

**TOWN OF SALEM
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8, 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
Kate Belleville, Alternate
John Bernier, Alternate
Maryann Casciano, Alternate

ABSENT

none

ALSO PRESENT

First Selectman Ed Chmielewski
Finance Specialist Lisa Jablonski

CALL TO ORDER

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS:

Horace Lindo

SEAT ALTERNATE IF NEEDED: *none*

COMMUNICATIONS:

- a. Copy of a letter from the Board of Education (BOE) Chairman Sean Reith which includes an invitation to the members of the Boards of Finance and Selectmen to attend their Thursday, December 8, Budget Subcommittee meeting
- b. Copy of the e-mail response from Clerk Collins regarding the BOE’s invitation and any related FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) issues that might arise from their attendance

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Item 4, Public Comments, was moved to precede Item 1, Executive Session. The following item numbers were adjusted accordingly.

AGENDA:

1. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Horace Lindo, 542 Flanders Road, Oakdale, a property owner in the Town of Salem, a longtime member of the Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company, and a former Member of the Board of Finance, spoke with respect to the ambulance service, its paid staff, and the Town's support. The Gardner Lake Ambulance Service provides approximately 80% to 90% of emergency medical and ambulance services to the Town. The Fire Company's membership is strong with all of their line officer positions filled and approximately 20 members attending their recent work detail. The first of three State-required classes for fire and ambulance personnel on hostile work environments and sexual harassment was recently held to a full room. There has been a void in the leadership of the Fire Department and supervision by the Town of the career Firefighter/EMTs since the retirement of Donald Bourdeau, Jr. The ambulance is staffed 24/7, 52 weeks a year by the career Firefighter/EMTs and unpaid volunteers who receive stipends for their service. He stressed the importance of each individual's role in providing the service. His primary goal is to bring everyone together to ensure that the Town's ambulance services remain viable. A packet will be sent to the Board regarding the staffing. Additional paid staffing will be necessary in the future as volunteer numbers continue to dwindle. He reiterated the importance of working together to continue offering this important service to the Town and its residents.

In response to Clerk Collins who requested clarification regarding the lack of leadership, Mr. Lindo stated that the Fire Company appointed a new Chief who is acclimating to his new position and there is no supervision over the Town's paid staff. After speaking with the Board of Selectmen, he was informed that the Town is in the process of hiring an individual to supervise the paid staff. He hopes that this new development will be the beginning of a positive working relationship to resolve some of the issues. The new Chief has been busy with training, responding to calls, and working. As such, it falls on the volunteers to communicate and work with the Town. He aims to resolve the lack of communication, which he understands is one of the main issues the Boards of Selectmen and Finance have with the Fire Company.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION – STATUS UPDATE ON LEGAL ACTIONS AGAINST TOWN

M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to enter into Executive Session to receive and discuss a status update on the legal actions against the Town of Salem at 7:14 p.m. Discussions to include the Board of Finance, First Selectman Ed Chmielewski, Selectman Liaison Ron LaBonte, and Town Attorney Brian Estep. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

Chairman Dickson resumed the meeting at 8:05 p.m. No notes or votes were taken during the Executive Session.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

a. NOVEMBER 10, 2022 BOARD OF FINANCE REGULAR MEETING

M/S/C: Collins/Griggs, to approve the November 10, 2022 Board of Finance Regular Meeting Minutes. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

4. 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 the assets are in line with the liabilities and equities. She noted that the *Budget vs. Actual Report* was generated by the CPA this month and includes the year-to-date numbers rather than the numbers to month's end. As such, some of the numbers will not coincide with those of prior years at this time. The figures are otherwise accurate.

5. SELECTMAN'S REPORT

A copy of the departmental updates, highlighting the excellent work of the Town's Department Heads and Staff, was provided to the Board. He reported that the Emergency Services team, which includes its Administrators, Supervisors, and Chief Officers of the Gardner Lake and Salem Volunteer Fire Companies, and the Town continue to hold their meetings without the representation of the Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company. He emphasized the importance of these monthly meetings to communicate issues and resolve conflicts.

6. APPROVE 2023 MEETING CALENDAR

7. APPROVE 2023/24 BUDGET CALENDAR

M/S/C: Collins/Griggs, to approve the 2023 Board of Finance Regular Meeting Calendar and FY2023/24 Board of Finance Budget Calendar with the following amendments:

2023/24 Budget Calendar:

MARCH 9, 2023

~~1.) AGENDA~~

~~2.) 1.)~~ ACT ON PROPOSED APPROPRIATIONS FOR 2023-2024

MARCH 16, 2023

~~1.) AGENDA~~

~~1.) 2.)~~ ACT ON PROPOSED APPROPRIATIONS FOR 2023-2024.

