoning Commission, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 19, 2020 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

E. #640 ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

First Selectman Lyden presented the budget request for Department #640 – Zoning Board of Appeals, with a flat budget. He explained that, because the Department’s budget is so small, any additional legal expenses are paid for out of the Selectmen’s budget. Board Member Bernier stated the need to ensure that the cost of the legal notices is included in the fees so as to offset those costs.

M/S/C: Collins/Cadwell, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$800.00 for Department #640 – Zoning Board of Appeals, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 19, 2020 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

F. #710 MUNICIPAL INSURANCE

First Selectman Lyden presented the budget request for Department #710 – Municipal Insurance, with an increase of \$4,944.00 or 3.97%. He reported on the receipt of a notification yesterday stating that the increase will be 3%. As such, he wished to reduce the request to 3%.

M/S/C: Collins/Bernier, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$126,972.00 for Department #710 – Municipal Insurance, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 19, 2020 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

G. #810 UNANTICIPATED EXPENSES

First Selectman Lyden presented the budget request for Department #810 – Unanticipated Expenses, with a flat budget. The funds are utilized for such items as the purchase of flowers to the families for those who have passed.

M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$1,000.00 for Department #810 – Unanticipated Expenses, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 19, 2020 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

H. #935 REVALUATION

First Selectman Lyden presented the budget request for Department #935 – Revaluation, with an increase of \$102,000.00, based on preliminary estimates. Two revaluations are conducted: a statistical revaluation, which is conducted every five years, and a full revaluation, which is conducted every ten years and is scheduled for the next fiscal year. Competitive, comparable bids will be received.

M/S/C: Collins/Bernier, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$102,000.00 for Department #935 – Revaluation, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 19, 2020 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

Clerk Collins reminded the Board that, under Section 10.12(G) of the Town Charter:

Except as otherwise provided by the Board of Finance, any portion of an appropriation remaining unexpended and unencumbered at the close of the fiscal year shall lapse.

All funds that have not been expended shall be returned to the Town’s General Fund. This does not include Capital expenses.

Clerk Collins suggested, and the Board agreed, to hear the Emergency Services Subcommittee’s findings prior to hearing the Fire Companies and Ambulance Departments’ budget requests.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT – EMERGENCY SERVICES

Board Member Bourgeois reported that she and Board Member Casciano met with the Fire Companies and reviewed their findings (*see file copy*). In an effort to maintain transparency, their report was also sent to both of the Fire Companies and the First Selectman for review and comments.

Department #220, Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company (GLVFCO)

Equipment – includes the Tanker, Engine, 127 Forestry Trucks, and Pump Hand Tool.

Training – each of the fire companies handle their own training

Hydro Testing – The GLVFCO handles the testing of the hoses for both fire companies.

Department #230, Ambulance

Because the Ambulance Department encompasses equipment, insurance, maintenance and repairs, and EMT uniforms related to, not only the ambulance, but also rescue services, Board Member Bourgeois proposed the possibility of changing the name of the department to Rescue Services.

Insurance – 51% of the insurance line item is for vehicles and includes vehicles that are not specifically for the ambulance.

Repair/Maintenance of Equipment – Like insurance, this line item also includes the repair and maintenance of equipment that is not specifically for the ambulance.

Department #222, Salem Volunteer Fire Company (SVFCO)

Contractual Services – This line item includes the same items as the GLVFCO’s Professional Fees.

Insurance – All of the vehicles are necessary as each serves a different function.

Department #230, Ambulance

The Ambulance Department maintains their own in-house budget under its own Tax I.D. number. Their in-house budget includes the maintenance of the defibrillators that are located throughout the Town and medical supplies to the SVFCO.

Comparable Analysis

A Comparable Analysis for each of the departments, including the Resident State Troopers and Board of Education, was created based upon the FY2018/19 actuals. The per person, i.e., per capita, cost for each of these services were determined as follows:

Department	FY2018/19 Actual Cost	FY2018/19 per Citizen Cost
GLVFCO	\$ 204,540	\$ 48.70
SVFCO	\$ 228,049	\$ 54.30
Fire Marshals	\$ 24,890	\$ 5.93
Ambulance	\$ 131,368	\$ 31.28
Public Safety	\$ 63,949.00	\$ 15.23
Resident State Troopers	\$ 295,891	\$ 70.45
Board of Education	\$ 10,376,941.00	\$ 2,470.70

A side-by-side comparison of the Fire Companies' FY2019/20 budgets was also provided.

