

**TOWN OF SALEM
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2021 – 7:00 P.M.
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM**

Per State of Connecticut, Governor Lamont Executive Order Number 7B, the meeting followed the suspension of in-person open meeting requirements. The public may view this meeting at:

<https://zoom.us/j/99043211850?pwd=Vitkc0N2c29TUHI5eUJWd1BpM1JmUT09>

Password: 772263

Or Via Telephone:

(312) 626-6799, (646) 558-8656, (346) 248-7799, (669) 900-9128, (253) 215-8782, (301) 715-8592

Webinar ID: 990 4321 1850 | **Password:** 772263

PRESENT

William “Skip” Dickson, Chairman
Marshall Collins, Clerk
Corinne (Cory) Bourgeois
Deborah Cadwell
Maryann Casciano
Janet Grigg
John Bernier, Alternate
Joseph Duncan, Alternate

ABSENT

Dean Wojcik, Alternate

ALSO PRESENT

First Selectman Kevin Lyden

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Dickson called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS: *none*

SEAT ALTERNATE IF NEEDED: *none*

COMMUNICATIONS: *none*

ALTERATIONS TO THE AGENDA: *none*

AGENDA:

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: MARCH 4, 2021 REGULAR MEETING

M/S/C: Collins/Griggs, to approve the Board of Finance March 4, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes, with the following amendments:

Page 4, final paragraph, 1st sentence:

The primary increases for Out of District Services include extended programs, vocational~~al~~ school, and special education services.

Page 9, Discussion for Motion, 1st sentence:

Discussion: Board Member Griggs...felt that the BOE would have difficulty function~~ing~~ properly without the approval of their proposed budget....

Page 11, Motion:

M/S/C: Collins/Casciano, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of ~~\$11,075,000.00~~ \$11,050,886.00 for the Board of Education for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision,....

Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Dickson stated that this evening's agenda does not include discussions regarding the Board of Education (BOE) FY2021/22 budget and requested that the Board's discussions be civil and respectful.

The following submitted letters were received and recited:

Daniel P. Collins and Charleen M. Collins, 210 Beckwith Hill Drive, wrote in support of the BOE's FY2021/22 proposed budget, which, they understood, would likely result in a tax increase. They felt that there is no better investment than in the children of the community, their education, and the future of the town; the increase approved by the Board would not be sufficient to support the school and its needs and would negatively impact the students who have already been greatly affected by the pandemic. The BOE's proposed budget, they felt, should be approved for the following reasons: to meet the BOE's contractual agreements, support the school's extracurricular activities, adequately maintain the school, and purchase the students' required instructional materials and supplies. They plan to vote against the town budget should the school not be funded at the requested amount and urged the Board to reconsider their decision.

Jen Rucci, 17 Pleasant View Road, expressed her frustrations and encouraged the Board to revisit the BOE's proposed budget. She stated her disappointment with those Board Members who insinuated that the BOE and Administration were not being transparent and honest with their funds, adding that the Board's rhetoric does "not foster a sense of compromise or support." A lifelong member of the Salem community, she felt that her children were not receiving the same education and opportunities that were afforded to her because of the lack of funding and support the school has received from the town. She felt that the town offers few services beyond the school and that, while the school is the town's greatest expense, it is also its greatest asset. The staff, the children, and the parents deserve to be more than appropriately funded for their hard work and efforts over the past year; it is important to establish a structurally sound foundation to support the school and their children.

Shannon Haynes, 46 Rathbun Hill Road, expressed her support of the BOE's proposed budget. She understood that the proposed increase would likely increase their taxes, but was necessary for the reasons outlined by the Collins'. The Board's approved increase would not be sufficient to support the school and would negatively impact the students. She felt that the Board fails to recognize Superintendent Joseph Onofrio's sacrifices and commitment and requested that they research the superintendent salaries of comparable towns. She felt that the school has done an "impeccable job" supporting the mental health of the children and the working parents by remaining open throughout most of the school year. The BOE's proposed budget would allow them to keep their staff and children safe and remain open. She stated that she would vote in opposition to the town budget should the school not be fully funded, as requested, adding that the children's education is not a "slush fund". She urged them to reconsider the school budget.

Deirdre M. Ahern, 398 Old New London Road, expressed her disappointment with the Board's rejection of the BOE's proposed budget increase. The Board's approved increase is insufficient and will prohibit the school from providing a quality education. She felt that the Central Office Administration was not adequate and stated the need for the Board to recognize the importance of offering competitive salaries and working hours to attract quality candidates. She urged the Board to reconsider the BOE's proposed increase.