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

8. LIAISON REPORTS

a. BOE (Board of Education)

Board Member BOE Liaison Griggs reported on the hiring of a 0.20 FTE School Nurse. Line-Item adjustments include the Tuition Magnet Elementary School, Overtime Custodians, Plumber, and Heating Fuel. The leak over the Nurse's Office and flashing traffic signals have been repaired, the gym sound system is near completion, and the heating fuel price has been locked in. Due to escalating prices, the funding for the Roof Replacement/HVAC Project is no longer sufficient. As such, the Roof Building Committee will be reconstituted and bids for the roof, with the HVAC system built into the bid as an add-on, will be sought. The contract for the school's replacement of copiers, which have reached their end of life, has been awarded to *Prism*, who provided the lowest and best bid and is on the State Contract List. The new contract will include a better service and result in an annual cost savings of approximately \$5,964.00. The BOE will be evaluating the financial risk(s) of offering a 2.5% raise to a Food Services employee. An Executive Session was held during their recent meeting to discuss the proposed MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the Unions regarding the Early Notice of Retirement Incentive. The BOE also discussed their Capital Plan requests, including moving out the bathroom renovations from FY2025/26 to 2032/33, an increased estimate for the Fire Alarm Upgrade, and the bid for the 1994 Boilers.

Board Member Griggs will e-mail the BOE's Key Budget Themes and Drivers to the Board Members.

b. EMERGENCY SERVICES

Emergency Services Liaison Bourgeois reviewed the Timeline for the Emergency Management Study. She confirmed that a report will be provided to the Board by February 3, as stated on the Timeline.

9. CAPITAL PLAN DISCUSSION

Chairman Dickson stated that the purpose of this evening's discussion is to review the submitted FY2023/24 Capital Plan Requests and provide any preliminary questions or requests to the various departments for clarification or additional information in preparation for their presentations.

Board of Education (BOE)

Replace Roof & A/C Units	\$ 100,000.00
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Previously approved for funding

Network Upgrades	\$ 139,459.00
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Previously approved for funding; second part of funding, cost estimates have increased and project has not yet begun; will require status of Network IT study for long-term plan

Replace 1994 Boilers	\$ 114,400.00
<i>Number revised based on price estimate received today; data regarding the annual cost of maintenance will be provided</i>	
Wall Padding – Multipurpose Room & Gym	\$ 35,280.00
TOTAL	\$ 389,139.00

Chairman Dickson requested that priority numbers be assigned to each of the items.

Information for the following items was also received for the FY2024/25 Capital Plan:

Replace Corridor Lockers	\$ 69,795.00
Fire Alarm Upgrade	\$ 102,165.00

Salem Volunteer Fire Company

SCBA (Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus)	\$ 7,450.00
& Spare Bottles	\$ 1,350.00

Salem Volunteer Fire Company Chief Chip Weston clarified that the pricing is for the financing, rather than the purchasing of the items, and is spread out over time. A tentative increase of approximately 3% was applied to accommodate any price increases; the exact pricing will be provided following the price increase in January 2023. The total estimated cost of the items is \$365,400.00. The cost covers the equipment for both Salem (20 Air Packs and 24 Spare Bottles) and Gardner Lake (18 Air Packs and 18 Spare Bottles) Fire Departments. There are currently a total of 40 sets for the Salem Volunteer Fire Company and 36 sets for the Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company. The purchases are not staggered due to NFPA revisions, which require the items to be replaced, regardless of age.

Replacement Gear & Hoses	\$ 13,000.00
TOTAL	\$ 21,800.00

The purchase of the Replacement of Tanker 121 has been moved out by one year.

Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company

Parking Lot Seal Coating	\$ 6,860.00
Firefighting Turnout Gear and Hose	\$ 14,000.00
Replacement of Building Roof	\$ 50,000.00
<i>Current price estimates for the building roof replacement was requested.</i>	
TOTAL	\$ 70,860.00

A request for the Replacement of Scott SCBA Bottles in the amount of \$ 61,250.00 appears to be a duplicate request; see Capital Requests for Salem Volunteer Fire Company.

Salem Historical Society Museum

Heating Units & Dehumidifiers \$ 32,000.00

Historical Society President Elbert Burr stated that the historical building is neither heated nor insulated, resulting in an unstable environment for the Town's historical artifacts. The building's current electrical service is adequate to accommodate the equipment. The necessary wiring is included in the estimate. A current price estimate will be provided to the Board.

TOTAL \$ 32,000.00

Public Works

Heavy Duty Mechanical Thumb/Hydraulic \$ 7,000.00

Ford Expedition \$ 50,000.00

First Selectman Chmielewski stated that the vehicle would be utilized to provide maintenance and haul and transport equipment, including the trailer, throughout the town. The Department has been utilizing an old truck handed down to them from the Fire Company which will soon reach its end of life. The Board questioned whether the vehicle was a need or a convenience and requested additional information regarding what the vehicle would be utilized for, who will be driving it, and the number of staff in the Department. In response to Board Member Griggs, he informed the Board that the former Public Works Director's vehicle is used regularly by the Emergency Management/Emergency Services Department. Board Member Bourgeois questioned the possibility of returning the vehicle to Public Works or considering sharing the vehicle between departments.

TOTAL \$ 57,000.00

It was confirmed that the request for the Set of 4 Heavy-Duty Portable Lifts in the amount of \$51,655.59 was approved by the ARPA Committee for funding and has been moved to a Town Meeting for final approval.

10. FORMAT & PLANNING DISCUSSION FOR LETTER TO DEPARTMENTS REGARDING BUDGETARY EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR 2023-2024, INCLUDES DISCUSSION ON ISSUES & CONCERNS FOR THE UPCOMING BUDGET SEASON

M/S/C: Bourgeois/Griggs, to approve the letter to the Departments regarding the budgetary expectations and guidelines for the FY2023/24 budget. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

OLD BUSINESS: none

ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C: Griggs/Bourgeois, to adjourn the meeting at 9:11 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