

**TOWN OF SALEM
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, AUGUST 11, 2022 – 7:00 P.M.
SALEM TOWN HALL – CONFERENCE ROOM 1**

**The minutes submitted below have been filed in accordance with
Section 7-342 of the CT General Statutes. They are subject to final approval
with or without amendments by a vote of the Board of Finance (BOF).
Approval and any such amendments will be detailed in subsequent BOF minutes.**

PRESENT

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

ABSENT

Kate Belleville, Alternate
Maryann Casciano, Alternate

ALSO PRESENT

First Selectman Ed Chmielewski

CALL TO ORDER

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS: *none*

SEAT ALTERNATE IF NEEDED: *none*

COMMUNICATIONS: *none*

AGENDA:

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

a. JULY 14, 2022 BOARD OF FINANCE REGULAR MEETING

M/S/C: Griggs/Collins, to approve the June 14, 2022 Board of Finance Regular Meeting Minutes. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

2. TREASURER’S REPORT

- A. REVENUE SUMMARY**
- B. TRIAL BALANCE**
- C. FUND BALANCE**
- D. OTHER**

The Board reviewed the *Balance Sheets* and *Budget vs. Actual* Reports. Treasurer Pam Henry reported that there were no unusual occurrences.

Balance Sheets Report:

Line Item 3900002, Undesignated Fund Balance (Board Member Bernier) – Treasurer Pam Henry will investigate the return of the funds to the line item, which was discussed during the budget season.

FY2021/22 Budget (Board Member Griggs) – The final numbers for the FY 2021/22 Budget will be provided to the Board in September, following the final payment of invoices and completion of line transfers for both the town and BOE.

Budget vs. Actual Report:

Treasurer Pam Henry noted that some of the payments are due at the beginning of the fiscal year resulting in high expenditure amounts for some of the line items. The town's final (pre-Audited) figures of the Balance Sheets and Budget vs. Actual Reports for the FY2021/22 Budget will be provided to the Board next month. The Auditors are scheduled to come in mid-September to conduct their final audit.

Line Item 5-222-618, Salem Volunteer Fire Company, Repair/Maintenance Vehicles (Board Member Bourgeois) – The expenditure of approximately \$8,000.00 for the line item so early in the fiscal year was questioned.

Clerk Collins proposed changing the title of Department 5-222 from Salem Volunteer Fire Company to Salem/Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Companies for clarity. Board Member Bourgeois proposed changing it to Town of Salem Fire Companies

M/S: Collins/Bourgeois, to re-title Department 5-222 from *Salem Volunteer Fire Company* to *Town of Salem Volunteer Fire Companies*. Discussion: Because the Fire Companies are no longer composed of only volunteers, it was agreed to amend the motion as follows:

M/S: Collins/Bourgeois, to re-title Department 5-222 from *Salem Volunteer Fire Company* to *Town of Salem Fire Companies*. Discussion: Because both employees and volunteers are serving the fire companies and due to the issues involving the fire companies, the Board Members agreed to research and table the item.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS – none

4. SELECTMAN'S REPORT

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that an application for a \$327,000.00 STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) Grant for the Darling Road Bridge Repair Project was submitted today. The engineering for the project has already been completed. The Town received \$1,705.00 as part of the National Opioid Settlement. The Salem Town Center, located at 1 New London Road, continues to work with the town to improve the property. Tenants have begun moving into the 12 (twelve) available units at Green Village II, the new age-restricted development on Route 82. The units are being rented at market rate. Additional State

Police patrols, traffic control, and other mitigation features have been deployed to help manage the Route 82 detour. The project is scheduled for completion at the end of August.

Finance/Human Resources – He recognized, commended, and expressed his appreciation to Finance Specialist/Human Resources Lisa Jablonski who continues to play an integral role in building and managing the town's staff and finances. She has helped with the hiring process of his new Executive Assistant, who has helped streamline the Town Hall process, as well as several part-time librarians. Thanks to her successful management of funds, the town received an \$11,262.00 distribution check from CIRMA (Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency), which handles the town's insurance, workers' compensation, and employee-related investigations. The funds will be deposited into the General Fund. As mentioned, the Auditors will be conducting their final audit in September; no issues were raised during their pre-audit in the spring. He, again, commended Finance Specialist/Human Resources Jablonski for completing and submitting the receipt of the second trench of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds in a very short time while she was on vacation. The ARPA Committee will be meeting in the near future to discuss the disbursement of the second set of funds.

