

**TOWN OF CROMWELL BOARD OF FINANCE  
REGULAR MEETING  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2022 7:00 pm  
CROMWELL TOWN HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
MEETING MINUTES**

PRESENT: Chairman John Ireland, Vice Chairman Steve Wygonowski, Dan Kelly, Ed Maley, Matthew Blanchette, Brian Stermer, Alternate Gail Richey

ALSO PRESENT: Town Manager Anthony Salvatore, Director of Finance Marianne Sylvester, Assistant Director of Finance Sharon DeVoe, Director of Public Works William Russo, Board of Education member Katherine Russ

A. CALL TO ORDER – John Ireland called the meeting to order at 7:01PM.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – The Pledge of Allegiance was said by all.

C. APPROVE AGENDA

D. SEAT ALTERNATES - None

E. CITIZENS COMMENTS –

Kelly McTeague, 20 Senator Drive, spoke on behalf of athletes at Cromwell High School in their support to have the tennis courts at Watrous Park be reconstructed.  
Zack Daniele, 23 Hicksville Road, is a tennis player at Cromwell High School and wants to be able to have a home court for his senior year.

F. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion and action regarding an appropriation within the American Rescue Plan Act Fund for the tennis court reconstruction at Watrous Park for \$900,000.
  - a. Town Manager, Anthony Salvatore, presented to Board of Finance a request to use \$900,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act Fund to reconstruct the 6 tennis courts and have two of the courts also compatible for pickleball. There was discussion on adding lights to the project. Director of Public Works, William Russo discussed the estimate that the town got and his ideas on the lights and type of court being placed in. There was also a discussion with both Anthony Salvatore and Director of Finance, Marianne Sylvester, about other projects that the town might use the ARPA money for.
  - b. Matthew Blanchette made a motion to appropriate \$900,000 within American Rescue Plan Act Fund for the tennis court reconstruction at Watrous Park. Steve Wygonowski seconded. **ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION PASSES.**
2. Set hearing and deliberation dates for the 2022-2023 budget.
  - a. After a discussion about availability the board decided to have their hearings on April 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> at 6PM with an additional day, if needed on April 14<sup>th</sup> at 6PM. Ed Maley made a motion to set the hearing and deliberation dates for April 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> at 6PM with an additional day, if needed on April 14<sup>th</sup> at 6PM. Steve Wygonowski seconded. **ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION PASSES.**

G. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

1. Regular Meeting, January 27, 2022
  - a. Ed Maley made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 16, 2021 meeting, Steve Wygonowski seconded. **ALL IN FAVOR MOTION PASSES.**

#### H. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

1. Town Manager Anthony Salvatore gave an update on various projects happening throughout the town.
  - a. The town has gone through the bid process for an architect to design the middle school
  - b. The town has finished putting together their budget and will present it before the Town Council before giving it the Board of Finance.
  - c. Exit 19 project should be wrapping up soon
  - d. Burlington Coat Factory will be going in next to Marshalls

#### I. REPORT OF THE FINANCE DIRECTOR

1. Director of Finance, Marianne Sylvester, present the budget through the end of January. She stated that they are watching legal and tax department.

#### J. REPORT OF THE TAX COLLECTOR

1. Director of Finance, Marianne Sylvester, presented a comparison of where the town stands with tax collection compared to other years. The town has collected 97% of their budgeted taxes.

#### K. BOARD OF EDUCATION LIAISON REPORT

1. Katherine Russ, Board of Education member, gave an update on the Board of Education
  - a. The Board of Education approved their budget
  - b. There was an increase, mostly in salaries, benefits and Special Education
  - c. They are moving to mask optional on Monday
  - d. Sports are doing amazing
  - e. The high school musical is back in person

#### L. CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS – Chairman John Ireland reminded everyone of the referendum on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. He also said he had materials to be added to the minutes and are attached.

#### M. VICE CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS – Vice Chairman Steve Wygonowski thanked everyone.

#### N. GOOD AND WELFARE - None

#### O. ADJOURNMENT – A motion was made to adjourn at 9:22 PM by Steve Wygonowski and seconded by Matthew Blanchette. **ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION PASSES.**

Respectfully Submitted

*Sara Kennedy*

Sara Kennedy



John Ireland &lt;cromwellbof@gmail.com&gt;

## February BOF Meeting - Agenda Email

10 messages

John Ireland &lt;cromwellbof@gmail.com&gt;

Fri, Feb 11, 2022 at 8:38 AM

To: ed maley <edmaley@snet.net>, Steven Wygonowski <Swygonowski@hotmail.com>, Gail Richey <Gwilleyr@yahoo.com>, Brian Stermer <bdstermer@comcast.net>, Matt Blanchette <matt.blanchette@outlook.com>, daniel.donna.kelly@snet.net, ahulick@aol.com

Good morning everyone,

I hope you are doing well. This is my monthly email asking about any topics or updates you may be looking for at our meeting in 2 weeks. If you have something please contact me directly and we can discuss.

