

**BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 27, 2020**

I. OATH OF OFFICE

Ann Dearstyne, Town Clerk, administered the Oath of Office to the new or returning Board of Finance members: Thomas Harrison, Cathy Salchert, and Ellen Retelle.

II. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was opened at 7:01 p.m. at the Avon Town Hall by Ann Dearstyne, Town Clerk. Members present: Thomas Harrison, Catherine Durdan, Margaret Bratton, Ken Birk, Cathy Salchert, Katrina Marin, and Ellen Retelle. A quorum was present.

III. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION OF BOARD OF FINANCE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR/SECRETARY

Ann Dearstyne, Town Clerk, requested nominations from the Board for a Chairperson.

On a motion made by Ken Birk, seconded by Cathy Durdan, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Board of Finance vote to elect Tom Harrison as the Chairman of the Board of Finance.

Mr. Birk, Mmes: Bratton, Durdan, Marin, Retelle, and Salchert voted in favor. Mr. Harrison abstained.

Ann Dearstyne, Town Clerk, requested nominations from the Board for a Vice Chair/Secretary.

On a motion made by Ellen Retelle, seconded by Katrina Marin, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Board of Finance vote to elect Cathy Salchert as the Vice Chair/Secretary of the Board of Finance.

Mmes: Salchert, Marin, and Retelle voted in favor. Motion failed 3-4.

On a motion made by Margaret Bratton, seconded by Ken Birk, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Board of Finance vote to elect Cathy Durdan as the Vice Chair/Secretary of the Board of Finance.

Mmes: Bratton, Durdan, Messrs: Harrison and Birk voted in favor. Motion carried 4-3.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Cathy Durdan.

V. COMMUNICATION FROM THE AUDIENCE

Mr. Harrison reported that the Board of Education (BOE) will not be continuing with a liaison; the Board could request a BOE member to attend a particular meeting to discuss an agenda item if necessary.

VI. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING:

December 16, 2019 Meeting

On a motion made by Ken Birk, seconded by Cathy Durdan, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Board of Finance approves the minutes of the December 16, 2019 Meeting as drafted.

Messrs: Harrison, Birk, and Mmes: Bratton, Salchert, and Durdan voted in favor. Mmes: Retelle and Marin abstained.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

19/20-05 Review and Discussion: FY 20/21 Budget

Mr. Harrison noted that he met today with Chairpersons of the Town Council and Board of Education and the budget overall is anticipated to come in higher than last year; the Council should have a budget to recommend to the Board by the end of February. Ms. Salchert noted that the Council is holding their budget workshop on Saturday, February 8th. Ms. Salchert commented that the Board of Education adopted the Superintendent's proposed budget last week. In response to a question from Ms. Retelle, Mr. Harrison responded that there are no concrete numbers at this point. Ms. Salchert noted that the Board of Education is coming in at 4.76%. Mr. Harrison added that the Board of Education is not expecting much relief from the State.

The Town Manager's Office will receive the Board of Education's FY 21 proposed budget document this week. Mr. Robertson noted that on the Town side we continue to work on putting together the budget. He will have items to discuss with Town Council at their budget workshop. He noted that the Grand List will likely have an approximate 0.5% increase. Legislators are going into a short session; the Governor's address may come out in early February; the teacher's pension will likely come back in some form. In response to a question from Mr. Harrison, Mr. Robertson responded that taxes with the Avon Village Center will be incremental as permits are approved and will not be reflected in the Grand List until October 2020. In response to a question from Ms. Retelle, Mr. Robertson responded that we do not have a bottom line yet on the Town's side of the budget. Ms. Colligan noted that all debt and capital projects for the Town and Board of Education are in the Town budget; the Town operating budget may come in between 3-5%.

Mrs. Marin commented that the Board has the power to suggest a percentage cap on the Town and Board of Education's budgets. Mr. Harrison could not recall the Board ever conducting that practice. Mrs. Marin noted businesses closing in Town, the financial crisis at the State, and protecting the interest of the residents. Ms. Bratton added that we have made reductions at the Board's budget workshop in April; it is really about listening to the public; last year we also had the revaluation. Mr. Harrison noted the importance of getting residents out to vote on the budget in May. Ms. Salchert recommended advertising the budget meeting dates early and ongoing.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

19/20-10 Discuss Method of Board of Finance Packet Dissemination

The Board discussed past practice, how some other Board/Commission packets are distributed, and more time to review meeting material. Mrs. Marin noted that she has been picking up her last few packets; the packet for this meeting could have been e-mailed since it was small; reduces paper, saves time, and puts police services to better use. The Board requested that their meeting packets be received on Wednesday before the regular monthly meeting instead of Friday, unless circumstances indicate otherwise and are communicated to the Board. Going forward, a few Board members wish to pick up their packets at the Town Manager's Office while several others wish to follow the current procedure.

IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Monthly Financial Report Summary

Details were included in the packet report dated period ended 12/31/19 prepared and reported by Margaret Colligan. Ms. Colligan noted that revenues and expenditures continue to run in line. Ms. Salchert inquired about the Farmington sewer agreement under Legal and how long it will continue to run outside retainer and how much have we already spent. Mr. Robertson responded that a monthly payment is made to the Attorney and once any file exceeds hours there is a reach back provision which goes back approximately one and a half years; Farmington has been less than easy to work with and it will continue until it is done. Ms. Salchert commented that the concern is not spending money on legal advice, but rather to learn more in general. Mr. Robertson recommended discussing this item under Executive Session at a future Board meeting with an AWPCA member and possibly the Town Engineer present; to be scheduled following the

Town budget referendum. In response to a question from Ms. Bratton, Mr. Robertson responded that the new sewer use fees will begin in calendar year 2021.

B. Town & Public Safety Communications System Project

Mr. Robertson provided a brief background/summary regarding the project. The Town went through a Land Use process with the Canton Planning and Zoning Commission, they opened a public hearing which was continued but then their Board of Selectmen held a meeting and denied the request. We need to re-scope the project and are currently working with Motorola to look at other options but it will be difficult to achieve the level of coverage that we would have had with the Kingswood site. In response to a question from Mr. Birk, Mr. Robertson responded that we will do everything we can to make the alternative fit within the language of the referendum. Mr. Robertson noted that we will look into sites at Lovely, Ridgewood, and the Landfill with current commercial towers. Ms. Bratton recognized Cynthia Zdanukas for a great quote in a recent newspaper article summarizing the type of tower. Ms. Salchert commented that the way the article was read was that Canton had an opportunity to co-locate and would solve their problem by going with the Kingswood site, however it would appear that Canton needed to do more work on their end.

C. Miscellaneous – No other items were discussed.

X. **OTHER BUSINESS** – No other items were discussed.

XI. **ADJOURN**

On a motion made by Ken Birk, seconded by Katrina Marin, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Board of Finance adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m.

Messrs: Harrison, Birk, and Mmes: Bratton, Durdan, Salchert, Marin, and Retelle voted in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cathy Durdan, Vice Chair/Secretary

Attest: Jennifer Worsman, Clerk

All referenced material is available to the public in the Town Manager's Office.