

North Stonington Board of Finance Meeting

Meeting Minutes, Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2020

North Stonington Media Center "Old" M/H School/Zoom Meeting @7:00pm

North Stonington, CT

1. **Call to Order:** 7:02pm, Members present: Chairman Dan Spring, Alternate Brett Mastroianni filling in for Dan Smith, Anne Akin, Carolyn Howell, Michael Anderson, Alternate Sarah Nelson
2. **Public Comments:** none
3. **BoS: a- Project Updates-Boombridge, b-School Modernization Project Closeout, c-Appropriation Request (Grants):**
 - a) Boombridge Rd. bridge- project is slightly behind due to supply issues as a result of Covid. Crew is working 9-10 hr. days 6 days per week to catch up. Completion expected 1st week in Dec.
 - b) School Modernization Project Closeout: Friday, 23Oct2020, we close out the 3rd USDA loan. Project initially forecast financing \$24M, actually only financed \$21.93M. Initially forecast a 2.5-3.5mil increase to pay back the loan, actual increase was only 2.02mil.
 - c) Appropriation Request (A2021-002 dated 20Oct2020)): money for both appropriation requests will come from the undesignated fund and will be replaced by the end of the fiscal year when grant funds are received.
 - 1) John Dean Gallup House- \$20K appropriation for study. Received 4 applicants for \$20K feasibility study and conditions assessment chose a company we have not worked with before. Study will cover best use of property, as well as additional work that may be necessary for safety requirements. Property may be used as a residence or for accessory use, depending on what zoning allows. Intent is for property to be a revenue generator. Received a \$20K grant from the State Historic Preservation Office to cover this, state has suspended matching funds requirement, so study will cost the town nothing. \$20K will be reimbursed by state after work is complete (expect study to take 2 months).
 - 2) Affordable Housing- \$4500 appropriation is for technical writing assistance for affordable housing plan. Plan needs to be updated, will work with SEC who will provide statistics that land use needs for update of housing plan. Have received \$4500 grant to cover this work, and there is no matching funds requirement, therefore no cost to town.

Motion to by Chairman Dan Spring approve appropriation of \$4500 grant funds from undesignated fund to line item B34.09 for technical assistance to update affordable housing plan. 2nd Mike Anderson
Vote: 6/0/0 Motion Passes

Motion to by Chairman Dan Spring approve appropriation of \$20K grant funds from undesignated fund to line item C3.35 for feasibility study and conditions assessment for John Dean Gallup House. 2nd Mike Anderson

Vote: 6/0/0 Motion Passes

Appropriation is > \$20K so it needs to go to town meeting for approval.

4. **Reports: Profit/Loss BoS/BoE, Tax Report:**

- a) Profit/Loss BoS July-Sept2020- Question on who is paying expenses for old middle/high school. Town is paying out of B27.10. Expenses for July-Oct2020 are \$13,597. At this point we don't know if lease will completely cover these expenses.
- b) Profit/Loss BoE July2020 and Aug2020- no discussion
- c) Sept2020 Tax Report- Tax collection is at 53.38%, next big collection due in Jan 2021.

5. **ReVal 2020 Update:** All properties have been assessed. Currently reviewing 60 building permits submitted. Expect approximately a 9% increase in the grand list (approximately \$45M) compared to other towns similar in size which showed a 1-3% increase. Should have a lock on numbers by next meeting.

6. **BoF Policies Review:**

- a) Policy 2016-02, End of FY Budget Reconciliation- Sarah Nelson has reviewed this policy and has some notes and recommendations that she will put into a draft form and send to all board members for review.
- b) Undesignated Fund Balance Policy- Brett Mastroianni has looked at similar policies in chartered and unchartered towns. Will set up a Zoom meeting to discuss with Anne and Dan.

7. **Previous Minutes:** Tabled

8. **Future Strategies, Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Closeout, Annual Report:**

- a) Need grand list numbers for the start of budget prep. State is currently running a surplus, so we are not expecting any cuts from them.
- b) Discussion on checking with all departments to see if Covid is having any effect on their budgets in preparation for upcoming budget season.
- c) Discussion on format of budget presentation given by departments
- d) Discussion on the potential to get a more detailed profit/loss report from the BoE, for example a breakout of a category such as utilities would give valuable information on trends
- e) Annual Reports- Some have been submitted already. Deadline for reports is Nov. 16th. Dan Spring does the BoF report, but can't do that without the audit report which we won't receive until Dec.

9. **Public Comment:** Joe Gross- Keeps hearing that the School Modernization project came in under budget, but the demolition of the middle/high school was not completed because the funds weren't there, so project is not under budget. It is a good idea to rent out the building, maybe in three years we will have enough money to demo the building. He has a copy of the referendum we voted on, and it includes the demolition of the middle/high school as part of the project, he is willing to bring it down and show us. Also thinks Carolyn and Brett have the right idea, budget is not a 3 month process, it's a 12 month process. In order to get it to a 3 month process, need to get it from the boards and commissions in a format that we specify with the info we need specified and that we understand and that answers all our questions so we don't have to send it back 20 times. Also need to look at what is coming up in the next year and next 5 years to properly plan ahead.

10. **Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn at 8:27pm by Mike Anderson, 2nd by Anne Akin.
Approved 6/0/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Akin
BoF Secretary