As far as action items, I believe we will be looking at funding the reconstruction of the tennis courts over at Watrous Park (the Town Council took it up this week). In addition, we will be setting the dates for the budget workshops and meetings for late March / early April. Please bring your calendars with you.

The BOE did formally vote on their proposed budget at their last meeting and we should have a liaison update on the 24th.

Lastly, if you know that you will not be able to attend this monthly meeting, please send me an email ahead of time.

Give me a call if you have any questions. Thanks very much and have a great weekend.

John

DANIEL KELLY &lt;daniel.donna.kelly@snet.net&gt;

Tue, Feb 22, 2022 at 3:54 PM

To: John Ireland &lt;cromwellbof@gmail.com&gt;

Cc: Ed Maley <edmaley@snet.net>, Steven Wygonowski <Swygonowski@hotmail.com>, Gail Richey <Gwilleyr@yahoo.com>, Brian Stermer <bdstermer@comcast.net>, Matt Blanchette <matt.blanchette@outlook.com>, Anne Hulick <ahulick@aol.com>

Good Afternoon John

In reviewing the materials for the meeting on Thursday I see the information supporting the request for replacing the six tennis courts at Watrous Park using the American Rescue Plan Funds. While I am in general agreement with this type of capital expenditure I did have a couple of observations/questions ahead of the meeting ...

- I expected for this size of request, \$900,000 from the American Rescue Plan, we would receive a list with of projects under consideration with relevant information and prioritization provided by the Town. I did see an informal list of projects under consideration in the Finance Director's memo to the Town Manager however do not believe this provides the context necessary to make a decision regarding the Tennis Courts.

- I believe in September, when we approved the additional compensation to town employees from the American Rescue Plan, the question was raised about prioritization and the Board of Finance was told that a list was being developed and would be provided moving forward. Although the Board of Finance did approve the expenditure in September, it was for a much smaller amount than the current ask which represents approximately 23% of the remaining funds.

- There was a brief discussion in the meeting materials considering both the courts Cromwell High School and Waltrous Park needing to be replaced. The materials provide the case for replacement and not repair at this stage. However it does not discuss why Watrous Park and not CHS should be the courts replaced at this point based on the priorities of the town. If the courts at CHS were replaced would the funds from the American Rescue Plan provided to the school be available for the funding? I am not suggesting that CHS is the right answer only if this was a consideration.

My overall observation and question is that it does not appear this process for utilizing the American Rescue Plan funds is following the Capital Planning Process; i.e., all projects under consideration for the fiscal year being prioritized and communicated with relevant information to be discussed, debated and voted on ... should it be and if not what is the

Board of Finance role?

Thanks. Dan

[Quoted text hidden]

---

**John Ireland** <cromwellbof@gmail.com>  
To: DANIEL KELLY <daniel.donna.kelly@snet.net>

Tue, Feb 22, 2022 at 4:37 PM

Dan,

What's your cell?

[Quoted text hidden]

---

**DANIEL KELLY** <daniel.donna.kelly@snet.net>  
To: John Ireland <cromwellbof@gmail.com>

Tue, Feb 22, 2022 at 5:21 PM

Cell number is 860-212-1604. Call me when you have a chance.

Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail for iPhone

[Quoted text hidden]

---

**John Ireland** <cromwellbof@gmail.com>  
To: DANIEL KELLY <daniel.donna.kelly@snet.net>

Tue, Feb 22, 2022 at 5:24 PM

Is tomorrow OK? I just got into Hartford for the Uconn game, but definitely want to address your questions.

