

**BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 25, 2021**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. via GoToMeeting by Chairman Thomas Harrison. Members present: Chairman Thomas Harrison, Vice Chairman/Secretary Catherine Durdan, Ellen Retelle, Cathy Salchert, Katrina Marin, Margaret Bratton, and Ken Birk. A quorum was present.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Thomas Harrison.

III. COMMUNICATION FROM THE AUDIENCE - None

IV. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING:

December 21, 2020 Meeting

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

RESOLVED: That the Board of Finance approves the minutes of the December 21, 2020 Meeting as drafted.

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

V. OLD BUSINESS

20/21-05 Review and Discussion: FY 21/22 Budget

Mr. Robertson reported that the Town Council will receive the Town Manager's recommended budget by February 1st. In response to an inquiry from Mr. Harrison, Mr. Robertson responded that the Grand List is higher than what we have seen historically at around 1% which will take pressure off the levy. In response to an inquiry from Ms. Retelle, Mr. Robertson responded that the same budget copy that goes to the Town Council will also be posted on the web site; the Saturday budget workshop is based on the budget that will be distributed on or about February 1st.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

20/21-14 Board of Education Request for Special Revenue Fund: Technology Protection Plan

Dr. Bridget Carnemolla, Superintendent of Schools, reported they want to offer a way for their families to have technology protection for chromebooks that students began using before the pandemic; the goal in their strategic plan is to furnish each student with their own device utilized at school and home with a managed device through a more secured network at school and for teachers to monitor use. She added that we want to insure families against damage that may occur with the chromebooks; research was done from a legal perspective and a policy has been drafted; the final step is for the Board of Finance to approve the fund. She introduced Susan Russo, Business Manager, with Avon Public Schools and the Board members welcomed her.

In response to a question from Ms. Retelle, Dr. Carnemolla responded that each student in Grades 2 through 12 has a chromebook; they are backfilling in Grade 1 and have sets presently for Pre-K and K. In response to a question from Ms. Retelle, Dr. Carnemolla responded that the protection plan could cover other devices but their focus is to establish coverage for chromebooks. In response to a question from Ms. Retelle, Ms. Russo responded that it is a self-funded insurance policy. In response to a question from Ms. Retelle, Dr. Carnemolla responded that they have not yet established the insurance premium cost for the families but the average in the Farmington Valley is \$30.10, it ranges from \$20 to \$45 statewide, and they are looking

at coming in at \$30, just below the Farmington Valley average. In response to a question from Mr. Harrison, Dr. Carnemolla responded that chromebooks were not assigned for some time so it was hard to track damage incidents; now they are being inventoried and in the first seven weeks of school there was just under \$3,000 in damages. In response to a question from Mr. Birk, Dr. Carnemolla responded that if the premium is \$30 and the chromebook is a complete loss they will get a new chromebook with no additional cost. Ms. Russo noted that a new keyboard costs \$124 on a \$297 chromebook and screen cracking can range from \$155 to \$185. In response to a question from Ms. Bratton, Dr. Carnemolla responded that this account is only for families to contribute to and if the expenses cost more than the premiums contributed, the difference would come out of the Board of Education technology supply budget line item, as is done at present. In response to a question from Ms. Bratton, Ms. Russo responded that the policy is specifically written for the repair or replacement of the chromebooks with thresholds not requiring Board of Education approval. Dr. Carnemolla clarified that a pallet of stolen chromebooks would require an insurance claim, but individual repairs/replacements would not result in insurance claims. In response to a question from Ms. Bratton, Mr. Robertson responded that with any of our special revenue funds there is an appropriation at the beginning of the fiscal year with a defined revenue source and defined expenditure object and any appropriation unspent at the end of the fiscal year closes to this special revenue fund unassigned fund balance. Ms. Retelle commented that this is a fiscally smart thing for the school district to do and help mitigate some losses they are incurring and based on her experience in education.

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

RESOLVED: That the Board of Finance hereby approves the establishment of Special Revenue Fund – Technology Protection Plan.

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

VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Monthly Financial Report Summary

Details were included in the packet report dated period ended 12/31/20 prepared and reported by Tom DiStasio. He noted that collections are a little higher than last year at this time. He added that Charges for Services are lagging as a result of the Special Education Interdistrict Tuition not being received yet from CREC, in addition to COVID-19 restrictions with recreational sports/activities. In response to a question from Ms. Bratton, Mr. DiStasio responded that the 13.08% in Unassigned Fund Balance was not during a typical year; it is a good number and our policy is to keep it above 10%. Mr. Robertson noted that the rating agencies look for a policy which we have in place; AAA communities tend to be higher, 15-18% is not unheard of. In response to a question from Ms. Retelle, Mr. DiStasio responded that with regards to utility expenditures, the reference is related to our detailed quarterly report. Mr. Robertson noted that there is nothing out of the ordinary here in terms of the operation that is going on. He added that our costs are locked in through contracts. In response to a question from Ms. Retelle, Mr. DiStasio responded that the \$140,000 for the COVID-19 Relief Fund has been received; it was expressed as being available for use to defray costs and emergency response associated with COVID-19; we plan on discussing how to utilize that money to offset general fund expenditures associated with the pandemic.

B. AHS Turf Field Lighting

Mr. Robertson reported that ACORN fundraisers completed their campaign at the end of December and they plan to present a check to the Town Council at their next meeting on February 4th. He added that we would like to place the order as soon as possible which would require a special meeting of the Board of Finance on February 8th or 9th. In response to a question from Ms. Marin, Mr. Robertson responded that if we wait another two weeks to take action at the Board's next regular meeting, the lead time on ordering the poles is out to the end of March. In response to a question from Ms. Retelle, Mr. Robertson responded that the amount being approved will not be more than what the Board authorized at your last meeting.

C. AHS Roof Top Unit Replacement Project

Mr. Robertson reported that if we receive the grant from Eversource for 50% of the project costs, it would go before Town Council for a supplemental appropriation for the full project cost at their February 4th meeting followed by approval from the Board of Finance.

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

IX. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**: Pending Claim/Litigation – Farmington Wastewater Treatment Plant

On a motion made by Margaret Bratton, seconded by Ellen Retelle, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Board of Finance enter into Executive Session at 7:48 p.m.

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

Brandon Robertson-Town Manager and the Clerk attended the session.

X. **ADJOURN**

On a motion made by Tom Harrison, seconded by Ellen Retelle, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Board of Finance adjourn the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

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