Next Steps

The Subcommittee plans to continue to work with the Fire Companies to gather additional information to help them better understand such items as the allocation of supplies, grants, training and Capital requests; obtain information from the fire companies of comparable towns; review the financial records of the Ambulance accounts (*not* to take the place of any audits), and; to understand the roles and responsibilities of the Fire Marshals and how each of these departments work together.

First Selectman Lyden commended both the Board and the Subcommittee on their hard work and efforts and stated that the Town is very fortunate to have their volunteers. Due to the declining state of volunteerism, the requirement for increased training, need for increased commitment, and continued growth of expenses for labor, pensions, and insurance, it is important to look for efficiencies within their budget, reviewing and eliminating any redundancies, and ensure that their funds are properly managed. What has worked in the past is no longer sustainable.

Clerk Collins also commended the Subcommittee's hard work and efforts. He expressed his reservations regarding the obtaining of information concerning the training and operations of the fire companies of comparable towns. The Board's role and responsibility is limited to the fiscal (funding) aspect of each of the departments and to ensure that those funds are being appropriately allocated and expended. In response, Board Member Bourgeois confirmed that they are seeking information regarding their financials. Their goal is to utilize the information as a tool as they strive to create a more efficient and effective department(s). In such case, Clerk Collins agreed, adding that, relative to other comparable-sized towns, the Fire Companies' Capital Plan expenditures of nearly \$2.8 million over the next 10 years, seems excessive. In addition, according to his understanding of the Firefighters Union's statements, the State is expected to cut the towns' funding for training.

First Selectman Lyden reminded the Board that, while their purview is financial, they could also make any operational recommendations to the Board of Selectman, per the Town Charter.

Clerk Collins was pleased that the Subcommittee shared some of the same concerns as the Auditors regarding the need for a cost allocation plan, clarifying what is and what is not allowed under the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding), and the importance of maintaining transparency. He reminded the Board of their unanimous vote for the GLVFCO's Ambulance Division to implement some of the June 4, 2019 O'Connor Davies Audit recommendations in an effort to help them prepare the Town's FY2020/21. He added the importance of receiving the necessary information upon which to base their decisions, as recognized by the Auditor.

Extensive discussion ensued regarding the 1992 Ordinance in which the departments entered into an agreement with the Town for the provision of fire services; 1993 Agreement between the Town and SVFCO; 2003 MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) regarding the Ambulance Funds, and; the 2006 Annual Agreement regarding the annual funding of the GLVFCO by the Town. GLVFCO Board of Directors (BOD) President Cheryl Philopena stated that the 2006 Agreement continues to be valid until the Agreement is revised. While the Town may request audits of their records, the Board must understand that the ambulance funds are not public funds and referred to *The Black's Law Dictionary's* definition of public funds as "money that is used by the government to provide goods and services to the public in general. This money has been generated by the government." The funds in question, she stated, are paid to GLVFCO Ambulance, a private corporation, by private individuals. She also referred to a letter, dated February 13, 2002, from Attorney Edward B.

O'Connell stating that the Town has no right to the funds or the way in which the funds are expended. She clarified that the 2003 Agreement was a five-year agreement while the 2006 Agreement is enforced annually and remains valid. She also informed the Board of the existence of an unsigned MOU. The GLVFCO BOD is agreeable to the Town's review of their finances, but added that they are not obligated to comply with any of the recommendations derived from an audit. Should the Town require their compliance, a valid explanation as to how the funds are public must be provided. GLVFCO BOD Treasurer Christine Lindo stated that their annual budget is currently \$104,000.00, \$30,000.00 of which is allocated towards a new ambulance. The balance of the funds is allocated for supplies and operations. To date, they have raised \$200,000.00 for a new ambulance and \$45,000.00 for additional equipment.

Clerk Collins stated that, prior to making any final action on the budget, he would like to review the agreement between the Town and the Fire Company.

