

**TOWN OF SALEM
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, AUGUST 12, 2021 – 7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT

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

ABSENT

Maryann Casciano
Joseph Duncan, Alternate
Dean Wojcik, Alternate

ALSO PRESENT

First Selectman Kevin Lyden

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Dickson called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS: *none*

SEAT ALTERNATE IF NEEDED:

M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to approve to seat Alternate Member Bernier for Full Board Member Casciano. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Clerk Collins proposed the possibility of requesting a monthly summary of all of the line-item adjustments (year-to-date), indicating the amount budgeted, expended, and adjusted from both the General Government and Board of Education. Board Member Griggs agreed, adding that such information would enable them to better track the numbers and lead to better discussions and decisions. Board Member Bourgeois concurred.

M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to request the year-to-date line-item transfers from all of the departments – General Government and Board of Education on a monthly basis. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

ALTERATIONS TO THE AGENDA: *none*

AGENDA:

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: JULY 8, 2021 REGULAR MEETING

M/S/C: Griggs/Collins, to approve the Board of Finance July 8, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes, with the following amendment:

Item 6, second paragraph, last sentence:

It is estimated that \$77,013.03 ~~77~~ of the total project will be paid by the town and \$77,986.97 will be reimbursed by the State.

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

2. TREASURER'S REPORTS

A. REVENUE SUMMARY

B. TRIAL BALANCE

C. FUND BALANCE

D. OTHER

The Board reviewed the Treasurer's Reports and did not express any questions or concerns.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS: *none*

4. SELECTMAN'S REPORT

First Selectman Lyden reported that the Town Hall and Library parking lots were sealed and will be striped. The permits for the removal of the underground oil tank and installation of the above-ground oil tank have been approved and the project will begin shortly. The project will be funded by a STEAP (Small Towns Economic Assistance Program) Grant.

The town received the first of two installments of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds in the amount of approximately \$603,000.00. Part of the funds will be utilized to upgrade the audio-visual system in the main conference room. While generators do not qualify, he will investigate the possibility of utilizing the funds to purchase and install a generator for Salem School, which also serves as the town's emergency shelter. The allocation of funds will follow the Town Charter, which states that amounts exceeding "one-fifth of one percent (0.2%) of the Town Budget shall be submitted to a Town Meeting" and those exceeding "one percent (1%) of the Town Budget shall be submitted to referendum" (Section 10.09).

He has met the new Superintendent of Schools Brian Hendrickson. Information regarding the remaining funding for the School roof has been forwarded to Business Manager Kim Gadaree.

The purchase of the large snowplow truck, which is in the town's Capital Plan, has been secured. The Freightliner truck is in stock, already painted red, and will be outfitted with the necessary equipment and available for use by November. To date, two (2) payments totaling \$132,000.00 have been allocated for the purchase and an additional \$66,000.00 was allocated for this fiscal year in the Capital Plan. The final cost of the truck is higher than expected and additional funds will be necessary to make up the difference to total \$80,000.00. The truck will be replacing a 17-year-old truck. Delivery of the new bucket truck is also expected. They have requested a trade, but should a trade not be possible, the old bucket truck will be posted for sale on Municibid.

The Zemko House has been re-roofed and the carpeting has been replaced with vinyl flooring. In addition, a new toilet has been installed in the old Center School building. Parts of the Library has also been repainted and remodeled, including the Teen Room. A new solar picnic table has also been purchased by the Library and will be installed in the near future. Much of the Library's projects were made possible through the receipt of a grant.

In response to Board Member Griggs regarding the possibility of utilizing part of the ARPA Funds to provide broadband access for low-income families, First Selectman Lyden stated that the town could consider providing funds to families-in-need to upgrade their service, adding that such families are not likely to be consolidated in certain areas of the town. He added that, because the town does not have a social services department, it might also behoove them to set aside funds for social services. Currently, funding for those in need is provided through the generous donations of residents to the town's Benevolent Fund. Discussion ensued regarding the possible need to create a 501(c)(3) for the Benevolent Fund for tax purposes or creating a Social Services Commission. Clerk Collins proposed the possibility of creating a broadband hotspot that would be beneficial for businesses and remote workers.

5. FIRST SELECTMAN TRANSFER REQUESTS

M/S/C: Cadwell/Griggs, to approve the following First Selectman's Transfer Requests for Fiscal Year 2020/21:

From: Line Item 5-105-116 – Salaries, Public Works
To: Line Item 5-105-121 – Salaries, EMT/Maintenance
Amount: \$18,000.00
Reason: To fund additional hours/shifts of the FF/EMT paid staff

From: Line Item 5-138-802 – Insurance (PHS & BC Dent)
To: Line Item 5-410-935 – Bulky Waste Hauling
Amount: \$13,000.00
Reason: Undercalculation of recycling costs (\$40/ton)

From: Line Item 5-138-802 – Insurance (PHS & BC Dent)
To: 5-135-609 – Building Maintenance
Amount: \$10,000.00
Reason: Library Gutter and Roof Repair, Center School upgrades, Quarterly Water Testing

Discussion: First Selectman Lyden stated that he expects to return approximately \$150,000.00 to the town. In response to Board Member Griggs, he stated that the funds for the re-roofing of the Zemko house was allocated

through line-item 5-135-609, Building Maintenance. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

6. EMERGENCY SERVICES AND BOE SUBCOMMITTEES

BOE (Board of Education) Subcommittee (Board Members Cadwell and Griggs)

The Board reviewed the July meeting summary provided by Board Member/BOE Liaison Griggs. She added that the BOE currently has \$20,604.47 in unexpended funds for FY2020/21. In response to Clerk Collins, she was unsure as to the exact amount of the transfer for line-item 14, which reads \$14,20.28. An explanation regarding the HVAC replacement contract was not received.

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

Clerk Collins expressed his dismay with the slow progress of the fire companies. As they are aware, fire companies nationwide are faced with increased difficulties recruiting volunteers, having adequate personnel to respond to emergencies, and a growing trend towards hiring paid Fire Fighters/EMTs. As a public safety issue, he proposed the possibility of holding a Town Meeting to pose a question in the upcoming referendum regarding whether the town should consider unified fire protection services. The leadership for such an action to take place must derive from the Board of Selectmen. As such, he proposed the following motion:

The Board of Finance immediately communicate to the Board of Selectmen a formal request that they call a Town Meeting for the purpose of putting the following question on the November 2021 election ballot:

Should the Town of Salem appoint a Public Safety Task Force to consider implementing unified fire protection services?

Board Member/Liaison Bourgeois expressed the challenges they have been encountering and agreed with Clerk Collins' proposal, but felt that the question should exclude the appointment of a Task Force, which might not be productive and result in more discussions. She proposed rephrasing the ballot question as follows:

Should the Town of Salem ~~appoint a Public Safety Task Force to~~ consider implementing unified fire protection services?

She felt strongly that the town should be able to voice their opinions regarding the direction of the town's future.

Discussion ensued regarding the need to allow the respective parties to speak, educate and provide the public with the relevant facts enabling the residents to vote intelligently. Clerk Collins felt that a formal request to the Board of Selectmen would force them to discuss the issue and move the process forward.

M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to immediately communicate to the Board of Selectmen a formal request that they call an Informational Town Meeting for the purpose of placing the following question on the November 2021 election ballot:

Should the Town of Salem consider implementing unified fire protection services?

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

OLD BUSINESS – none

ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C: Bourgeois/Collins, to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 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