

**TOWN OF SALEM
BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2019 – 7:00 P.M.
SALEM TOWN OFFICE BUILDING**

PRESENT

William “Skip” Dickson, Chairman
Marshall Collins, Clerk
Deborah Cadwell
Janet Griggs
John Houchin
Corinne (Cory) Bourgeois, Alternate (*seated*)
Maryann Casciano, Alternate

ABSENT

Hernan Salas
Michael Jensen, Alternate

ALSO PRESENT

First Selectman Kevin Lyden

CALL TO ORDER:

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

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS: *none*

SEAT ALTERNATE IF NEEDED:

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

COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Copy of a Memo sent to the Board Members, Board of Education Chairman Sean Reith, and First Selectman Lyden by Clerk Collins regarding the Governor’s Budget Proposals.
2. Copy of the Governor’s FY2020/21 allocation of funds to the town, as generated by Board Member Houchin.
3. Final copy of the Auditors’ Annual Financial Report and State Single Audit Report for the year ending June 30, 2018 from PKF O’Connor Davies, LLC.

AGENDA:

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: JANUARY 24, 2019 SPECIAL MEETING

M/S/C: Collins/Cadwell, to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of January 24, 2019, with the following amendment:

Page 3, Item 4(A):

**M/S/C: Collins/Cadwell, to approve the Board of Selectmen’s supplemental appropriation in the amount of ~~\$1,800.00~~ \$1,350.00 to line item 5-610-261, Inland Wetlands Conservation Commission, Legal Service.
Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0-2. Voting in Favor: Board Members Bourgeois, Cadwell, Collins, and Dickson. Voting in Opposition: None. Voting in Abstention: Board Members Griggs and Houchin.

M/S/C: Collins/Houchin, to rescind the motion approving the Special Meeting Minutes of January 24, 2019, as amended. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

M/S/C: Collins/Houchin, to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of January 24, 2019, as presented. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0-2. Voting in Favor: Board Members Bourgeois, Cadwell, Collins, and Dickson. Voting in Opposition: None. Voting in Abstention: Board Members Griggs and Houchin.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Salem Free Public Library Director Vicky Coffin and Library Board Chairperson Susan Butler provided a brief presentation of their request for an additional appropriation of \$11,000.00 in the library staffing line item of the Salaries budget that was presented to the Board of Selectmen. The Library's number of hours and staffing cost, efficiency, economic feasibility, and a comparison of comparable libraries were reviewed with respect to the amount of time the Library Director is spending at the circulation desk (estimated at 35-40% or 14 of the Director's 37 hour work week), rather than attending to her duties as the Head Librarian were discussed. The Library Board recommends that the Library be staffed with two members at all times during its hours of operation. With the Library Director often serving as the second staff member, the Library is left with the potential of being understaffed in the event of illness or personal emergency(ies). The additional funding would increase the employees' safety, be more cost effective, and allow the Director and staff to attend professional development courses. It was noted that the Board of Selectmen voted to approve a salary increase of 5%, while the other Departments' salaries were increased by 3%.

4. PROPOSED APPROPRIATIONS FOR FY2019-2020

A. #118 – TAX COLLECTOR

Tax Collector Cheryl Philophena presented the budget request for the Department #118 – Tax Collector, which remains flat.

M/S/C: Griggs/Collins, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$13,655.00 for Department #118 – Tax Collector, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance's March 21, 2019 Special Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

B. #230 – AMBULANCE

Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company Chief James Savalle presented the budget request for Department #230 – Ambulance, which includes a total increase of \$4,057.00. He corrected line item 5-230-624, Repair/Maintenance of Equipment, which should read a variance of \$4,800.00 rather than the \$8,800.00, as indicated. The budget also includes increases in the line items for Insurance and Bio Hazard Transport as well as a \$1,000.00 decrease for

Uniforms, which was transferred to the General Government budget. An asterisk with an explanation will be added to the Lucas Heart Device and Stryker Lifting Device Contract noting that these are newly added items; the same will be added for those items which are also utilized by the Salem Volunteer Fire Company.

