

**TOWN OF SALEM
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2023 – 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
Selectman Kevin Lyden
Finance Specialist Lisa Jablonski

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Dickson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS: *none*

SEAT ALTERNATE IF NEEDED: *none*

COMMUNICATIONS: *none*

AGENDA:

- 1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: JANUARY 26, 2023 BOF Meeting**
M/S/C: Collins/Rucci, to approve the January 26, 2023 Board of Finance Regular Meeting Minutes. 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 *Balance Sheets* and *Budget vs. Actual* Reports. In response to Board Member Bernier regarding the status of those line items that indicate that less than 50% of the budgeted amount has been received, Treasurer Henry stated that all of the lines appear to be on track for this time of year, noting that some of the revenue is not received until later in the fiscal year. Selectman Lyden noted that Line Item 420000-011, LoCIP (Infrastructure), is 302.3% over budget due to the accumulation of three (3) years of funds; the goal is to apply for and utilize the Grant funds on an annual basis for Capital items, including roads. In response to Board Member Casciano regarding Line Item 5-140-737, T B Allocated-Fuel Use, which is blank, Treasurer Henry stated that the item is entered and reconciled at the end of the fiscal year. Treasurer Henry will double-check the entries for Line Item 410000, General Property Tax, which indicates that the town is 107.7% over the budgeted amount.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

John Cunningham, 46 Salem Ridge Drive, provided a brief background of his history and experience as a Deputy Fire Marshal and Deputy Fire Chief for the Town of Salem and the City of Groton. He spoke on the breakdown in communication between the town and the Fire Company regarding its finances and the town's apparent lack of open government. As the Treasurer for the Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company (GLVFCO), he is responsible for ensuring that the bills are in order. Unfortunately, he is currently forbidden to speak with the Finance and Human Resources Department regarding Fire Department matters, per orders of the First Selectman, hindering his ability to resolve their financial issues. Over the last several months, he has discovered that though checks issued to its vendors were processed, they were being held. Other bills that were paid were done so at a lesser amount without explanation. As a result, he is now tasked with reviewing all of the bills and contacting each of the vendors to determine the status of their accounts, which is a negative reflection on the town and affects the reputation of both the Fire Company and him. It appears that bills submitted by the Fire Company are being improperly handled and requested that an investigation be conducted into the matter. He thanked the Board for their service, time, and diligence.

4. SELECTMAN'S REPORT

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that the town's Emergency Management Director, Public Safety Director, and Firefighters continue to meet monthly for their roundtable discussions with the Gardner Lake and Salem Volunteer Fire Companies. He thanked Deputy Fire Marshal Cunningham for raising his issues and concerns and welcomed the Board to investigate the matter. He commended the Finance Specialist and expressed his appreciation to former First Selectman and Selectman Lyden for his inheritance of a very professional organization. He stated that training sessions were held for the town's entities

to provide instruction regarding the proper submission of invoices. He believed that part of the disconnection between the GLVFCO and the town is the result of the Fire Company's inability to appoint a Command Officer to act as a liaison with the town to communicate and resolve issues.

He provided a brief overview and update of each of the departments and expressed his appreciation to and commended each of the individual staff members and departments for all of their hard work and efforts, including the Public Works Department's recent emergency repair of the Landfill's trash compactor and Town Hall septic system, the current tax collection rate of 96.03%, as reported by the Tax Collector, and the establishment of a Regional Mutual Aid Fire Marshal Agreement with the towns of Bozrah, Colchester, Franklin, and Lebanon. The Agreement was spearheaded by longtime Salem Firefighter Tom Main who was recently appointed the Interim Fire Marshal and Supervisor of full-time Firefighters/EMTs. Also appointed was Salem Firefighter Jeff Standish as a Deputy Fire Marshal and Assistant Supervisor.

In response to Board Member Collins regarding the target opening date for the Disc Golf Course, it was stated that the goal is re-open the Course this spring/summer. He also felt that an investigation into the processing of invoices should be under the guise of the Board of Selectmen and requested that the Board be updated on the matter. He noted past issues and the importance of moving forward.

5. ACT ON PROPOSED APPROPRIATIONS FOR 2023-2024

A. #110 BUILDING OFFICIAL

Building Official Vernon Vesey, III, presented the budget request for Department #110 – Building Official, with an increase of \$155.00 or 3.6% due to an increase in the standard mileage rate as determined by the IRS (Internal Revenue Service). In response to Board Member Bernier regarding his projections following the pandemic, Building Official Vesey stated that building has not slowed down and the increased prices and lack of materials do not appear to have affected the industry.

B. #112 TOWN CLERK'S DEPARTMENT

Town Clerk Linda Flugrad presented the budget for Department #112 – Town Clerk's Department, which includes an increase of \$5.00 or 0.03%. The increase is due to an increase in the software, which is offset by a reduction in an alternative line item. She reported that, in preparation for the budget presentation, she discovered that the department has received almost \$50,000.00 in Grant Funding for various projects, including the reorganization of the Building Department vault. This year, she was awarded a \$6,000.00 Grant which might be used for the preservation of old maps and/or additional shelving and cabinetry for the vault. Chairman Dickson expressed his appreciation and commended her on consistently presenting a very responsible budget.