David Bingham, M.D., White Birch Road, expressed his support of the BOE budget, as presented, though it may result in a small tax increase. He stated his deep concern for the town's schoolchildren as a result of the recent conflicts and unexpected expenses caused by the pandemic. He felt the proposed budget was reasonable and that it would be "better to err on the side of doing a little more for the children than not enough"; any cuts could "significantly affect [the children's] self-reliance, socialization and future opportunities for bettering their lives and enriching our community." He requested that the Board support the BOE and their proposed budget and thanked the Board for their service to the town.

Tiffany Cunningham, 89 Rattlesnake Ledge Road, expressed her devastation by the Board's approval of increasing the BOE's budget by only \$75,000.00 and felt that their decision represents the Board's "complete misunderstanding of the needs of the Salem School." The BOE Budget Subcommittee carefully reviewed over 10,000 line items and the BOE Members unanimously supported the proposed budget. The Board's approved budget would result in drastic cuts to the School's programs and exclude their new physical education supplies. The East Lyme High School Reconciliation, staff salaries, bus contract, technology support, and repairs must be funded and maintained. She encouraged the Board to revisit and fully support the BOE's proposed budget. She fully supports any accompanying tax increases which, she believes, the town would be able to support while still supporting those who are struggling. As a BOE member, she pledged to continue to seek possible cost-savings.

Cameron Croteau, no address provided, expressed his dismay with the approved budget, stating that one of the biggest reasons his family relocated to the town was its school system, which, he felt, is one of the best in the State. He questioned what would draw people to Salem if the

Board did not offer its full financial support to the BOE and allow the school to continue to maintain its level of education and help increase the value of the town's properties. He asked that the board reconsider the "laughable difference" and thanked the Board for their time.

Erin Gardner-Flores, 34 Brookside Drive, wrote in support of the BOE's proposed budget though it may result in a tax increase. She felt that the approved amount would not be enough to run the school and would negatively affect the students who have already been impacted by the pandemic. Having moved their family to Salem because of the school system, she urged the Board to fully fund the school and maintain its quality for the same reasons as outlined by the Collins' and Ms. Haynes. She stated that she would vote against the town budget should the school not be fully funded.

The following public comments were made by individuals who were present at the meeting:

BOE Selectman Ex-Officio Hugh McKenney, 33 Woodland Drive, reported that, having attended most of the BOE meetings, he has witnessed their hard work, careful deliberations, and efforts to be fiscally responsible. He requested that the Board reconsider their decision to allocate only \$75,000.00 above their current budget; he felt that the motion was poor, lacked insight, and was made capriciously without any thoughtful consideration. Their home values are higher than in surrounding areas due to the quality of the school. He urged the Board to have strong discussions regarding the increases, each of which, he believed, are clearly justified. Rather than increasing taxes, he suggested the Board utilize the town's Rainy Day Fund, which has been abnormally high and must be reduced. He thanked the Board for their time and requested they do their proper due diligence.

Sue Spang, Hartford Road, a 34-year resident of the town and current BOE Member, thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak. She recited her submitted letter in which she states "the many fallacies and lack of understanding of each Board's role." She felt that the Board's "constant innuendo that the school is doing something wrong, sneaky and not transparent by doing line-item transfers is ludicrous" and compared their cross-examination of the BOE's approval to provide compensation for three administrators who worked additional hours as a result of the pandemic to their practice of approving the First Selectman's line item transfers for additional compensation and salary adjustments for town employees, without question (a list of the line item transfers made from 2018 to 2020 to and from specific line items were cited). She stated that the BOE is not obligated to request the Board's permission to expend their funds and felt that the Board's agreement to inadequately fund the school was "one of retribution and a lack of understanding of what it takes to run a school." She also commented on the long-lasting negative effects resulting from the behavior of some of the Board Members, which has created a "toxic political environment" and "demoralizing atmosphere for the teachers and the staff". Their behavior, she felt, would increase their difficulty to recruit a Superintendent and attract volunteers to serve on boards and commissions. The scare tactics being utilized by the Board as an excuse not to fund the BOE and the loss of their credibility due to one-time compensations was inappropriate and damaging.

