

**TOWN OF SALEM  
BOARD OF FINANCE  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 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  
Corinne (Cory) Bourgeois, Clerk  
Kate Belleville  
John Bernier  
Deborah Cadwell  
Janet Griggs  
Matt Rucci, Alternate  
Maryann Casciano, Alternate

**ABSENT**

James Moran, Alternate

**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*

**ALTERATIONS TO THE AGENDA:**

**M/S/C:** Bourgeois/Cadwell, to add the following item to the Agenda:

**6. Salem Volunteer Fire Company Budget Update**

**Discussion:** The items that follow will be renumbered. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

**AGENDA:**

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: NOVEMBER 9, 2023 BOF MEETING**

**M/S/C:** Griggs/Belleville, to approve the November 9, 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**

Treasurer Pam Henry reviewed the Balance Sheet and Budget vs. Actual Reports. The Town's Assets are in line with the Liabilities and Equities and there were no unusual occurrences. The Budget vs. Actual Report indicates the receipt of \$126,831.14 (Department 4-096, Revenue Use of Town Money), which is unusual; it is unknown whether the influx of revenue will continue through the end of the fiscal year. The LoCIP (Local Capital Improvement Plan) (line item 420000-011) and Nips Grants (line item 420000-555) were also received from the state. Selectman Lyden reported that they are tracking the expected reimbursement for the School Oil Tank and the School Roof Projects. Once received, the funds will be allocated to the School HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning) Project. In addition, the roof drains that were incorrectly installed, causing an overflow of water, have been corrected with the School Roof Project Funds. He reminded the Board that, last year, a significant amount of funds was received from the state following their audit of the final building project and additional funding for the FY2024/25 BOE Budget to accommodate the School HVAC Project costs should be provided.

Audit Status (Board Member Bernier) – Finance Specialist Jablonski reported that an Audit Extension was filed with the state as they are waiting to receive the East Lyme reconciliation numbers.

Interest Amount (Board Member Rucci) – The current interest rates for the Short-Term Investment Fund (STIF) and Teachers' Retirement Board (TRB) will be sent to the Board.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENTS – none**

**4. SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION**

**Per Salem Town Charter, Section 10.09, in the amount of \$34,000.00 for Department 5-135-609, Building Maintenance**

Selectman Lyden requested a Supplemental Appropriation of \$34,000.00 for a STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) Grant. The Appropriation was unanimously endorsed at the December Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting. One of the criteria for the competitive grant is a match from the municipality. The Town of Salem was awarded \$198,560.00 for Town Hall Upgrades, including the replacement of its aging HVAC System. The funds would be allocated to Line Item 5-135-609, Building/Grounds Maintenance. The supplemental appropriation should not negatively affect the Town's Bond Rating.

**M/S/C: Griggs/Cadwell, to approve a Supplemental Appropriation in the amount of \$34,000.00 for Department 5-135-609, Building Maintenance, per Section**

**10.09 of the Salem Town Charter. Discussion: Board Member Bernier confirmed that the amount fits within the Town's .2% requirements and will not require a Town Meeting. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**

**5. SELECTMAN'S REPORT**

First Selectman Chmielewski expressed his appreciation to Selectman Lyden for his mentorship and Executive Assistant Alesha Brothers and Finance Specialist Jablonski for their hard work leading to the receipt of the STEAP Grant. The Town Departments have begun preparing for the upcoming budget season and two well-attended Budget 101 sessions with Clerk Bourgeois and the Finance Specialist. A positive Fire Chiefs monthly meeting was held yesterday. He complimented the Town's Emergency Management and Emergency Services team which recently met with Homeland Security for a free Security Audit. The Report included recommendations that are being acted upon. Overall, the Report found that the relationship between the Town, its entities, and the School is second to none. The Connecticut State Police reported on the receipt of 1,846 Calls for Service, to date, this year. The Emergency Preparedness Agency recently participated in an Annual State of Connecticut Emergency Planning exercise and the School also participated in a similar exercise the same day. Both exercises proved fruitful and the recommended items are being reviewed. The Public Works Crew is preparing for the winter, continuing to repair potholes, and has responded to 22 Maintenance Requests. The Library continues to offer numerous programs. Positive feedback has been received from the residents regarding the second payment reminders from the Tax Collector's Office. As of the end of November, the Collection Rate was 57.88%, approximately 1% higher than the previous year. The Recreation Commission held a very successful Holiday Tree Lighting evening and is busy planning future events and programs. The Agent for the Elderly continues to support the seniors. The Building and Assessor's Departments continue to be busy. Outgoing Town Clerk Linda Flugrad has been training and transitioning the office to newly-elected Town Clerk Julie Stoken. He looks forward to the upcoming budget season.

