

Town of Cromwell, CT
Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
Thursday, November 17, 2016
Town Hall Room 7:00 P.M. Room 224/225

Minutes and Record of Vote

Present: Chairman John Henehan, Vice-Chairman Julius Neto, Joseph Corlis, Allan Spotts, Bob Milardo and Alternate Jon Dzurka

Not Present: Amanda Drew, Alternate Dan Kelly and Town Manager Anthony Salvatore

Also Present: Finance Director Marianne Sylvester, Board of Ed Finance Director Eve Spencer and Police Chief Denise Lamontagne

Call To Order – Chairman John Henehan called the Regular Meeting dated November 17, 2016 to order at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance – The Pledge of Allegiance was said by all.

Seat Alternates – Motion was made by Mr. Neto and seconded by Mr. Spotts to seat Alternate Jon Dzurka. *All in Favor – Motion Passed.*

Approval of Agenda – A motion was made by Mr. Neto and seconded by Mr. Corlis to approve the agenda dated November 17, 2016 and to add the Pledge of Allegiance to it. *All in Favor – Motion Passed*

Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings –

Regular Meeting October 27, 2016 – A motion was made by Mr. Neto and seconded by Mr. Spotts to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting dated October 27, 2016. *4 in Favor and 1 abstained – Motion Passed*

Citizens Report – None

Report of the Town Manager – Report of the Town Manager was presented by Finance Director Marianne Sylvester. Ms. Sylvester reported per the request of the Town Manager to report on the issues that took place over the last month and they are as follows:

- Interviews for the Library Director has been narrowed down to 3 candidates and are being called back for second interview and hope to have a decision by Thanksgiving or shortly thereafter.
- CRT provides the Meals on Wheels program and they are asking all the towns of Middlesex County for additional funds to assist the program. Otherwise they will need to cut the program by approximately 30%. It has not been decided how Cromwell will be handling it. It would require another \$25,000 or so in a supplemental appropriation or some other funds to support this program in the extent we currently provide for our

residents. This includes shut-ins and meals provide through our Senior Center to our senior citizens. Ms Sylvester had spoke to the Director of this program and they were hoping to have the funds by December 1, 2016. She explained that the town does not work that quickly. Further discussion will take place with parties concerned in regards to how it will be decided to support this program. Discussion also took place as how this request became to (State Funds were cut from this program).

- Election Day went smoothly. Town Manager Anthony Salvatore commended the Registrars office personnel, police department and public works for a job well done. Chairman Henehan noted that approximately 80% of the town voters voted.
- Tax Collector is still out on medical leave and hopes to return to work within the next week or two. Ms Sylvester noted that the staff is doing a wonderful job in his absence. The Assessor's office and Ms. Sylvester's department have been supporting them with reconciliation and assist with any other matters they may come across.
- A grant was received for the Coles Road reconstruction. The Boards will be approached for Supplemental Appropriation for the Town's share of approximately \$225,000. This will be discussed and proposed in the December 2016 meeting.
- The Town Manager also wanted Ms. Sylvester to mention the budget noting that legal fees may be higher. The Boat Club is challenging the extension of their contract and the payment amount. He just wanted to let everyone know that this one of those things that impacts the legal fees. There was discussion as to what can be done to minimize the cost to get the matter resolved.
- Also the Public Works contract has been approved and is waiting for a date for signing the contract, as well as the Police Department's contract.

Report of the Finance Director – Finance Director Marianne Sylvester reported that our financial reports confirmed our AAA rating due to being strong in numerous areas (economy, management, institutional framework, pension funding, etc). Mr. Neto requested clarification about the strong economy and it was based on Cromwell's strong economy (not the State).

Report of The Tax Collector – In the absence of Tax Collector Doug Sienna Ms. Sylvester reported that the collections report included in the packet provided prior to the meeting is on target and came in as expected for the end of September. Refer to the report for details. It was noted that Cromwell's labor market compared to Hartford's shows a lower unemployment rate.

Ms. Sylvester also noted that they sold bonds today. It was decided after considerable deliberation (should we wait for things to settle, interest rates going up, etc.) but decided to go ahead with today's bond sales and table the intended refunding. It just didn't prove to have efficiency at this point. The savings would be just enough to cover the issuance of it. Overall we did very well. We ended up with the true interest cost of 2.866% and the all in was 2.983% (that was for \$5.5 million). Given where we were Cromwell would not have gotten 3% but was told that Cromwell was getting value from the AAA rating. Documentation will be provided as to what the difference would have been from an AAA to an AA rating.