Matt Rucci, 17 Pleasant View Road, thanked the Board for their time, voiced his support for the BOE's proposed budget, and urged the Board to do the same. While he realizes that the requested increase may raise their taxes, he was hopeful that the Board would be able to find the funds to balance the budget. Like many families, he and his wife chose to raise their family in Salem due, in large part, to the school. The school must be properly funded to ensure that their children are receiving the education they deserve. He also expressed his disappointment with the rhetoric from last week's meeting from some of the members and encouraged them to raise their level of discourse and reach a compromise despite their philosophical differences.

TJ Butcher, 248 Norwich Road, thanked the Board for their service, time, and efforts as he is aware of the energy it takes to serve on the Board and urged them to adequately fund the school. He expressed his appreciation to the Chairman who prefaced the Public Comments with a call for civility and respect. He, too, expressed his disappointment with the hostile tenor of their meetings and some of the Board Members' aggressive demeanor against those who present their budget, many of whom are volunteering their service and have worked hard to create a budget that they believe is in the best interest of the town. Their treatment of these individuals has resulted in the hesitation of many qualified citizens to volunteer and serve the town. He also expressed his disturbance by the Board's vote to increase the BOE budget by a mere 0.003%, which is essentially a zero budget. The approved amount would cripple the school and increase their struggle to cover their fixed costs and could result in a loss of the teaching staff and music and/or sports program(s); prohibit them from purchasing new computers, books, and/or software, and/or; result in increased class sizes or grouped grades. He questioned whether the Board has considered how the BOE would be able to accommodate the students with the budget they have approved. He believed that the school's current and future students are entitled to the same education their predecessors received and will not receive based on their allocated budget. He expressed his appreciation to Chairman Dickson for reciting all of the public's letters and stated his willingness to pay more in taxes. Like others, he would also vote no to the town budget should the school not be properly funded.

Michelle Williamson, New London Road, expressed her confusion as to how the Board felt that the BOE would be able to provide their staff with their contractual wage increases with the budget they have allocated and urged them to reconsider their decision.

Denise Dube, Salem Ridge Drive, an over 30-year resident of the town, stated that the children are our future and should be adequately funded. As a former employee of a school system, she is very well aware of the hard work and efforts the staff invests in the children. The excellent education her children received from the school should be passed on to the town's current and future children. She also questioned whether the Board could consider the funds that will be received from the Federal Government due to the most recent COVID-19 bill that was passed and signed by the President. Though retired, she was agreeable to the raising of the town's taxes to help fund the BOE's proposed budget increase.

Chairman Dickson thanked the public for their comments.

3. TREASURER'S REPORTS

A. REVENUE SUMMARY

B. TRIAL BALANCE

C. FUND BALANCE

D. OTHER

The Board reviewed the Treasurer's Reports for the months of February 2021, and found no unusual occurrences.

4. SELECTMAN'S REPORT

First Selectman Lyden expressed his appreciation to the town's Agent for the Elderly, Pam Henry, and the Uncas Health District Director Patrick McCormack for aiding the town's seniors in receiving their COVID-19 vaccinations. Seniors, ages 75 and over, who have reached out to the town have received their vaccinations and those who are 65 and over who have reached out to the town have either received or are scheduled to receive their vaccinations.

He thanked the many volunteers who continue to help deliver food to the 40+ families who have been negatively affected by the pandemic. The program, which has been running for nearly a year out of the Salem Volunteer Fire Company, will be soon be coming to a close and the monthly food distribution program will be revived.

After a meeting with Salem Youth Baseball League President David Donat and Recreation Commission Chairman Alan Maziarz and Member Art Bergman, it was agreed that the town will be holding its Spring Baseball/Softball season. Proper Sector Rules will be followed for outdoor events.

The Board of Selectmen has endorsed the Town-approved Resolution for the supplemental appropriation of \$115,000.00 for the fuel tank replacement at Salem School. The project is slated for the Summer and the underground tank will no longer need to be insured.

An additional question will be asked at this year's annual referendum for the appropriation of \$1,056,000.00 in bonds for the Salem School Roof/HVAC Replacement. Part of the funds is expected to be reimbursed by the receipt of State grants. Once the funding is secured, the amount will be included in the town's \$3.2 million re-funding of their current bond. Similar to the refinancing of an existing loan, the interest rate will be lowered and the time remaining on the original note (nine years) will remain the same. The project is slated for the Summer of 2022.

5. ACT ON PROPOSED APPROPRIATIONS FOR FY2021/22

A. REVENUES

First Selectman Lyden reviewed the projected revenues for each of the respective departments, which reflects an overall expected increase of \$336,123.00 or 2.19%. The revenues will be balanced against the Town Government, Debt Services, Capital, and BOE budgets.