Tax Collector – Assistant Registrar of Voters Athena Sartori, who helped the Tax Collector collect the funds during July, will also be working as the Assistant Tax Collector.

Salem Recreation will be hosting a Summer Concert on Thursday, August 25, at the Pavilion, with food trucks. He encouraged everyone to visit the website for a listing of all of the upcoming classes and activities. Selectman Disc Golf Project Liaison TJ Butcher will be working with Recreation Commissioner Steve Wlodarczyk on the project.

The Building Department has issued 30 permits, with a total value of \$627,174.09 and total collected fees of \$7,356.51, for FY2022/23.

The Tax Assessor has been busy providing customer service and assisting the Tax Collector.

The Planning & Zoning Commission recently denied an application for 45 Forest Drive, LLC. Legal action pertaining to the denial was received this afternoon.

He commended both the Town Clerk and Registrars for successfully dealing with the challenges the redistricting introduced during the recent primary election.

Public Works continues to do a phenomenal job responding to the public's comments and concerns.

Interim Library Director Shannon Henson has also been doing a phenomenal job. Due to staff concerns regarding the ongoing pandemic, Plexiglas shields have been purchased and installed at the circulation desk. Everyone was encouraged to visit the website for a listing of all of their events and activities.

Emergency Management – 71 Calls for Service, 29 of which were during weekday hours, were received in July and 68 Calls for Service, 21 of which were during weekday hours, were

received in June. Full-time Career Firefighters/EMTs have been conducting CPR/AED Classes for the Town Hall staff.

Resident State Troopers – Trooper Kevin Crosby graduated from the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program last Friday. Trooper Ben Duffy facilitated a \$5,000.00 Grant through the Cops for Kids with Cancer program for a Salem family whose child has been stricken with cancer.

Emergency Services – Volunteer numbers continue to dwindle. The town's full-time Career Firefighters/EMTs have been staffing the ambulance during the daytime hours. The team is currently persevering through some challenging decisions. Additional staffing may be necessary for the near future.

Board Member Questions/Comments

Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company (GLVFCO) Ambulance (Board Member Bernier) – The GLVFCO Ambulance is privately owned by the Fire Company. The funds the Ambulance receives from the patients are deposited into the Fire Company's Ambulance account. The town has been funding the cost of the tires, gas, and insurance. In addition, the town's full-time Career Firefighters/EMTs are rendering the care, transportation, and completing the paperwork during their working hours. Board Member Bernier questioned the use of the town's full-time Career Firefighters/EMTs to generate funds for the GLVFCO Ambulance, a private entity. First Selectman Chmielewski explained that, previously, the full-time Career Firefighters/EMTs were paid by both of the Fire Companies, with each being a member of their respective fire companies. Currently, neither of the full-time Career Firefighters/EMTs are town employees and are not members of either Fire Company.

Town Clerk Office Vault (Clerk Collins) – The issue is in the process of being resolved.

Cooling Station (Board Member Griggs) – First Selectman Chmielewski stated that, after speaking with Emergency Management and Emergency Services and surveying the neighboring towns, it was decided to open the Library for use as a cooling station for the town's residents. The Library extended its Saturday hours and opened on Sunday to accommodate the public. The cost of opening the Library as a cooling station will derive from the Library's funds. The Town Hall and Library are considered secondary evacuation centers.

5. FIRST SELECTMAN TRANSFER REQUESTS:

First Selectman Transfer Requests are routine and require the action of the Board per §10.13d of the Salem Town Charter. It is also a proper procedure in preparation for the annual audit. It is anticipated that approximately \$80,000.00 to \$90,000.00 will be returned to the town.

It was explained that accrual accounting is a financial accounting method that allows one to record expenditures/revenue before paying for/receiving payment for goods or services. As such, no additional funds were provided to the respective employees for those line items. A

partial accrual indicates a salary differential between the previous and current years and/or extra hours for additional work.

Discussion ensued regarding the possibility of adding a column indicating the adjusted amounts, as well as the budgeted and expended/actual amounts. The Board agreed that the additional column would add confusion.