Ms. Sylvester also mentioned that they have been working on the audit and that the first draft should be release next week. There were issues with the Tax Collector's report. The auditors proposed a suggestion or two that may assist in reconciling the numbers (for example: running a report that the tax collector runs annually and run it monthly as well). It was asked as to what kind of issues and Ms. Sylvester mentioned a couple of examples.

The current year's budget is on target. Legal will differ from month to month. Labor Relations should be going down. Projects are still being ironed out according to the Town Manager.

Report of the Tax Collector – Finance Director Marianne Sylvester reported for the Tax Collector and mention that collections were strong. 58% have been collected as of the end of October 2016. Supplemental Motor Vehicle tax bills will be going out in December and the second half of the Property Taxes will be collected in January 2017. Prior years taxes look strong again. A copy of the Tax Collector's Report was included in the packet for your review.

Old Business – None

New Business –

1. Discussion and action to appropriate \$33,900 with the CNR Fund to support the 2016-17 DUI grant (75% will be reimbursed). A motion was made by Mr. Milardo and seconded by Mr. Corlis to appropriate \$33,900 with the CNR Fund to support the 2016-17 DUI grant. ***All in Favor – Motion Passed.***

Police Chief Denise Lamontagne included in the packet a memo stating the need for the funds for the DUI grant and also referenced that 75% of the funds will be reimbursed to the town. Chief discussed the particulars of the grant, which includes four checkpoints and 36 roving patrols. There was some discussion as to possibly rotating the location of the checkpoints and it was noted that accessibility and safety was a deciding factor as to where the checkpoint are done.

Mr. Neto proposed the matter as this, constant from year to year (or standard operating procedure), be handle differently to avoid taking the time of a town employee to discuss or present matter such as this. A presentation should be made in front of all parties at one time and then discussed in detail during their separate meetings. It is costing the town to have these individuals (such as the Chief) to present the need for funds to more than one Board/committee when it can be done at one time. Just a suggestion and would appreciate thought be given to it. Discussion as to the parameters to be set for matters of this type should be evaluated and considered.

Chairman Henahan also asked the Chief about the body/car cameras and the cost involved with backing up the data. Chief explained the particulars as to how the data is transferred from the body cameras compared to the car cameras, what is involved in reviewing and storing of this data. She mentioned that the transferring of data is cumbersome and time intensive (storing, reviewing, etc.).

2. Set time and dates for 2017 regular Board of Finance meetings. A motion was made by Mr. Neto and seconded by Mr. Corlis to authorize the setting of time and dates for 2017 regular Board of Finance meetings. ***All in favor – Motion Passed.***

Additional discussion took place as to streamlining matters to more than one board or committee and minimizing the attendance of town personnel to have to attend said meetings. If it can be presented via letter, memo and/or report of some kind, then this should be considered. Requested that this procedure be tweaked and implemented.

Board of Education-Liaison Report – Mr. Corlis reported that the Board of Ed met on November 15th and the Board of Ed Director Eve Spencer stated that there are no major changes to the budget. The soft freeze imposed by the Superintendent has been lifted. The Special Education budget has only one line item that is in a deficit on the tuition budget line. The deficit is \$30,216 and there is an excess cost reimbursement for it. No funds have been moved at this time and that concludes his report. Ms. Spencer added that the tuition is due to the cost of kids going to the magna schools and they have not been billed for all the kids attending the magna schools. Discussion took place with concerns from the Board and responses from Ms. Spencer.

Chairman's Comments – Chairman John Henahan congratulated the Finance Director and her staff for helping the Town of Cromwell to maintain their AAA rating saving the town significant money. He also mentioned that there has been discussion with the Charter Revision about not having a Finance Board. He stated that the Board of Finance might not play a major role in making financial decisions but do to some extent for the sake of the town citizens.

Chairman Henahan also mentioned that there is an issue with the December 22nd meeting and would like to move it to December 19th (in Room 224) or December 20th (in the Arch Room). Most agreed to December 19th at 7:00 p.m. in Room 224. A motion was made by Mr. Neto and seconded by Mr. Corlis to hold The Board of Finance's Regular Meeting on December 19, 2016. ***4 agreed and 1 abstained – Motion Passed.***

Vice-Chairman's Comments – Wishing everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Good and Welfare – The Board wishes Doug Sienna a speedy recovery.

Adjournment – A motion was made by Mr. Milardo and seconded by Mr. Corlis to adjourn meeting at 7:55 p.m. ***All in Favor – Motion Passed***

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Hardacker

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Recording Clerk