C. #114 TREASURER/AUDITOR/BOF

The budget request for Department #114 – Treasurer/Auditor/BOF remains flat. Selectman Lyden informed the Board that, due to the receipt of the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds, the town would be required to conduct a Federal Single Audit. The estimated cost of the Audit is \$3,000.00 and would be shared with the school. As such, he recommended the Board increase Line Item 05-114-204, Contract (Auditor), by \$1,500.00, bringing the total budget for the department to \$41,348.00. A notation will be added to the explanation stating that additional funds were allocated for the town's portion of the Federal Single Audit.

D. #122 REGISTRAR/ELECTIONS

Registrar of Voters Betsy Butts and Athena Sartori presented the budget request for Department #122 – Registrar/Elections, with an increase of \$61,128.00 or 41.52 %. Registrar of Voters Butts reviewed the bulleted highlights of the proposed budget, which includes additional costs for the April 2024 Presidential Preference primaries, a salary increase for the Poll Workers, a stipend for the Deputy Registrars, and the remaining required certification classes for newly elected Registrar Sartori. The budget does not account for any additional referendums, state audits, or early voting requirements, which would require additional staffing costs. In response to Board Member Bernier regarding the voting process as a result of the redistricting, Registrar Sartori commended both Registrar of Voters Butts and former Registrar of Voters Doris Butts for their hard work and efforts to organize a smooth voting process allowing both districts to vote at Town Hall. The Board thanked them for their hard work and efforts.

E. #645 RECREATION COMMISSION

Selectman Lyden presented the budget request for Department #645 – Recreation Commission, with a 2.05 % or \$972.00 increase due to an increase for Line Items 5-645-945, Weekend School Access, and 5-645-929, Community Outreach/Other Appropriated Expenses. He stated that the town has a positive working relationship with the school to use the gymnasium and multi-purpose room for recreation activities and events during the evenings and on weekends. The weekend custodian provides security to the building and cleaning of the relevant areas; an invoice is provided to the town for the services. A brief discussion ensued regarding the proposed reduction in Line Item 5-645-927, SRA Programs, and the youth basketball and soccer leagues. Recreation Commission Chairperson Mary Durkee stated that Salem children are currently playing East Lyme Youth Basketball in exchange for gym space. In addition, the Commission is working with a group of interested parents to bring youth soccer back to Salem and, if successful, the league would initially return on a much smaller scale with the younger children. When the league(s) are revived, the Commission would be requesting a reinstatement of the funds. Realizing that the Commission offers very

little to the community, they are hoping to offer additional community events with the requested additional funds (Line Item 5-645-929, Community Outreach/Other Appropriated Expenses). Chairman Dickson recommended moving “Community events” to the beginning of the explanation for the line item. Clerk Collins proposed the possibility of hosting a fun run(s) during warm weather.

F. #210 SECURITY

First Selectman Chmielewski presented the proposed budget for Department #210 – Security, which includes an increase of \$11,460.00 or 2.98%, due to the projected salary and benefits increase for the Resident State Trooper Program (Line Item 5-210-216). He commended the town's Resident State Troopers, who are actively engaged in community policing. Discussion ensued regarding the continuing rising cost for the Troopers. The Line Item also includes projected overtime costs for handling issues that arise at the Gardner Lake Boat Launch and Salem School. Board Member Bourgeois proposed allocating approximately \$350,000.00 to \$375,000.00 to the line item, based on its immediate history. Selectman Lyden proposed leaving the line item flat to avoid a supplemental appropriation. Chairman Dickson agreed to leave the line item flat and reassess the amount in March. In response to Board Member Casciano who questioned the receipt of revenue from citations, First Selectman Chmielewski stated that such revenue is deposited into the state’s General Fund and does not come to the town. In response to Board Member Bernier who questioned whether there were any changes from FY2020/21 and FY2021/22 for Line Items 5-210-016, Equipment, and 5-210-416, Other Expenses (Supplies), accounting for the significant decrease in funding and whether those line items are adequately funded, First Selectman Chmielewski and Selectman Lyden stated that the amounts requested for those line items are adequate. At the request of Board Member Rucci, First Selectman Chmielewski stated that the amount of time the Troopers are spending on School matters would be provided to the Board to determine whether an additional Trooper should be hired.

G. #600 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

First Selectman Chmielewski presented the proposed budget for Department #600 – Economic Development, with a flat budget. The Commission is partnering with the Recreation Commission to host a Community Concert/Event. An updated *Businesses and Services Directory* is also planned.

H. #610 INLAND WETLANDS & CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission Vice Chairperson Diba Khan-Bureau presented the proposed budget for Department #610 – Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission, with a flat budget. In response to Clerk Collins regarding the proposed amount for Line Items 5-610-261, Legal Services, and 5-610-941, Engineering, which has not been expended over the last two fiscal years, she stated that the amount is an

estimation for any possible future expenses and is unpredictable. The estimated expenditures for the current fiscal year will be provided to the Board to help justify the requested amount(s).