The following requested transfer which was tabled during the Board's last regular meeting is no longer necessary:

5-152-814, Town Services, Health Services \$ 4,000.00

M/S/C: Griggs/Collins, to approve the following transfer of funds from the following line items in the FY2021/22 budget, for a total of \$35,512.95:

5-105-104, Tax Collector \$ 12,375.48

No Tax Collector from July to November 2021

5-105-105, Tax Collector Assistant \$ 10,773.50

No Assistant Tax Collector from December from March 2022

5-105-116, Public Works \$ 9,282.84

Surplus of predicted overtime balance

5-105-117, Public Works Director \$ 3,081.13

Retirement of Public Works Director

to the following line items:

5-105-100, First Selectman \$ 72.57

Accrual

5-105-102, Town Clerk \$ 379.55

Accrual

5-105-103, Town Clerk Assistant \$ 3,464.23

Pay Rate Staff Change; Partial Accrual

5-105-106, Assessor \$ 2,542.75

Revaluation; Partial Accrual

5-105-107, Assessor Assistant \$ 6,613.27

Revaluation; Partial Accrual

5-105-109, Finance/HR \$ 7,695.62

ARPA/COVID/Personnel Changes/Lawsuits; Partial Accrual

5-105-110, Registrar of Voters \$ 124.73

Accrual

5-105-113, Recording Secretary \$ 4,900.00

Additional Meetings/Lengths; Partial Accrual

5-105-114, Administrative Part -time \$ 5,913.29

Staff Hours Increased to Assist HR/Finance; Partial Accrual

5-105-115, Recreation Coordinator \$ 3,331.34

Additional Programs for Post-Covid; Partial Accrual

5-105-125, Acting Selectman \$ 475.60

Accrual

and to approve the following transfer of funds from the following line item in the FY2021/22 budget, for a total of \$8,917.96:

5-210-216, Security, Resident Trooper Contract \$ 8,917.96

New Resident State Trooper (replacement at lower grade)

to the following line items:

5-126-208, Town Counsel, Town Issues \$ 4,562.70

An Executive Session will be scheduled in the near future to discuss the town issues regarding the current lawsuit, "The Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. vs. Town of Salem", pursuant to C.G.S. §1-200 (6)(B), and to discuss investigative reports regarding complaints by Salem Town Employees against The Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. members, pursuant to §1-200(6)(E) and §1-210 (b)(2).

5-630-224, Planning & Zoning, Legal Services \$ 2,398.10

Primarily expenditures for pending lawsuit with 45 Forest Drive, LLC.

5-140-713, Utilities, Heat GLVFCO \$ 557.16

5-140-722, Utilities, Electric New Library \$ 1,400.00

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

6. TOWN INVENTORY/BUDGET INITIATIVES

Board Member Bourgeois provided a revised copy of her presentation to the Board for further review and feedback by Thursday, September 1. The final version will be presented to the Board at their next Regular Meeting. A watermark or note will be added to the sample letters and budget calendar stating that the sample is from the previous year.

7. LIAISON REPORTS

a. EMERGENCY SERVICES – no report

b. BOE

Board Member Liaison Griggs reported that Megin Sechen was appointed as the School's new Assistant Principal and Diana Rivera was hired as the School's new part-time Director of Facilities. The BOE also made salary and line adjustments. As of June 2022, the BOE's Unencumbered Fund Balance was \$79,876.33. The BOE is participating in the Eversource Energy Audit, which is partially funded by grant incentives and would result in a net cost of \$237,592.00. Because the cost is a Capital expense, the BOE questioned whether they have the authority to enter into the contract without the Board's approval. Extensive discussion

ensued regarding the contract and the cost and savings estimates. While supportive of the program, it was felt that additional information was necessary. The Board also felt that the request should have derived directly from the BOE to the Boards of Selectmen and/or Finance with the relevant supporting material. Chairman Dickson will speak with BOE Chairman Sean Reith regarding the request.

Clerk Collins questioned the following items:

Director of Facilities & Assistant Principal – Whether the positions have the same FTE and salary amounts as the previous Director of Facilities and Assistant Principal.

Unaffiliated Employees Salary Increases – Derivation of funds.

Discussion ensued regarding the possibility of entering into an Executive Session to discuss the vault. First Selectman Chmielewski reported that there would be unanticipated expenses for the vault and a cost analysis is in process.

OLD BUSINESS: *none*

ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 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

**A VIDEO RECORD OF THE MEETING CAN BE FOUND ON THE TOWN'S WEBSITE
UNDER BOARDS & COMMISSIONS – BOARD OF FINANCE – MEETING VIDEOS**