First Selectman Lyden provided and recited the Agreement, dated February 6, 2006, as well as the acceptance and agreement by the then-Board of Selectmen in March 2003 regarding the auditing of their books and records and use of funds, per Attorney O'Connell letter, dated February 13, 2003. GLVFCO BOD President Philopena added that the then-Town Attorney John Butts reviewed and agreed with the contents of the letter, which also states that, while municipalities are authorized to provide municipal ambulance services, the service is neither transformed into a municipal entity nor are the funds received by the private individuals utilizing their services transformed into public funds. Furthermore, the Town's allocation of funds to the Fire Company does not change their status as a charitable corporation. She reiterated their willingness to work together to resolve the issues and

reminded them that, while the Town may review and audit their books and records, they are not legally obligated to fulfill any of their recommendations. In response, Clerk Collins recited Chapter X, Section 10.02(B), Budget Preparation, of the Town Charter, which states that:

“ At such time as the Board of Finance shall direct, budgets for all other General Government functions of the Town supported *wholly or in part* by Town funds,...shall be prepared by the appropriate officials and submitted to the Board of Finance with a detailed estimate of the expenditures to be made and the anticipated revenue other than tax revenue to be received during the ensuing fiscal year. These functions include the...Fire Companies (Gardner Lake and Salem), Ambulance,...”

And, per the Town Charter, the Board unanimously voted to direct the GLVFCO's Ambulance Division to the comply with specific recommendations included in the June 4, 2019 O'Connor Davies Audit, which would enable the Board to determine their funding. In response, GLVFCO BOD President Philopena clarified that the Town Charter is only referring to Departments 220 (GLVFCO) and 230 (Ambulance) and not their private funds. As such, she disagreed and reiterated their opposition to fulfilling the audit recommendations.

First Selectman Lyden reiterated that, because the Town does provide funding, the Board has a right to request and review their information and it is the responsibility of the Board to allocate funds to the Ambulance Department based upon that information. He added that the Town funds the salaries for two (2) full-time Firefighter/EMT's (Emergency Management Technicians), gas for their vehicles, electricity, heat, and telephone system. The Department is unique in that it receives a revenue independent of the Town. In response, GLVFCO BOD President Philopena stated that the Ambulance's private funds have a deficit of \$25,000.00 as they have been paying the salaries for the weekend shifts since September 2019 because the Town has not been paying them and has refused to discuss the matter. Furthermore, she reiterated that the funding for a new ambulance, supplies, and equipment derive wholly from their revenues, which is not guaranteed and is currently \$9,000.00 below its projected amount due to lack of payment for the services they have provided to individuals.

Chairman Dickson stated that the Board's issues revolve around the funding that is provided to the Fire Companies and the Ambulance and how the funds and items within those funds are allocated in an effort to seek for efficiencies.

Board Member Bourgeois suggested the possibility of drafting a long-term service agreement between the Ambulance and the Town such that the Town pays for the service and the Ambulance becomes an entirely separate entity from the Town.

Clerk Collins stated that the generally accepted and suggested practice for non-profit corporations is to maintain a six-month operating reserve. Their current accounts total \$98,629.00, in addition to the \$201,000.00 in the ambulance reserve, and their FY2020/21 proposed budget request is \$46,000.00. If their operating budget for 2018 was \$56,000.00, the six-month reserve is \$28,000.00. Given these numbers, he questioned their need for such a high reserve. In response, GLVFCO BOD President Philopena stated that those funds are necessary for any unexpected expenses, such as the malfunction and replacement of equipment.

Board Member Casciano stated that the Board is seeking transparency and clarity. Questions regarding their allocation of items and funds remain and while it is their responsibility to fund the Ambulance, it is difficult to comfortably do so without any supporting documentation validating the expenses. In response, GLVFCO BOD President Philopena offered to separate those items that are related to the Ambulance and the Fire Company, which, it was noted, is one of the audit recommendations. Board Member Casciano expressed her appreciation to all of the volunteers, but questioned whether any discussions have taken place regarding the possibility of hiring an independent ambulance company for these services. GLVFCO BOD President Philopena stated that the cost of hiring an independent ambulance company would not be financially feasible and it would not be guaranteed that an ambulance would be readily available within the Town at the time of an emergency.

I. #222 SALEM VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY (SVFCO)

SVFCO Chief Gene Maiorano presented the budget request for Department #222 – Salem Volunteer Fire Company, with an increase of \$1,000.00 or 1.06%. SVFCO Chief Maiorano provided the following responses to the Board's questions regarding the following line items:

Line Item 5-222-218, Contractual (Professional) Services, was increased by \$700.00 or 20% due to a request by their insurance company to conduct background checks annually. The line item is the same as GLVFCO's Line Item 5-220-215, Professional Services; he is agreeable to changing the name of the line item.