Department #91 – General Property Taxes is based on a 98% collection rate and the current mil rate; it is estimated to increase of \$298,488.00 or 2.5%. The Grand List grew this year primarily due to the installation of the pipeline. The reasoning behind the projected amount for Line Item 1080, Refunds – Current Yr. will be investigated.

Department #92 – State/Federal Grants is projected to increase by \$53,375.00 or 12.79%.

Department #93 – State/Federal Grants for Education is projected to increase slightly by \$1,010.00 or 0.04%. The funding received for Adult Education (Line Item 4-093-036) are passed through the town to the School.

Department #94 – Licenses & Permits is expected to decrease \$5,300.00 or 3.47%. The First Selectman estimated the increase for Line Item 049, Conveyance Tax, by 10% due to the robustness of the current real estate market. Board Member Bernier suggested the possibility of further increasing the projected amount.

Department #95 – Charges for Current Services is expected to decrease by \$950.00 or 3.98%.

Department #96 – Revenue from use of Town Money is expected to decrease by \$4,000.00 or 40%.

Department #97 – Miscellaneous Revenue is projected to decrease \$6,500.00 or 19.12%. The Library is not currently issuing fines (Line Item 072, Library Fees/Fines/Bozrah) due to the pandemic.

Any additional questions regarding the revenues may be sent to the First Selectman for his responses at the next meeting. Clerk Collins added that there are many uncertainties surrounding their revenue from the State, including the recently approved funding that might be received from the Federal Government. Any additional thoughts and/or suggestions will be discussed at their next meeting.

M/S/C: Collins/Casciano, to approve the projected revenue for Department #91 – General Property Taxes in the amount of \$12,466,718.00 for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

M/S/C: Collins/Griggs, to approve the projected revenue for Department #92 – State/Federal Grants in the amount of \$470,838.00 for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

M/S/C: Collins/Casciano, to approve the projected revenue for Department #93 – State/Federal Grants for Education in the amount of \$2,528,750.00 for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of

Finance's March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

M/S/C: Collins/Casciano, to approve the projected revenue for Department #94 – Licenses & Permits in the amount of \$147,600.00 for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance's March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

M/S/C: Collins/Casciano, to approve the projected revenue for Department #95 – Charges for Current Services in the amount of \$22,900.00 for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance's March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

M/S/C: Collins/Casciano, to approve the projected revenue for Department #96 – Revenue from use of Town Money in the amount of \$6,000.00 for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance's March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

M/S/C: Collins/Griggs, to approve the projected revenue for Department #97 – Miscellaneous Revenue in the amount of \$27,500.00 for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance's March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

B. #100 SELECTMAN'S DEPARTMENT

An increase of \$90.00 or 1.20% for Department #100 – Selectman's Department is being requested due to an increase in Line Item 5-100-201, Membership Fees. The town's membership fees to CCM (Connecticut Conference of Municipalities) and seCTer (Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region) are included in a separate line item.

M/S/C: Collins/Casciano, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$7,570.00 for Department #100 – Selectman's Department for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance's March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

C. #105 SALARIES

An increase of \$103,616.00 or 8.66% for Department #105 – Salaries is being requested. The largest increases include increased funding for the Acting Selectman, Public Works Manager/Foreman, and EMT/Firefighter/Maintainer. The increase for the EMT/Firefighter/Maintainer reflects the recent hiring of a full-time employee; the line has been consistently underfunded and is somewhat unpredictable depending upon the timing of the emergency calls. Similarly, the Public Works line has been increased in preparation for the hiring of an individual who will be trained under the current Public Works Director and tasked with overseeing the town's future projects; the position would be included in the Union.

Discussion ensued regarding the need to provide emergency coverage during the weekend evening hours and the increasing difficulty with recruiting volunteers to serve as a result of the training and commitment involved in the position. The calls for service received for each of the shifts can be provided to the Board. In crafting the proposed budget, the Board of Selectmen also discussed increasing the annual stipend from \$1,000.00 to \$1,500.00 for the volunteers. The On-Call Program (Line Item 5-105-119) primarily includes those who volunteer for the Gardner Lake, rather than Salem, Volunteer Fire Company as many of the individuals, as volunteers, refused to accept the stipend. The Board agreed with the importance of ensuring that the town is adequately covered and increasing the department budget by \$30,000.00 as a placeholder while the Board Member Liaisons speak with Emergency Services Director Mike Bednarz to determine the actual amount needed to fill the weekend evening EMT/Firefighter position.