[Quoted text hidden]

---

**DANIEL KELLY** <daniel.donna.kelly@snet.net>  
To: John Ireland <cromwellbof@gmail.com>

Tue, Feb 22, 2022 at 5:27 PM

Absolutely. Enjoy the game. We can talk tomorrow. Thanks Dan

Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail for iPhone

[Quoted text hidden]

---

**John Ireland** <cromwellbof@gmail.com>  
To: DANIEL KELLY <daniel.donna.kelly@snet.net>  
Cc: Ed Maley <edmaley@snet.net>, Steven Wygonowski <Swygonowski@hotmail.com>, Gail Richey <Gwilleyr@yahoo.com>, Brian Stermer <bdstermer@comcast.net>, Matt Blanchette <matt.blanchette@outlook.com>, Anne Hulick <ahulick@aol.com>

Wed, Feb 23, 2022 at 1:10 PM

Dan,

Thank you for your email. Here is some information related to your comments / questions:

- Even though there have been changes made as to how the funds can be utilized, some restrictions are still in place (i.e. these cannot be used to reduce taxes or pension obligations), so the approvals for these funds would be separate. This is considered a non-renewable revenue source.
- Concerning the "why now" with this ask, here are some of the items discussed during the Town Council meeting. There were discussions around getting started on this as soon as possible so the townspeople can utilize the new courts quickly. Also, doing this now would (1) get a jump on obtaining bids and ensuring that the contractor(s) would be available and (2) lock-in on a price before they increase.
- The Town Council has deemed this a "high-priority" item. The other items that have been initially identified are being explored as to the cost and how they can be done appropriately & efficiently. The town is proceeding cautiously with the list, as again, these would be from a one-time revenue source.

Let me know if you want to discuss further. Otherwise I will see you tomorrow night. Thanks.

John

[Quoted text hidden]

---

**ed maley** <edmaley@snet.net>

Wed, Feb 23, 2022 at 3:09 PM

To: John Ireland &lt;cromwellbof@gmail.com&gt;

Cc: DANIEL KELLY &lt;daniel.donna.kelly@snet.net&gt;, Steven Wygonowski &lt;swygonowski@hotmail.com&gt;, Gail Richey &lt;gwilleyr@yahoo.com&gt;, Brian Stermer &lt;bdstermer@comcast.net&gt;, Matt Blanchette &lt;matt.blanchette@outlook.com&gt;, Anne Hulick &lt;ahulick@aol.com&gt;

John,

I just want to support Dan's questions. Although I understand there were some vague discussions in the town Council about other projects, that doesn't seem to me to be anything like a priority list. Yes, we are limited in the things we can do with this money, but the breadth of the possibilities is quite large, even to the point that we have already used a portion to give a bonus to certain employees. In any case, none of that tells us one way or another whether this is a priority item or not. It's hard to understand how the town Council could pick this as a priority item when they were choosing from a list of one. I don't see anything in their minutes about this being designated as a priority in anyway, other than they simply voted for it. My understanding, without my having been there, is that there was also a discussion about infrastructure improvements relative to sewer and, notwithstanding the fact that this is a District issue, water. The tennis courts sound like they definitely need repair and probably replacement, but it's hard to spend this kind of money in a vacuum. This is around 20% of the amount of money we will get over the two-year period. The number on some of those other items could be extremely high, as we all know, notwithstanding that they are not as much "fun" as tennis courts. I think, at the very least, it would be helpful for the administration to explain to us why they have not made a broad study of other items, or, if they have, why they haven't shared that with us. We certainly shouldn't be funding things in the order that they happen to randomly come up, notwithstanding the fact that we seem to have done that many times in the past. I certainly wouldn't characterize that course as cautious.

Also, where did the number \$900,000 come from?

Ed

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 23, 2022, at 1:10 PM, John Ireland <cromwellbof@gmail.com> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]

---

**John Ireland** <cromwellbof@gmail.com>

Wed, Feb 23, 2022 at 5:00 PM

To: jamh062349@comcast.net

[Quoted text hidden]

---

**John Ireland** <cromwellbof@gmail.com>

Wed, Feb 23, 2022 at 7:43 PM

To: ed maley &lt;edmaley@snet.net&gt;

Cc: DANIEL KELLY &lt;daniel.donna.kelly@snet.net&gt;, Steven Wygonowski &lt;swygonowski@hotmail.com&gt;, Gail Richey &lt;gwilleyr@yahoo.com&gt;, Brian Stermer &lt;bdstermer@comcast.net&gt;, Matt Blanchette &lt;matt.blanchette@outlook.com&gt;, Anne Hulick &lt;ahulick@aol.com&gt;

Ed,

From looking at the packet, here is how I believe they came up with the \$900k figure - \$688,000 x 1.18 for prevailing wage = \$811,840. When the Town Council passed this, I believe they were still anticipating the need to do some repair work before the new construction. That would add \$40,500 x 1.18 = \$47,790. Both combined together are approx. \$860k. If someone has different math please share.

Concerning your other questions, we can address those and see what responses we receive during the meeting.

2/25/22, 1:19 PM

Gmail - February BOF Meeting - Agenda Email

John

[Quoted text hidden]