I. #630 PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

Planning & Zoning Commission Chairman Vernon Smith presented the proposed budget for Department #630 – Planning & Zoning Commission, with a decrease of \$1,500.00 or -5.54%. The proposed budget includes an increase in funding for Line Item 5-630-425, Other Expenses, to accommodate the state's required training. The increase is offset by decreases in other line items. He expressed his appreciation to the Board, First Selectman Chmielewski, Finance Specialist Lisa Jablonski, and Treasurer Pam Henry for all of their efforts, in creating a very well-run town.

J. #640 ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

First Selectman Chmielewski presented the proposed budget for Department #640 – Zoning Board of Appeals, with a flat budget.

K. #710 MUNICIPAL INSURANCE

First Selectman Chmielewski presented the proposed budget for Department #710 – Municipal Insurance, with an increase of \$13,774.00 or 9% due to two (2) additional Line Items for a \$1 million Cyber and Active Assailant liability policies, which were recommended by CIRMA (Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency). The policy will cover both the town and the School. The Board requested additional information regarding the policies.

L. #810. UNANTICIPATED EXPENSES

First Selectman Chmielewski presented the budget request for Department #810 – Unanticipated Expenses, with an increase of \$200.00 or 0.2% due to rising costs. The funds are utilized for such discretionary items as the purchase of flowers and cards for the families of those who have passed.

M. #935 REVALUATION

First Selectman Chmielewski presented the budget request for Department #935 – Revaluation, with a flat budget of \$1.00 as a placeholder.

N. #910 INTEREST PAYMENTS

First Selectman Chmielewski presented the proposed budget for Department #910 – Interest Payments, with a decrease of \$16,625.00 or -12.45%.

O. #920 PRINCIPAL PAYMENTS

First Selectman Chmielewski presented the proposed budget for Department #920 – Principal Payable, which includes an increase of \$5,000.00 or 1.52%.

- M/S/C: Collins/Cadwell, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$4,503.00 for Department #110 – Building, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 23, 2023 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**
- M/S/C: Collins/Cadwell, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$16,889.00 for Department #112 – Town Clerk, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 23, 2023 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**
- M/S/C: Collins/Cadwell, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$41,348.00 for Department #114 – Treasurer/Auditor/BOF, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 23, 2023 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**
- M/S/C: Collins/Cadwell, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$20,888.00 for Department #122 – Registrar/Elections, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 23, 2023 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**
- M/S/C: Collins/Cadwell, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$48,472.00 for Department #645 – Recreation Commission, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 23, 2023 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**
- M/S/C: Collins/Cadwell, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$385,100.00 for Department #210 – Security, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 23, 2023 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**
- M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$1,500.00 for Department #600 – Economic Development Commission, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 23, 2023 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**
- M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$3,600.00 for Department #610 – Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 23, 2023 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**
- M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$25,600.00 for Department #630 – Planning & Zoning Commission, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 23, 2023 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**

- M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$800.00 for Department #640 – Zoning Board of Appeals, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 23, 2023 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**
- M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$158,779.00 for Department #710 – Municipal Insurance, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 23, 2023 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**
- M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$1,200.00 for Department #810 – Unanticipated Expenses, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 23, 2023 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**
- M/S/C: Collins/ Bourgeois, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$1.00 for Department #935 – Revaluation, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 23, 2023 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**
- M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$116,875.00 for Department #910 – Interest Payments, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 23, 2023 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**
- M/S/C: Collins/Bourgeois, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$335,000.00 for Department #920 – Principal Payable, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 23, 2023 Regular Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**

6. DISCUSSION REGARDING DEDICATION FOR ANNUAL REPORT

Board Member Bourgeois nominated Firefighter/EMT Brian Whitlatch, who passed away in November 2022. The Board will review the nominations during their next Regular Meeting.

7. LIAISON REPORTS

A. BOE

Chairman Dickson was pleased with the BOE’s budget process. Board Member Liaison Griggs concurred, adding that the BOE is carefully reviewing the budget in a very methodical manner. The Board reviewed the BOE’s Line-Item transfers. The subject matter of their legal issues, which are discussed during Executive Session, is unknown. Board Member Collins reported that the Governor is proposing an additional \$135 million increase in ECS (Educational Cost Sharing) Funding, which will reinstate the 10-year phasing-in period for funding and result in a \$110,000.00 annual decrease in

funding for the Town of Salem. While the state has additional funds, it is unlikely that the town would receive any (significant) funds. He also reported that the state agreed to increase the statutory limit for the rainy-day fund from 15% to 18%, which is in line with the town. Board Member Griggs reported that the School will be losing some extraordinary teachers due to retirement which should result in some significant savings.

B. EMERGENCY SERVICES

Board Member Liaison Bourgeois reported that the Emergency Services Study has not been received. The Board may review the First Selectman's report for an update on the Emergency Services Department. She encouraged the Board Members to sign up for the Everbridge Notification System if they have not already done so.

OLD BUSINESS: *none*

ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C: Collins/Cadwell, to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 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