

North Stonington Board of Finance Meeting
Meeting Minutes, Wednesday, Mar. 24, 2021
Zoom Meeting @7:00pm
North Stonington, CT

1. **Call to Order:** 7:01pm, Board of Finance members present: Chairman Dan Spring, Vice-Chair Paul Simonds, Dan Smith, Carolyn Howell, Mike Anderson, Anne Akin Alternates Brett Mastroianni and Sarah Nelson
2. **Public Comments*:**
 - a) Shawn Murphy- Heard that the plan was to get to 28.5mil (3.6% tax increase). He has given his opinion of what an acceptable tax increase should be, it should not exceed 28 mil (2%). We are looking at average increase in grand list, but we should be looking at median increase. There is very large range between the value of more expensive homes that increased in value and more modest homes that went way up in value, but average is skewed by a small number of expensive homes that drastically decreased in value. If we look at median increase we will get a better idea of how a mil rate increase will affect most people. More people fall into the category of having a greater increase in assessed home value than the 8% average shown by the grand list increase. Kingswood/Meadowood neighborhood saw 16% increase from reval, not 8%.
 - b) Brian Rathbun – In looking at the proposed budgets, sees that most of the increase is due to contractual labor agreements. Thinks that before any labor contract is agreed on, taxpayers should have some input. People are struggling, and the BoS and BoE budgets should be zeroed out for one more year, especially since he has heard of a proposed 2 mil tax increase by the state on towns that don't have 10% affordable housing.
 - c) Tom Marsh- Reiterating a point he brought up last night. Would very much like to hear that a committee will be formed to decide what will be done with the Covid relief funds.
 - d) Joe Gross-Town has more committees and subcommittees than townspeople. Would like to see meeting times decreased, marathon sessions get us nowhere.
3. **Correspondence:** Chairman Dan Spring had informal telephone call with Joe Gross to discuss the issues he brought up in his public comment.
4. **BoS Additional Appropriations Review:** review of two items that did not pass last week,
 - a) C3.47 Financial Software- \$60,325 for implementation of Infinite Visions financial and human resources software. Discussion followed.
Motion by Paul Simonds to send to town meeting the request for an additional appropriation for C3.47 financial software for the implementation of Infinite Visions in the amount of \$60,325. 2nd Mike Anderson
Vote: Aye-Paul Simonds, Mike Anderson, Dan Spring, Dan Smith, Carolyn Howell Nay-, Anne Akin 5/1/0 Motion passes
 - b) B26.01 NSVFC- \$55,000 for per diem staff- consensus is that American Rescue Plan should be used to cover this.

5. **Budget Review to Date-**

- a) Consensus that BoE budget is acceptable
- b) Consensus that line item 22.06 for 298NW Rd. should be increased from 50K to 100K since 6 month cost is 138K.
- c) Discussion on line item C1.19, F250 truck to postpone, buy used, proceed with 3 yr. lease.

Motion by Anne Akin to remove line item C1.19, \$20K for F250 Pickup truck from the budget this year. 2nd Dan Smith.

Vote: Aye-Dan Smith, Carolyn Howell, Anne Akin Nay- Paul Simonds, Mike Anderson, Dan Spring 3/3/0 Motion does not pass

- d) Land Acquisition Fund- Motion by Dan Smith to cut line item C3.15, Land Acquisition Fund to \$1K. 2nd Paul Simonds Discussion followed

Vote: Aye-Dan Smith, Carolyn Howell, Paul Simonds, Anne Akin Nay- Mike Anderson, Dan Spring 4/2/0 Motion passes.

- e) Discussion on reducing first selectman's salary, salary reduction vs reduction to part time position, day to day duties, research on 1st Selectman salaries in like towns, potential loss of qualified candidates, carrying through on promise to taxpayers.

Motion by Dan Smith to reinstate the pension for the first Selectman and reduce the salary of the 1st Selectman to be elected in 2021 to 50K. 2nd Anne Akin

Vote: Aye- Dan Smith, Paul Simonds, Anne Akin Nay- Mike Anderson, Dan Spring Abstain- Carolyn Howell 3/2/1 Motion passes

- f) Draft budget w/ tonight's changes:

BoE	14,371,465	1.78% increase
General Gov't	5,278,341	3.32% increase
Debt Redemption	1,382,949	14.84% increase
<u>Capital</u>	<u>272,253</u>	<u>14.97% decrease</u>
Total	21,305,008	2.66% increase

Change between last year and this year is \$552,247 or 0.96mil

Starting at 27.4mil rate:

Revenue shortfall from 2020/2021	0.8 mil
Redemption of debt	0.3 mil
BoE	0.44 mil
General Gov't and Capital	0.21 mil
<u>Revenue shortfall from 2021/2022</u>	<u>0.17 mil</u>

Total 29.32 mil (7.3% increase in taxes)

- g) Consensus that this needs further review.

6. **Reports- BoS P/L, BoE P/L, Tax Report, Check Register, Undes. Fund report, Old MS/HS 6 Month Expenditure Report:** Tax report shows collection at a little over 94%.

7. **Policy Reviews/Approvals:** Tabled

8. **Previous Minutes:** Tabled

9. **Future Strategies- 2021-2022 Budget Schedule, BoF Members Reports:**

- a) FOIA Training Monday March 29th at 7pm.

- b) Provision in CT law for tax freezes or tax relief for seniors. Topic to be added to next agenda.

10. Public Comment*:

- a) Brian Rathbun- Heard good dialog tonight- we are not wasting our time. Thinks going to BoE do discuss wages is a good idea. Thinks getting an updated copy of the proposed budget for review would be beneficial.
- b) Mike Urgo-Thanks everyone for their hard work.
- c) Nita Kincaid- We have next week on the agenda for further budget review, but if we need more time, we will have to add special meetings.
- d) Joe Gross- unavailable

11. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn at 11:04 by Chairman Dan Spring, 2nd by Anne Akin.
Approved 6/0/0.

***All public comments are opinions of the commenter**

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Akin
BoF Secretary