M/S/C: Collins/Griggs, to increase Line Item 5-105-121, EMT/Maintenance by \$30,000.00 and approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$1,329,665.00 for Department #105 – Salaries for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

D. #126 TOWN COUNSEL

A decrease of \$600.00 or 1.21% was proposed for Department #126 – Town Counsel. In response to Chairman Dickson, the First Selectman reported that the bulk of the lawsuit with the Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company, which involved the Federal Labor Laws and the volunteering of a paid full-time Firefighter, has been settled. He added that the 2003 Agreement with the Fire Company was too restrictive and should be open for revision so that the town could provide them with additional provisions. He was open to reducing the amount allocated to the department due to its unpredictability. The Board agreed to reduce Line Item 5-126-208, Town Issues, by \$10,000.00.

M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to decrease Line Item 5-126-208 to \$35,000.00 and approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$39,000.00 for Department #126 – Town Counsel for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

E. #134 TOWN OFFICE OPERATION

An increase of \$2,510.00 or 2.42% for Department #134 – Town Office Operation is being requested due to an increases for computer services, water treatment, and copier costs. Payroll Services was slightly decreased due to the distribution of bi-weekly vs. weekly paychecks.

M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$106,310.00 for Department #134 – Town Office Operation for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s

March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

F. #135 MUNICIPAL BUILDING MAINTENANCE

An increase of \$2,800.00 or 5.61% for Department #134 – Municipal Building Maintenance is being requested due to increases in Contracts, Maintenance, Exterminator, and Quarterly Water Testing for the Town Hall, Library, and Salem and Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Companies. Additional testing is required at the Transfer Station and Public Works Departments.

M/S/C: Collins/Griggs, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$52,700.00 for Department #135 – Municipal Building Maintenance for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance's March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

G. #138 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

An increase of \$37,893.00 or 9.56 % for Department #138 – Employee Benefits is being requested due to increases for FICA, Medicare, Insurance, and Pension. Line Items 5-138-800, FICA, and 5-138-801, Medicare, are based upon the employee salaries. One retiree will be receiving insurance benefits for approximately two years; the town has no OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits). No former employees are currently receiving Unemployment Benefits at this time. With the addition of a part-time EMT/Firefighter, per their previous discussion (Item 5(c)), the actual amounts for the FICA and Medicare lines may increase. The town offers a 457 Pension Plan that is similar to a 401K Plan. Approximately 14 individuals are currently enrolled in the town's pension plan.

In response to Board Member Griggs who questioned the possibility of reducing Line Item 5-138-802, Insurance, given the transfers that have been made since FY2019/20, as indicated in Ms. Spang's letter, First Selectman Lyden stated that he felt the funding for the line item was adequate and accommodates for the benefits for the prospective Public Works employee, the employee who is currently on medical leave, and one retiree. The line items have been reduced over the past ten years due to the transformation of some of the positions from full-to part-time and the outsourcing of other positions.

M/S/C: Collins/Griggs, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$434,410.00 for Department #138 – Employee Benefits for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance's March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

H. #140 UTILITIES

An increase of \$2,054.00 or 1.34 % for Department #140 – Utilities is being requested. The Department includes utilities for the Town Hall, old and new Libraries, Gardner Lake and

Salem Volunteer Fire Companies, Transfer Station, Public Works Department, and Recreation Fields; the budget request is based on past trends.

M/S/C: Collins/Griggs, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$155,592.00 for Department #140 – Utilities for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

I. #152 TOWN SERVICES

An increase of \$8,357.00 or 7.83% for Department #152 – Town Services is being requested. Increases include services for the Gardner Lake Authority, Senior Services, Health Services, and the ACO (Animal Control Officer) Agreement. The Gardner Lake Authority (Line Item 5-152-813) includes the towns of Bozrah (15%), Montville (25%), and Salem (65%). The Board of Selectmen reduced the Authority’s requested amount of \$14,000.00 and recommended they contact CT DEEP (Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection) regarding their funding for the police patrol as the bulk of the issues derive from the boat launch area. It is questionable as to whether this year’s Memorial Day Parade and Event (Line Item 5-152-815) will be held; if held, it is expected to be a very small service and event. Line Item 5-152-812, Seniors Services includes transportation for medical appointments and the subsidizing of senior lunches at *Two Brothers Restaurant*.

M/S/C: Collins/Casciano, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$115,050.00 for Department #152 – Town Services for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

J. #157 REGIONAL SERVICES

An increase of \$334.00 or 2.81 % for Department #157 – Regional Services is being requested to accommodate the increase in Adult Education, which is reimbursed by the State and is passed through the town to the BOE.