Line Item 5-222-222, Physicals – Physicals are conducted by L&M (Lawrence & Memorial) Hospital, which ensures that all of the required physicals are conducted fairly and equally. The funds allocated to the line item may vary from year to year, depending upon an individual's need and/or the ages of the firefighters, as younger firefighters are required to have a physical less often than older individuals. While the cost per physical is dependent upon the individual and his/her personal health, the cost is, on average, \$500.00.

Line Item 5-222-518, Training – EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Training is conducted independently of GLVFCO. The cost for the training of new members is \$1,200.00 to \$1,400.00 per person for Firefighters. All new members whose training is paid for by the Fire Company must sign a contract stating that he/she will remain an active member for a minimum of one-year after completing the training. The member is, otherwise, required to reimburse the Fire Company for his/her training costs. Most of the training is conducted in-house at the Town's Training Building, while other classes, e.g., EMT Refresher course and Q License classes, are hosted elsewhere. The line item also includes any necessary training props and materials. State Instructors are also paid to provide courses at the Firehouse. There are currently 30 members, 20 to 22 of whom are active. He added that he has proposed the possibility of updating the Town's incentive plan for firefighters to the First Selectman. The revision would raise the incentive to \$1,500.00 for those who respond to 22% or more of the Town's calls.

Line Item 5-222-618, Repairs/Maintenance of Vehicles – The previously discussed \$6,000.00 ladder for the valve was repaired the previous year and is currently in working condition. As such, the item has been excluded from their budget request.

Line Item 5-222-619, Testing – All ladder testings are provided by NETS (National Engineering and Testing Services), Inc., Providence, RI, and SCBA (Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus) flow testing, extinguishers, and air compressors (for both Fire Companies) are tested by Shipman's Fire Equipment. The increase of \$700.00 in this line item is due to the increase in price for the service and maintenance of the air compressors.

Line Item 5-222-622, Radio Repair – The Fire Company's radios are serviced by J&S Radio Sales, Inc., Willimantic, CT. The company also services GLVFCO's radios.

Clerk Collins suggested, and the Board agreed, to make a motion on the appropriation of funds to the SVFCO after hearing from the GLVFCO and Ambulance Departments.

J. #230 AMBULANCE

Prior to the budget presentation for the Ambulance Department GLVFCO BOD Treasurer Christine Lindo clarified that \$30,000.00 of the \$99,000.00 of discretionary funds is earmarked for the future purchase of the new ambulance and is transferred annually in March/April. In addition, they have a deficit of \$9,000.00, resulting in a very tight budget for this fiscal year. In response to Clerk Collins who stated that the Balance Sheet that was submitted on February 6 does not reflect their income, GLVFCO BOD Treasurer Lindo agreed to provide the Board with their revenues.

GLVFCO Chief James Savalle commended and thanked Board Member Bourgeois for discussing the budget with him and expressed his willingness to continue their discussions and answer any additional questions she might have. He presented the budget request for Department #230 – Ambulance, with a decrease of \$5.00 or 0.01%. Per Board Member Griggs' request, the budget sheet includes two (2) notes:

Note 1 refers to Line Item 5-230-531 and is an itemized list of the Ambulance Division's VFIS (Volunteer Firemen's Insurance Service, Inc.)

Note 2 refers to Line Item 5-230-624, Repair/Maintenance of Equipment, and is an itemized list of the vehicles. He is open to either renaming the line item and/or discuss the possibility of moving some of the vehicles into Department 220, Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company.

He continued to review their budget, line-by-line, noting that Line Item 5-230-419, Office Supplies, may be deleted as those items have been moved to Line Item 5-230-519, Training.

Discussion ensued regarding the training costs (Line Item 5-230-519, Training). In response to Clerk Collins who questioned the zero amount indicated for training in a previously submitted document and the proposed amount of \$9,890.00 in their proposed budget, GLVFCO Deputy Chief Training Officer Joseph Danao stated that the only cost associated with their training are for State-certified courses; the zero amount indicates the cost of their

collective, inter-, or intra-department training events. Unless an individual(s) does not take part in the training and must be sent elsewhere, the cost would be maintained at a zero amount. It was decided to do their training for live burns in Colchester due to additional funds in their account; the cost was divided between themselves and Oakdale. Oftentimes the training costs are waived for various reasons, including in-kind services or trading of training costs. There are currently 25 members, approximately 15 of whom are active. A number of their members are cross-trained as an EMT, Firefighter, and Fire Police. One of the problems they have encountered is an aging staff as well as an age gap between the 32 and 55 year age range.