**6. SALEM VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY (SVFCO) BUDGET UPDATE**

SVFCO Chief Gene Maiorano reported on the status of the Fire Company's budget, which is 77% expended due to unanticipated costs, including an increase in supplies due to increased staffing, Fire Prevention items for the School, and issues with the Ladder Truck, Tanker Truck, and Service Truck. He provided the Board with handouts of their budget with the anticipated and unanticipated costs. In addition, the Fire Company has been experiencing internet issues that were traditionally allocated under the Town's Building Maintenance line item, which is currently over budget. In addition, to keep their accounts up to date, the Fire Company has expended some of its own funds for truck equipment. Their anticipated bills include EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) classes for three individuals, a gas meter, a compressor, and their portion of the ESO Fire Records Management Software. Furthermore,

the maintenance costs for the Tanker, Engine, and Ladder Trucks have significantly increased from the previous year. Clerk Bourgeois stated the importance of having the trucks repaired. Discussion ensued regarding the use of funds from other line items that are now negatively impacting the Fire Company's budget. SVFCO Chief Maiorano also informed the Board they are investigating the most cost-effective way to purchase iPads that would allow them to properly record their actions directly into the ESO Program onsite. Chairman Dickson stated the Board's willingness to fund the Fire Company; the question is how much, from where the funds would derive, when the funds would be transferred, and their need to plan for the future. The Board will review the material and the budget and further discuss and act on the matter during their January Regular Meeting.

**7. CAPITAL PLAN DISCUSSION**

The Board Members reviewed the Capital Plan requests. Clerk Bourgeois reported that the Fire Company radios, mandated by the State, are not included in the packet. Emergency Management, Emergency Services, and Fire Companies are working together to create a plan to spread out the costs over two to three years. She noted that a grant for the radios was applied for and denied last year. Chairman Dickson reminded the Board that ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds continue to remain. He requested that any questions the Board might have regarding the requests be forwarded to him.

Bob Appleby Fields at Volunteer Park Pavilion (Board Member Casciano) – It was clarified that, in addition to the Pavilion, there are plans to expand the parking area and create an ADA-Accessible Walking Trail at Volunteer Park. There are also plans to extend the Multi-Purpose Path/Harris Brook Trail to the Fields at Round Hill Road. It was noted that due to drainage issues at the Round Hill Road Soccer Field, the Salem School Soccer Teams practice and play games at Bob Appleby Fields.

**8. 2024 – 2025 BUDGET CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The Board Members were encouraged to review any challenges, concerns, or opportunities they might see in the budget. Board Member Bernier suggested they review the Revenue, Revenue Use of Town Money, preliminary numbers for the Grand List, and other revenue opportunities, including ARPA Funds. Board Member Griggs suggested the possibility of initiating a cost-benefit analysis to invest funds into solar panels to save money in the future and research available grants. Board Member Rucci concurred, adding that it would be beneficial for Town Departments to research and apply for available grants to help fund their projects or operating costs. Chairman Dickson noted that the budgets for Emergency Services, per the recent release of the MRI (Municipal Resources, Inc.) Public Safety Study, and the BOE Budget in relation to the ECS (Educational Cost Sharing) Funding remains to be seen and stated the difficulty he is expecting to be faced with as they craft the budget. Clerk Bourgeois suggested they review any possible funding opportunities regularly.

## **9. LIAISON REPORTS**

### **A. BOE**

Board Member Liaison Griggs reported that the change from a part-time to a full-time Special Education Coordinator has proved beneficial and reduced costs as children are being monitored and diagnosed more appropriately. The line item transfers, reviewed by Business Manager Kim Gadaree, included projected estimates for the remainder of the fiscal year. The state upheld its previous ruling regarding the MBR (Minimum Budget Requirement), stating that the Town of Salem does not have a high school of record, but a cooperative agreement, making the Town ineligible. The Board questioned the ruling and will review the requirements. First Selectman Chmielewski stated that the members of the Board of Selectmen reviewed the BOE's request for a Non-Lapsing Account and voiced the need for caution and did not recommend they move forward with the account. Board Member Bernier cited Section 10.12(g), Expenditures, of the Salem Town Charter which states that "Except as otherwise provided by the Board of Finance, any portion of an appropriation remaining unexpended and unencumbered at the close of the fiscal year shall lapse." and felt that the establishment of a Non-Lapsing Account would constitute a violation of the Town Charter. He expressed his neutrality on the issue, adding that it may be beneficial should it not result in the raising of the Town's MBR. Clerk Bourgeois concurred and expressed her concerns regarding the lack of support from the Board of Selectmen. The Board will further review and discuss the item at a later date.

### **B. EMERGENCY SERVICES & SAFETY**

Clerk Bourgeois reiterated that the Capital Plan request for radios includes Emergency Services, Emergency Management, and Fire Companies. The grant application that was denied was a multi-town submission. No feedback was received as to the reason(s) for the denial.

**OLD BUSINESS** – *none*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**M/S/C: Bernier/Griggs, to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 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.**