M/S/C: Collins/Houchin, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$46,512.00 for Department #230 – Ambulance, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 21, 2019 Special Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

C. #220 – GARDNER LAKE VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company Chief Savalle presented the budget for Department #220 – Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company, which includes an increase of \$4,347.00. Notations indicating those items which are utilized by both Fire Companies will be added. Discussion ensued regarding the additional allocation of \$3,000.00 in the Chief’s Account (line item 5-220-436) for the purpose of providing one hot meal and a bus ride to the 25 members and his/her significant others who do not receive a stipend as a token of gratitude. It was noted that, in all due fairness, the same increase should be allocated to the Salem Volunteer Fire Company for the same purpose. Banquets are no longer being provided due to the time and energy that it takes to raise the funds to hold the banquets. The explanation for the hot meal, etc. will be deleted and the Chief’s account will be increased by \$625.00 to coincide with that of the Salem Volunteer Fire Company.

M/S/C: Collins/Griggs, to approve an increase of \$625.00 for line item 5-220-436, Chief’s Account (total \$2,500.00), and approve the total appropriation of funds in the amount of \$79,442.00 for Department #220 – Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 21, 2019 Special Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

M/S/C: Griggs/Collins, to remove line item 5-220-626, Tanker Pumper, from Department #220 – Gardner Lake Fire Company. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

D. #116 – ASSESSOR

First Selectman Lyden introduced Assessor Mike Kapinos and reminded the Board of the inclusion of the one-time mandatory upgrade for the Vision 8 software (line item 5-116-436). Per the Auditor, the item was moved from the town’s Capital Plan to the Assessor’s budget. Board Member Collins informed the Board that he would be abstaining from voting on the item as the Assessor’s Statewide are clients of his. Assessor Kapinos reported that he, along with Assessor Barbara Perry, met with Vision and were able to negotiate a \$5,000.00 decrease. It was clarified that the upgrade (one-time fee) costs \$14,500.00 with an annual cloud fee of \$4,500.00. Line item 5-116-436 will be renamed “Vision 8 Software System”.

M/S/C: Houchin/Griggs, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$31,100.00 for Department #116 – Assessor, subject to review and/or revision, pending approval at the Board of Finance’s March 21, 2019 Special Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0-1. Voting in Favor: Board Members Bourgeois, Cadwell, Dickson, Griggs, and Houchin. Voting in Opposition: None. Voting in Abstention: Board Member Collins.

E. #158 – LIBRARY

Library Board Chairperson Butler presented the budget request for Department #158 – Library, which includes a 7% increase of \$2,300.00 due to the replacement of three computers; Junior Library Guild Children’s book subscription, which will help compensate for the depletion of the Urbanik Fund, and; an increase in Bibliomation fees. Library Director Coffin reported that \$4,500.00 was unexpectedly received from the State and they are anticipating the same for the next fiscal year. In response to Alternate Board Member Casciano, Library Director Coffin stated that approximately 10 internet sessions/day take place and the library is visited by 34,000 patrons/year.

M/S/C: Houchin/Collins, to eliminate line item 5-158-630, Alarm Fee, in the budget for Department #158 – Library. Discussion: The line item has been moved to the General Government budget. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

M/S/C: Collins/Houchin, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$36,650.00 for Department #158 – Library, subject to review and/or revision, pending the Board of Finance’s March 21, 2019 Special Meeting. Discussion: The Board requested they be provided with the State’s proposed funding for libraries so that the Board might better gauge the town’s overall budget. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

Library Director Coffin reiterated their request for the additional appropriation for library staffing when they review the salaries budget.

F. #600 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)

EDC Chairman Elbert Burr presented the budget request for Department #600 – Economic Development Commission, which includes a \$300.00 increase from the previous fiscal year for the purpose of EDC-related courses, and promotional materials. He briefly discussed the booklet, comprised of the town’s businesses, which is slated for completion in the coming month(s). A brief discussion ensued regarding the Commission’s need for an additional appropriation for funds to cover the costs for producing, publishing, and mailing the booklet.

M/S/C: Cadwell/Collins, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$1,700.00 for Department #600 – Economic Development Commission, subject to review and/or revision, pending the Board of Finance’s March 21, 2019 Special Meeting. Discussion: The Board agreed to cut the Commission’s proposed budget by \$100.00 for the EDC-related courses to keep in line with the other department budgets. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

G. #610 – INLAND WETLANDS & CONSERVATION COMMISSION

First Selectman Lyden presented the budget request for Department #610 – Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission, which includes an increase of \$1,950.00 for legal services, conferences, and mileage. The Commission's budget was decreased over the past two years, with the understanding that any necessary additional appropriations might be requested at that time. The budget includes \$1,000.00 for the GIS expense, whose cost is divided by the IWCC, Planning & Zoning Commission, and Assessor. As such, the Commission's total current budget is, in actuality, \$350.00, for legal services, conferences, mileage, and engineering.