M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$12,203.00 for Department #157 – Regional Services for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

K. #240 PUBLIC SAFETY

An increase of \$4,850.00 or 3.92 % for Department #240 – Public Safety is being requested. Reflected in the proposed amount includes increases for Communication Equipment, Fire Marshal Expenses, Alarm Maintenance for all town-owned buildings, and Gear for the full-time Firefighter/EMTs and decreases for 911 Emergency and On-Call Nominal Fees. The First Selectman was agreeable to reducing the proposed funding for Line Item 5-240-960, Gear – FF/EMT, from \$19,850.00 to \$17,850.00. It was agreed to maintain Line Item 5-240-421, Civil Preparedness, to ensure that there are adequate funds to cover any unpredictable events.

M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to reduce Line Item 5-240-960, Gear – FF/EMT, by \$2,000.000 and approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$126,650.00 for Department #240 – Public Safety for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

M. #310 PUBLIC WORKS

An increase of \$9,210.00 or 3.58 % for Department #310 – Public Works is being requested. The cost of maintaining the Public Works vehicles (Line Item 5-310-023) has been reduced due to the town’s recent purchase of a new bucket truck. However, Line Item 5-310-441, Snow Removal Expense, has been increased due to the unavailability of salt in the local area. The town annually uses approximately 65 tons of salt, which was purchased from New London for \$65.00/ton. Due to ongoing issues at the Pier, the town must now purchase salt from New Haven or Providence at a cost of \$95.00/ton. While many towns utilize salt only, the Town of Salem uses a mixture of salt and sand. He corrected the Explanation indicated for Line Item 5-310-443, Field Maintenance, stating that the \$11,000.00 for the Bingham Field/School is included in the town’s Capital Plan and should not be included in this budget.

M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$266,160.00 for Department #310 – Public Works for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

M. #410 TRANSFER STATION

An increase of \$16,958.00 or 10.52% for Department #410 – Transfer Station is being requested. While additional funding is being requested for the trash bags, the line item is offset by its revenue. A \$14,158.00 increase is being budgeted for Line Item 5-410-935, Recyclable Hauling, which has increased in cost over the years. While the town received revenue for recyclables 11 to 12 years ago, the town now pays \$40.00/ton for hauling the recyclables. Board Member Griggs noted that, due to the pandemic, many residents took the opportunity to clean their homes resulting in an increase in the sale of trash bags; the amount may decrease as the pandemic subsides.

M/S/C: Collins/Casciano, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$178,100.00 for Department #410 – Transfer Station for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

N. #925 CAPITAL RESERVE

O. #926 OPEN SPACE LAND

M/S/C: Collins/Griggs, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$1.00 each for Departments #925 – Capital Reserve and #926 – Open Space Land for FY2021/22, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the

**Board of Finance's March 18, 2021 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None.
Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**

6. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

A. BOE – *no report*

B. EMERGENCY SERVICES – *no report*

OLD BUSINESS – *none*

Clerk Collins stated his intention to propose a tax reduction based on the revenue projections, which appear to reflect that additional funds may be available. It is his hope that the amount, while nominal, would be helpful to those who have been financially impacted by the pandemic. He is opposed to a tax increase at this time for the same reason. While additional funds might be received through the Federal Government, the actual funding the town would receive is uncertain. He felt that, given the many variables, the Board has done a good job with the budget and commended the Emergency Services team and Board Member Liaisons Bourgeois and Casciano for reviewing their long-term needs. He was struck by Selectman McKenney's comment regarding his support for the use of one-time revenues to spend down the Unassigned Fund Balance to balance the budget, which he felt would be a fundamentally bad economic policy and would result in an increase in the delta between the town's revenues and expenses which would result in the residents having to pay more in the future. He also objected to his comment regarding their lack of thought and capriciousness, stating that their goal is to do what is best for *all* of the townspeople. The Board carefully reviews all of the requests and a lot of thought is given to their decisions and all ideas are evaluated. Clerk Collins expressed his appreciation to the First Selectman for the thought given to the numbers proposed for all of the departments. He reiterated his opposition to a tax increase at this time and his strong opposition to using one-time revenues to balance the budget.

In response to Board Member Casciano, Chairman Dickson stated that the status of the paving for the Salem School will be one of the items that will be discussed next week as they finalize the budget.

ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C: Collins/Casciano, to adjourn the meeting at 10:04 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