Referring to the Auditor's report, Clerk Collins questioned where the expenses for Accounting EMS (\$5,775.00) and EMS Bookkeeper (\$5,000.00) are reflected in their Ambulance budget. In response, GLVFCO Chief Savalle stated that those numbers are reflected in the GLVFCO Ambulance Division's in-house budget, which has been provided to the Board; the in-house budget is based upon revenues received from their services to individuals and does not include any Town funds.

K. #220 GARDNER LAKE VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY (GLVFCO)

GLVFCO Chief Savalle presented and provided a line-by-line explanation of the budget for Department #220 – Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company (GLVFCO), which has a decrease of \$10.00 or 0.01%.

Line Item 5-220-017, Equipment – Note 2 provides an itemized list of the maintenance and repair of equipment and vehicles the line item funds.

Line Item 5-220-214, Physicals – Physicals are conducted by Hartford Healthcare Occupational Safety & Health. Like the SVFCO, the funds allocated to the line item may vary from year to year, depending upon the member's need(s), health, and/or the age. This line item also includes the physicals for the Ambulance members. Similar to the SVFCO, the approximate cost of a physical per member is \$400.00 - \$500.00.

Line Item 5-220-215, Professional (Contractual) Fees – Like the SVFCO Chief Maiorano, he is also agreeable to renaming the line item to maintain consistency. A controlled server, providing privacy protections, per HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act), is maintained at the Fire Company. The Fire Company utilizes Yucatech, Inc. for its IT services. Clerk Collins recommended noting that "Legal" under the Explanation of Services/Expenses be clarified as being related to HIPAA Compliance so as to avoid any confusion with other legal matters.

Line Item 5-220-436, Chief's Account – Dues/subscriptions included in this line item are memberships to the New London County Fire Chiefs and NFPA (National Fire Protection Association). The same dues/subscriptions are included for the SVFCO. The line item also includes the mileage costs for any meetings or training classes he is required to attend. Miscellaneous expenses include flowers for those who have passed.

Line Item 5-220-528, Insurance – Note 1 provides an itemized list of the items that are covered under this line item.

Line Item 5-220-620, Hydro Testing – GLVFCO Chief Savalle requested the name be amended, deleting the word “Hydro”, to coincide with that of SVFCO. The requested amount is higher than their previous years’ actuals due to the age of their equipment. Testing for the SCBA, cascade, Scott Pack, and meter testing is conducted by Shipman’s Fire Equipment. The Hirsch tools, pumps, and hoses are tested by Firematic Supply Company and their fire hose is tested by Fail Safe Testing. Ladder Testing is conducted by Top Rung Inspection & Testing, Old Lyme, CT.

Line Item 5-220-626, Tanker Pumper – The removal of this line item was requested.

Extensive discussion ensued regarding the following line items for the two Fire Companies:

Radio Repair (Line Items 5-222-622 and 5-220-621) – The same company is utilized for this service

Training (Line Items 5-222-518 and 5-220-504) – This item is problematic. It has been recommended that the Fire Companies consolidate their training as a way to, not only ensure that the members are receiving uniform training, but also for any potential cost savings.

Testing (Line Items 5-222-619 and 5-220-620)

Physicals (Line Items 5-222-222 and 5-220-214) – The possibility of having their physicals conducted by the same healthcare system and the possible cost savings was discussed. It was noted by GLVFCO Chief Savalle that, though they are conducted by different healthcare systems, they are both conducted under the same NFPA standards. It was also noted by Board Members Bernier, Bourgeois and Dickson that the cost was, relatively, the same.

Contractual Services/Professional Fees (Line Items 5-222-218 and 5-220-215) – It was clarified that, contrary to that of GLVFCO, the SVFCO does not have any IT costs. Any issues that arise at SVFCO are handled by one of their members. Computer backup costs refer to the annual fees for their off-site/cloud backup system.

Clerk Collins proposed the possibility of consolidating and transferring the following line items to Department #240, Public Safety Department, as recommended by the Consultants, with the same allocation of funds in an effort to achieve some cost efficiencies:

Radio Repair (Line Items 5-222-622 and 5-220-621)

Training (Line Items 5-222-518 and 5-220-504)

Testing (Line Items 5-222-619 and 5-220-620)

Clerk Collins clarified that he is not interested in the operational side of the training, but felt that their training should be consolidated and handled jointly. He added that a town with a population of 4,200 with two volunteer fire companies is an anomaly and is unsustainable with respect to the recruitment of volunteers, the obtaining of grants, and the funding of Capital items.