M/S/C: Collins/Cadwell, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$3,200.00 for Department #610 – Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission, subject to review and/or revision, pending the Board of Finance's March 21, 2019 Special Meeting. Discussion: The Board agreed to cut the Commission's proposed budget by \$100.00 for Conferences, in line with the other departments' budgets. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

H. #630 – PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

Chairperson Ruth Savalle presented a flat budget for Department #630 – Planning & Zoning Commission, with the understanding that any necessary additional appropriations might be requested at that time.

M/S/C: Houchin/Collins, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$14,500.00 for Department #630 – Planning & Zoning Commission, subject to review and/or revision, pending the Board of Finance's March 21, 2019 Special Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

I. #640 – ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS (ZBA)

M/S/C: Houchin/Collins, 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 the Board of Finance's March 21, 2019 Special Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

J. #710 – MUNICIPAL INSURANCE

First Selectman Lyden presented the budget request for Department #710 – Municipal Insurance, which includes an increase of \$3,294.00, covering a 2% rate increase for the town's buildings and properties, with the exception of the school, and the town's tanks, bonds, and crime.

M/S/C: Collins/Houchin, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$124,426.00 for Department #710 – Municipal Insurance, subject to review and/or revision, pending the Board of Finance's March 21, 2019 Special Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

K. #810 – UNANTICIPATED EXPENSES

M/S/C: Houchin/Griggs, to approve the appropriation of funds in the amount of \$1,000.00 for Department #810 – Unanticipated Expenses, subject to review and/or revision, pending the Board of Finance’s March 21, 2019 Special Meeting. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

J. #935 – REVALUATION

First Selectman Lyden stated that the town’s revaluation will be conducted in FY2020/21 and no funding will be necessary for the FY2019/20 budget.

4. DISCUSSION REGARDING DEDICATION FOR ANNUAL REPORT

The Board discussed dedicating the Annual Report to Norm & Judy Rabe and Stu & Judy Gadbois, all of whom have greatly contributed to the community. Chairman Dickson will contact former Board of Finance Chairman George Householder to create the dedication for the Gadbois' and Board Member Griggs will create the dedication for the Rabe's. Clerk Collins will be available to edit the dedications. First Selectman Lyden requested that the dedications along with a photo(s) be submitted within two-weeks to the First Selectman's office. Salem's 200th Anniversary will be recognized on the cover of the Annual Report.

M/S/C: Collins/Houchin, to dedicate the Annual Report to Stu and Judy Gadois & Norm and Judy Rabe. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.

5. INITIAL DISCUSSION OF GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET POTENTIAL IMPACT

Clerk Collins' memo providing a brief overview of the provisions being proposed by Governor Ned Lamont was discussed. The provisions should be considered by both the BOE and Board of Finance during their budget discussions. Provisions include an acceleration to the reduction of the town's ECS (Educational Cost Sharing) funding of over \$300,000.00 for both fiscal years 2020 and 2021; consolidation/regionalization of services for small towns, i.e., Superintendent/Central Office-sharing, and; teacher retirement contribution by the town(over \$19,000.00 for FY2020 and nearly \$40,000.00 for FY2021). In reviewing the proposal, Clerk Collins estimated that the town is looking at an overall cut of approximately \$500,000.00 in State funding. Board Member Griggs added that the State's special education funding to the town might also be reduced. Other discussions taking place at the State level include regional revaluation and the sharing of town services.

Board Member Houchin suggested the possibility of submitting an article to *Our Town Salem*, informing the townspeople of their restraints due to the State's ongoing fiscal crisis. Clerk Collins stressed the importance of discussing the BOE's budget, which is based on a flatly-funded ECS Grant, at their next meeting.

Board Member Griggs questioned the process should they have any questions regarding the BOE budget. It was agreed that any questions the Board might have should be directed to Chairman Dickson, who will forward the questions to the appropriate party in preparation for their next meeting. The Board expressed their appreciation to the BOE for providing a brief preview of their proposed budget.

OLD BUSINESS: *none*

ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C: Houchin/Collins, to adjourn the meeting at 9:43 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