

North Stonington Board of Finance Meeting

Meeting Minutes, Wednesday, July 21, 2021

Hybrid North Stonington Education Center/Zoom Meeting @7:00pm

North Stonington, CT

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2021 SEP -7 A 9:07

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order:** 7:00pm, Board of Finance members present: Chairman Dan Spring, Vice Chair Paul Simonds, Dan Smith, Carolyn Howell, Anne Akin, Mike Anderson Alternate Brett Mastroianni, Absent: Sarah Nelson
2. **Public Comments*:**
 - a) Shawn Murphy- regarding the appropriation of funds to pave Kingswood and Colony Dr. this year, roads were put down in 2017 and are still in good shape. Town should wait until next year and then use town funds or LOCIP funds.
 - b) Brian Rathbun- is asking the BoF not to approve the appropriation for paving roads in Kingswood. This should have been included in the budget, not put forth as an appropriation. If this is approved, it should go to a town vote for everyone to vote on.
 - c) Carl Johnston- In regards to the items we will be voting on that will use American Rescue Plan funds (ARPF) he supports using the funds for the per diem firefighter and the non-emergency municipal notification system. In regards to the other two items, he does not support giving them 1% of the total amount we expect to receive over the next couple years, rather we should give 1% of what we receive this year and then if we get more next year give them 1% of that amount.
3. **Correspondence:** Ron Lewis contacted Carolyn Howell and asked if we had seen the letter that he sent to the BoS as well as the heads of all town boards and commissions. Letter was against the sale of 298NW Rd. Chairman Dan Spring states he did not get the letter from Ron, and there was no attachment in the email Carolyn sent him.
4. **BoS: American Relief Plan Funds Utilization, Appropriation Request:**
 - a) ARPF projects to move forward immediately:
 - Grant of \$165K to the NSVFC over the next three years. This will need to go to town vote if approved.
 - Implementation of no more than \$15K for a non-emergency notification system. Currently vetting reverse messaging systems from 3 vendors.
 - Grant of 1% of funds (\$15K) to Ledge Light Health District (LLHD)
 - Grant of 1% of funds (\$15K) to Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center (PNC)
 - Grant of \$10,092.92 to SCCOG to hire Planner III/Recovery Coordinator to assist SCCOG municipalities and oversee the SCCOG's continuing participation in the recovery efforts. Funds cover position for 4 years.
 - b) Discussion covered:
 - Neither LLHD nor PNC requested funds. NS's offer is proactive.
 - We have no specifics on what \$15K for messaging system will cover in terms of hardware, software, or service, and what would be length of service time.
 - Concern that we are spending 30% of ARPF so quickly, fear that there will not be enough left to start longer term projects
 - Following Carl's suggestion to grant half of 1% this year and remainder next year or whenever second half of ARPF become available.

Motion by Dan Spring to approve allocation of no more than \$220,092.92 of ARPF as outlined by 1st Selectman: \$165K to the NSVFC to be equally distributed over 3 years (approval for these funds to go to town vote), no more than \$15K for implementation of a municipal notification system, \$15K to LLHD, \$15K to PNC, \$10,092.92 to SCCOG. 2nd Dan Smith.

Vote: 6/0/0 Motion passes

- c) Proposal for additional appropriation of \$410K for paving of roads in Kingswood/Meadow Wood neighborhood. Idea is to finish last three roads not covered by STEAP grant this fall while pavers are already on site. This will complete project in 4 yr. time frame as promised. Discussion covered:

- Strong opinion that this should have been included in budget or at least discussed during budget preparation.
- Waiting until next year to see if town can get STEAP grant or LOCIP funds to cover cost
- Concern on using such a large amount of money from undesignated fund

Motion by Dan Spring to approve the appropriation request in the amount of \$410,000 for repaving of 3 roads in Kingswood/Meadow Wood neighborhood in adjunct to work already being done there. If approved, would need to go to town vote. 2nd Mike Anderson

Vote: 0/6/0 Motion does not pass

5. Reports: BoS Profit/Loss, BoE Profit/Loss, Tax Report

- BoS profit/loss- no discussion
- BoE profit/loss- no discussion
- Tax report is different from what we have seen in the past, by Aug it should be more like what we are used to. Collection is going well with high use of drop box and in person drop offs. Only Chelsea Groton Bank mistakenly sent bills to homeowner that should have been sent to bank holding the mortgage.
- Still looking for report from BoE on RISA account
- We don't get reports on pension accounts, town savings or investment accounts etc. Pension accounts are covered in audit and are self-directed, not directed by town. Town does not have any investment accounts

6. Previous Minutes: Tabled until August

7. Future Strategies- 2021/22 Tax Bills, BoF Member Reports, Closeout 2020/21, Audit:

- 2021/22 tax bills- no discussion
- BoF member reports- No reports
- Closeout 2020/21- closeout is in progress, still receiving bills and sending checks out. We have no idea yet of givebacks, this info may be available at Aug. meeting. Once closeout is complete, we want to put out RFP for new auditor.
- Audit- Audit starts Sept 27, documents are already being sent to the auditor. Audit will still be remote this yr., but presentation will be in person.
- Reconciliation Policy- Tabled until Aug. or Sept. meeting

8. **Public Comment:** Brian Rathbun asks if approval for ARPF will go to a town vote as a lump sum or as individual items. When informed that only the portion of funds designated for the NSVFC will be voted on by the town voiced his opinion that he did not agree with all of the expenditures and thought that all of them should be put to a town vote.

9. **Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn at 8:15 by Dan Spring, 2nd Anne Akin. Approved 6/0/0.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Akin
BoF Secretary