GLVFCO Chief Savalle explained that they have been candid, upfront and transparent with their budgets and are willing to cooperate with them, but are not in favor moving the items to the Public Safety Department, making them beholden to the Fire Marshal. Furthermore, they have participated in and conducted training sessions at the burn house and are open to training together with the SVFCO. SFVCO Chief Maiorano stated that the members of the SFVCO spent countless hours and energy creating the burn house and added his refusal to answer to the Fire Marshal, who works under the Fire Chiefs. Furthermore, he felt that the Gardner Lake Ambulance, which does a good job, should be its own association and the two Fire Departments should be consolidated, thereby resolving some of these issues. Board Member Casciano added that bringing the two fire companies together would also help them recruit more people as the division between the two fire companies does not reflect positively upon the Town. The question is how to go about doing so. GLVFCO Chief Savalle reiterated their willingness to train together, but stated his opposition to joining the two fire companies together. GLVFCO is a 501(c)3 corporation since 1956 and the Ambulance is not a division, but is a part of the Fire Company, itself. SVFCO Deputy Chief Chip Weston clarified that the training costs in question are those in which individuals are sent out of town to train for specific certifications; these costs are fixed and the same for each individual. As such, joining the training line item would not result in any cost savings.

Because it appears that, based upon this evening's discussions, there would be no substantial change in the budgets of the two Fire Companies, Chairman Dickson suggested they act upon the proposed budgets and revisit them at a later date.

M/S/C: Bernier/Cadwell, to delete Line Item 5-220-626, Tanker Pumper; rename Line Item 5-220-620 from Hydro Testing to Testing, and; approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$79,432.00 for Department #220 – Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Department, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance's March 19, 2020 Regular Meeting. Discussion: Board Member Bernier noted that the proposed budgets for the two Fire Companies and Ambulance departments are, relatively, flat. He also felt that, because the departments are receiving funds from the public, the Town does have a right to know and understand the expenditure of their respective funds. Voice vote, 4-1-1. Voting in Favor: Board Members Bernier, Bourgeois, Casciano, and Dickson. Voting in Opposition: Board Member Collins. Voting in Abstention: Board Member Cadwell.

M/S/C: Bernier/Bourgeois, to amend Line Item 5-222-218 from Contractual Services to Professional Fees and to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$95,225.00 for Department #222 – Salem Fire Department, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance's March 19, Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-1-1. Voting in Favor: Board Members Bernier, Bourgeois, Casciano, and Dickson. Voting in Opposition: Board Member Collins. Voting in Abstention: Board Member Cadwell.

M/S/C: Bernier/Bourgeois, to remove Line Item 5-230- 419, Office Supplies, and to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$46,507.00 for Department #230 – Ambulance, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 19, Regular Meeting. Discussion: In order to ensure that the Department receives adequate funding, Clerk Collins stated that, due to their lack of transparency and lack of requested information, it is difficult for him to simply provide them with the funds they are requesting. It is not, he clarified, the amount that they are requesting alone that he questions, but the amount they are requesting with respect to their reserve accounts, which he felt is significantly excessive and should be reduced. The Auditors, similarly, expressed their issues regarding the handling of their accounts receivables and recommended that a policy be instituted. Board Member Bourgeois felt that their budget includes their rescue equipment, which, if not funded, would result in a huge liability to the Town. Board Member Bernier expressed his struggle with the private/public funding aspect of the Ambulance Division and is not questioning the requested amount, but questioned their ability to review and include their “private funds” in their decision. The Department’s transparency or lack thereof was briefly discussed. Board Member Casciano felt that the Board of Selectmen should renegotiate the current MOU, which would aid the Board in properly funding them. The Board agreed with the need to discuss their budget further. Voice vote, 4-1-1. Voting in Favor: Board Members Bernier, Bourgeois, Casciano, and Dickson. Voting in Opposition: Board Member Collins. Voting in Abstention: Board Member Cadwell.

4. DISCUSSION REGARDING DEDICATION FOR ANNUAL REPORT

The dedication and accompanying photograph will be submitted to the First Selectman’s office.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. BOE – *no updates; no report*

B. EMERGENCY SERVICES – *see page 4*

OLD BUSINESS:

The agreements between the Town and the Fire Companies regard will be sent to the Board Members.

ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C: Casciano/Collins, to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

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