

**TOWN OF SALEM
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 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 7:05 p.m.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS: *none*

SEAT ALTERNATE IF NEEDED:

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

COMMUNICATIONS:

- a. E-mail from Friends of Salem Library President Carl Narwocki regarding the Zemko building
- b. E-mail from Clerk Collins in response to Finance Specialist Lisa Jablonski
The Board discussed requesting that the supporting documents be sent to them as they are received so that they would have the time to review the information.
- c. Connecticut Council of Municipality’s Salem 2021 Equity Profile
- d. Link to information regarding the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection’s (CT DEEP) Grant for waste management improvements/modifications
- e. E-mail from Clerk Collins regarding broadband

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:

M/S/C: Griggs/Bourgeois, to add the following items to the agenda:

- 7. Zemko Building**
- 8. CT DEEP Grant Application**
- 9. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds**

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

AGENDA:

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: SEPTEMBER 9, 2021 BOARD OF FINANCE MEETING

M/S/C: Bourgeois/Marshall, to approve the September 9, 2021 Board of Finance Regular Meeting Minutes with the following amendments:

Page 3, 3rd Paragraph, 4th line from end:

~~The budgets have been combined into one department and... He also felt that their request was somewhat disrespectful to the volunteers who donate their time and energy to support the health and safety of its townspeople.~~

Add to Page 4, 2nd paragraph:

The subcommittee will be comprised of Board Members Bernier and Collins.

Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0-1. Voting in Favor: Board Members Bourgeois, Cadwell, Collins, Griggs, and Dickson. Voting in Opposition: None. Voting in Abstention: Board Member Bernier.

2. TREASURER'S REPORT – no report

A. REVENUE SUMMARY

B. TRIAL BALANCE

C. FUND BALANCE

D. OTHER

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS – none

4. SELECTMAN'S REPORT

First Selectman Lyden reported that the Uncas Health District was awarded the Jaqueline D. Owens Service to the Community Award by the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), Norwich division.

James McIntyre was recently elected as the new Chairman of the Safety Community. The Committee, which includes members of the Public Works department, Library, Town Hall, Emergency Services, and the State Trooper, meets bi-monthly to review and discuss any safety concerns and make any necessary enhancements. Due to an increase in State Police Trooper retirements, the town's night-time Resident State Trooper has been revolving over the past few years. Some savings will be gained as the newer Troopers are coming in at lower steps. There are no foreseeable savings in retirement costs. Salem School's Annual Safety Plan was reviewed and submitted.

Granite posts have been installed at Salem Cemetery; the swag chains will be installed in the near future. The cemetery road has been chip sealed and millings have been placed along the path leading to the well that is used to water the plants. The posts were purchased by the

Salem Cemetery Association and installed by the town's Public Works Department, which also mows and plows the property.

He commended the town's new Public Works Foreman Tony Gallicchio, who has over 20 years of municipal experience. Public Works Foreman Gallicchio is working under Public Works Director/Advisor Don Bourdeau, Jr., and regularly meets with the Public Works Director and First Selectman.

Information regarding the expenditure of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds was sent to the Board Members. Approximately \$600,000.00 has been received and an additional \$600,000.00 will be received next year. To date, \$6,000.00 has been allocated to the Uncas Health District and \$7,000.00 has been allocated to upgrade the audio/visual system in the Conference Room. Requests from numerous non-profit organizations for funding and suggestions for the expenditure of the funds have been received. Discussion ensued regarding the possibility of investing in broadband technology for the town. He suggested forming a committee comprised of members from the Boards of Selectmen and Finance and the community at large to review, discuss, and propose the expenditures. He also recommended that any large expenditures be included in the town's Budget Referendum. Items costing between \$32,000.00 and \$160,000.00 could be approved via a Town Meeting. Smaller items, under \$32,000.00, may be expended more informally.

The Board of Selectmen approved an agreement with the Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company. The new agreement raises the volunteer stipend from \$30.00 to \$40.00 per shift. The increase is expected to result in the line item being overbudgeted by approximately \$20,000.00. The agreement will also help resolve some of the issues associated with the pending lawsuit, which remains active.

The above-ground fuel oil tank at the Town Hall is complete. The School was required to purchase a \$5,000.00 insurance policy for the underground oil tank due, in part, to a construction delay. The tank is scheduled for de-installation and replacement with an above-ground tank. An insurance rebate for the remaining period will not be received following the completion of the project.

5. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Fire Safety Subcommittee (Board Members Bourgeois and Casciano)

Emergency Services Liaison Selectman Ed Chmielewski expressed his appreciation to the Board for allowing them to provide an update regarding the progress they have made since their appointments in July 2020. He commended and expressed his pleasure in working with Emergency Services Director Mike Bednarz. He provided a brief recap of their progress as they continue to meet regularly with the Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs of both fire companies. Both of the departments, full- and part-time staff, and training officers continued to serve the public throughout the pandemic. Both of the fire companies have conducted joint training exercises, including hosting a live fire training this past weekend. In November, the town will

be sponsoring an aerial ladder certification training for the paid staff and volunteers. They continue to work on standardizing their protocol standard operating procedures, guidelines in cooperation with both fire departments. They have also enhanced the staffing and safety for the town by hiring a second full-time Firefighter/EMT, who is also a certified paramedic, and several part-time Firefighter/EMTs. Training of the town's financing procedures was also conducted for the fire companies. Both Emergency Services Director Bednarz and himself remain available to both departments 24/7 to resolve any issues and to improve communications between the fire companies, the town, and the Board. While they have been faced with some challenges, there were no noteworthy issues to report. The team, which cannot work without each other, continues to work well together and creatively resolve issues in a positive and proactive manner as they aim to enhance the team.

Emergency Services Director Bednarz expressed his appreciation to Emergency Services Liaison Selectman Chmielewski and briefly stated their ideas to improve their communication and record management system. The need to establish their roles arose as a result of issues related to the Federal Labor Laws, which precludes the town from having their volunteers move into a paid position, arose. While they have been fortunate to have their volunteers, who were equipped with all of the necessary training, gear and equipment, and familiarity with the town, graduate to a paid position(s) in the past, this is no longer the case. As such, they are now faced with the need for additional funding as they begin to hire outside Firefighters/EMTs. Because most of the Calls for Service derive between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., the need to supplement the daytime staff became evident. As the knowledge of the veteran First Responders becomes lost, he strives to plan for the future by creating Standard Operating Procedures for the departments.

Emergency Services Liaison Selectman Chmielewski added that the town will need to allocate more funds to emergency services, including upgrading and improving its communication technology. He commended the Emergency Services team and thanked the Board for their support and their service to the town. Emergency Services Director Bednarz concurred as he looks forward to continuing working with the Board.

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

Brief discussion was held regarding the ESSER/ARPA (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief/American Rescue Plan Act) Funds the BOE has and will be receiving. The following questions were posed for the BOE

- Total amount of ESSER/ARPA Funds to be received

- Date the ESSER/ARPA Funds must be expended by

- How they plan to expend their funds

- The total enrollment of students (VoAg/Magnet Schools, Homeschool, Salem School)

Discussion ensued regarding the care that must be taken with respect to their questions to ensure that they are not overreaching or micro-managing the BOE's budget.

The Board discussed the information requested by the BOE in preparation for the teacher negotiation contract. Board Member Bernier provided a brief review of the information he has gathered.

6. 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
Chairman Dickson reported that the letter to the departments will be drafted for the Board's review and approval. He also recommended that the Board Members review the Capital Plan, which will be forwarded to them.
- b. Other discussion items regarding the Capital Plan – *none*

7. ZEMKO BUILDING

Board Member Griggs reported that FOSL President Narwocki requested the possibility of reconnecting the electricity in the Zemko building so that the volunteers could comfortably sort the books in the building. The request was also forwarded to the Board of Selectmen. The building was purchased with the copper stripped from the building.

8. CT DEEP GRANT APPLICATION

The CT DEEP Sustainable Materials Management Grant information will be forwarded to the Board of Selectmen.

9. AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FUNDS

Board Member Griggs proposed the possibility of sending requests to the various departments, groups, and organizations throughout the town to submit a list of items that they would like to purchase utilizing the ARPA Funds. The list may be reviewed by the yet-to-be-formed Committee.

OLD BUSINESS

It was clarified that an item may be added to the agenda by a two-thirds vote and the item may be voted upon by the Board.

Clerk Collins requested that the Subcommittees be clearly specified on the Agenda for transparency purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 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