

**TOWN OF SALEM
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.
SALEM TOWN OFFICE BUILDING, VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM**

Per State of Connecticut, Governor Lamont Executive Order Number 7B, the Town of Salem Board of Finance Regular Meeting on September 10, 2020 will be following the suspension of in-person open meeting requirements. Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://zoom.us/j/97248253038?pwd=NDVaM0FYTEI4NTZjVnFNYVkvRUV3dz09>

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PRESENT

William “Skip” Dickson, Chairman
Marshall Collins, Clerk
Corinne (Cory) Bourgeois
Deborah Cadwell
Janet Griggs
Hernan Salas
John Bernier, Alternate
Maryann Casciano, Alternate

ABSENT

Dean Wojcik, Alternate

CALL TO ORDER:

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

SEAT ALTERNATE IF NEEDED: *none*

COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Copy of a letter from the Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company (GLVFCO), dated September 4, 2020
2. Copy of a letter from the GLVFCO, dated October 5, 2020
3. Copy of an e-mail from Clerk Collins in response to the September 4, 2020 GLVFCO communication
4. Copy of a letter from Salem School District Superintendent Joseph Onofrio II
5. Copy of an e-mail from a resident in response to the Board of Finance’s September meeting

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: *none*

AGENDA:

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: SEPTEMBER 10, 2020 REGULAR MEETING

M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to approve the Board of Finance September 10, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

2. TREASURER'S REPORTS

A. REVENUE SUMMARY

B. TRIAL BALANCE

C. FUND BALANCE

D. OTHER

In response to Board Member Casciano who questioned the tuition for the out-of-town students, Board Member Griggs stated that the tuition rate was set, but no students have taken advantage of the opportunity due to the cost and no revenue has been received.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

E-mail Public Comments to financepubliccomment@salemct.gov or place in the dropbox located by the entrance to Town Hall prior to 7:10 p.m.

No comments were received via e-mail or in the dropbox were received as of 7:10 p.m.

4. SELECTMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Dickson recited the First Selectman's report.

The Salem Volunteer Fire Company (SFVCO) elected long-time member Chip Weston as their Chief, replacing Chief Gene Maiorano, who recently stepped down, but will remain as an active member. The town is very fortunate to have Chief Weston and all of the paid and volunteer emergency responders serving the town.

As a result of the efforts of the Planning & Zoning Commission to develop a clear and concise regulation, the Commission received plans for the proposed construction of a 48-unit age-restricted development on private property. The Commission will hold a public hearing regarding the development at the end of November. No financial incentives will be given to the developer.

The Food Pantry has been providing weekly food deliveries to many Salem families since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Those in need of food assistance are encouraged to contact the First Selectman's office at (860) 859-3873. The town expresses their appreciation to the SFVCO, Public Works Department, and the volunteers who make the weekly food pantry possible.

Improvements have been made by the owners to the plaza located at 1 New London Road. Multiple violations led the town to the issuance of a Cease and Desist Order on the property and, as a result of the ongoing conditions, the town's Public Works Department was tasked with performing several maintenance tasks. The cost of these tasks will be funded by a lien that was placed on the property.

After nine (9) years of service, Superintendent Joseph Onofrio, II, has announced his retirement, effective August 15, 2021. A consistently competent leader of the Salem School District, the town wishes him the very best.

The Town of Salem now has 23 positive COVID-19 cases. Everyone is encouraged to continue practicing the recommended safety protocols, including physical distancing and the wearing of masks in public environments.

5. CAPITAL PLAN DISCUSSION

A. Send letter to all Departments to review their Capital item requests and submit the requests with documentation before the December Board of Finance Meeting

The letter, with the appropriate dates updated, will be sent to the different departments.

B. Other discussion items regarding the Capital Plan

Chairman Dickson reported that changes to the Capital Plan include the costs of the Library HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning) system and the receipt of the STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) Grant for the fuel tanks. A copy of the most recent Capital Plan will be sent to the board members for review.

6. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Fire Safety Subcommittee (Board Members Bourgeois and Casciano) – *no report*

In response to the letter received by the GLVFCO that alleged the Board's retaliation against the Fire Company, Clerk Collins clarified and stated, for the record, that there is no retaliation taking place by the Board. He referenced the Town Charter and the meeting minutes indicating the unanimous approval of and reasoning behind the Board's motion. Chairman Dickson concurred. Board Member Griggs further clarified the importance of noting that they are speaking on behalf of the Board of Finance only.

BOE Subcommittee (Board Members Cadwell and Griggs) – Board Member Griggs provided a brief overview of the BOE's recent meetings:

- The Superintendent and Director of Student Services have submitted their letters of resignation.
- Some of the new hires to replace the teachers who took advantage of the early retirement incentive plan were at a higher level than anticipated, resulting in a higher cost. Nevertheless, a cost savings was gained.
- BOE Member Sam Rindell, who will be moving to the Town of East Lyme, has submitted his resignation.
- They are investigating the possibility of reducing their trash removal fees that have increased by 3%.
- The Public Works Director is investigating the reasoning behind the lack of connecting the new and old boiler/cooling systems during the most recent addition to the school.
- Electricity costs have been wavering. As the result they are investigating other providers.
- The hot water heater was unexpectedly replaced.

- In an effort to identify and improve the budgeting process, the BOE will be identifying the pattern between donor funds and those funds that are either over-/under-budgeted.
- The Director of Special Services has enrolled Salem in a five-year IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) Pilot Project to revise the software, ensuring that the town would be accommodated accordingly. Funding for the software will be provided by the state.
- Two SPED (Special Education) lawsuits that may financially affect the town were introduced. While one of the lawsuits does not appear to be an issue, the other would change the timing of the receipt of services of a SPED student from the end of the school year to his/her 22nd birthday. An estimated cost was submitted by the Director of Student Services to the BOE.
- The water treatment analysis was completed.
- The East Lyme School District paid their non-12-month employees \$150,000.00 for hours worked outside of their contract. The administrative staff is full-time.
- The lunch aides, who must be present in all classrooms during lunchtime, are not covered by external funding sources. Bus monitors have been phased out, with the exception of two (2) buses with specific issues.
- A movement of funds to the Director of Special Services was made from the Support Staff line item to balance the budget. It was clarified that she did not receive a salary increase. Rather, the funding source was adjusted.
- \$21,419.32 of the \$30,301.45 allocated to fund the non-full-time staff overtime was expended.
- Uncas Health District Director of Health Patrick McCormack endorsed the school's proposed running club. The formation of the club will require a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from the Teachers' Union.

Clerk Collins added that the Connecticut Council of Municipalities' (CCM) Education Policy Committee is considering possible legislation to provide local municipalities with the option to approve line item transfers totaling over \$5,000.00. He also questioned whether the annual salary indicated in the letter of appointment to the Assistant Principal includes the salary increase that was provided to him one to two months after his hiring date.

Board Member Casciano inquired about whether any financial information was provided regarding the non-certified Union contract. Board Member Griggs stated that, because the discussion was held during Executive Session, she was not privy to that information, but has requested a summary from the Superintendent stating the terms of the agreement.

OLD BUSINESS – none

ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C: Collins/Cadwell, to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 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