

North Stonington Board of Finance Meeting
Meeting Minutes, Wednesday, Jan 06, 2021
Zoom Meeting @7:00pm
North Stonington, CT

1. **Call to Order:** 7:02pm, Members present: Chairman Dan Spring, Alternate Brett Mastroianni filling in for Paul Simonds, Dan Smith, Anne Akin, Carolyn Howell, Michael Anderson, Alternate Sarah Nelson
2. **Public Comments:**
Joe Gross- has comments on School Building Repurposing Committee and School Modernization Committee. Has reviewed meetings of both committees from 2017 up through present. Has concerns with allocating more funds for the maintenance of the building compared to the demolition, and the fact that we put out an ad for the reuse of the building. He does not support any more funds being used to maintain the building. Understands that it can't be discussed at tonight's meeting in enough detail to do his research justice. Intends to be present for next week's special meeting on 298NW building.
3. **BoF Policies Review:**
 - a) Undesignated Fund Balance Policy- re-draft sent out by Dan Smith, broken into sections to make it more clear and concise.
 - Under objectives section discussion with consensus to remove last bullet point and add bullet point to the effect that the undesignated fund helps the town to present a strong fiscal profile with the intent of taking opportunity in the debt markets.
 - Minor edits add "percentage" change "is shall" to shall "refunded" to refund
 - Discussion with consensus to move rationale section to very beginning of policy.
 - Discussion on whether percentage should be based on months with heavier expenses
 - Discussion to add statement that overage disposition is to be at discretion of BoF. Consensus is not to add this to policy. Consensus on adding options for disposition of overage, mil rate reduction or debt redemption payment.
 - Discussion on yearly review/approval of limits, consensus to remove approval and only specify yearly review. No consensus on appropriate review date.
 - Dan Smith to provide a clean copy containing edits for discussion/approval at next meeting.
 - b) Budget Reconciliation Policy- Not yet ready for review. Mike Anderson to step in to partner with Sarah Nelson as Paul Simonds has been unavailable due to work commitments.
4. **Previous Minutes:** None available for review
5. **Future Strategies, Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Planning, Annual Report, Meeting Schedule:**

a) Budget schedule

- Changed when BoS is going to discuss budget. Department budgets are due in on Friday and there isn't enough time for Christine to format everything and get packets sent out on the same day. BoS review of budget is pushed out to Jan. 26th.
- Inquiry from Chair of BoE regarding BoF budget presentation template. BoE wants to know whether they should use the form for their fund transfers as opposed to attaching the transfers they have from their monthly reports. Consensus is that an attached list is acceptable as long as each transfer includes a rationale.
- Concern regarding March 1st presentation by the BoE and the BoS of their respective budgets to the public before BoF has had a chance to review and give feedback. Consensus that BoE and BoS should make very clear at the beginning of their presentations that this is a first attempt at their budgets, and that the BoF has not yet had a chance to review of provide feedback.

b) Annual reports- Waiting on report from one more department, then need to format and send out.

c) Audit Service-

- BoF needs to designate an audit service in January, but with current Covid situation, it is hard to do an RFP. Dan will get quote from Sandra Wellwood for this year.
- Received second bill related to Covid costs. Bill was just under \$6K, costs should be reimbursed by state as Covid Relief Fund expenditures.
- Continuity is good, but an internal review by the firm is also good to catch mistakes made due to complacency. Audit cost is supposed to cover a peer review.
- We may be due a credit from this year's audit since there wasn't a presentation by Sandra to the BoF.

d) Joint meeting w/ BoS, and BoF to discuss 298NW building expenses. Meeting scheduled for Wed. 13Jan2021

- Christine Dias will provide a detailed report from quickbooks of each expense under this budget line item through FY to date, as well as service contract info and a breakdown of labor, who did the work, and how many hours of NW Public Works labor went into work on 298NW.
- Majority of expense is due to utilities (approximately \$32K of \$38K)
- Request from the BoF to the BoS for information on cost of running 298NW for one year when it was in use by BoE. BoS deferred question to BoE. BoE replied to BoS but info was not passed along to BoF. Info was not broken down by wing.
- BoE should be invited to meeting since they know the most about the building and its expenses.

e) New BoF Ordinances

- Board had discussed adding an ordinance increasing the number of alternates from 2 to 3

- There may be some issues to be addressed before deciding to do this, minority representation, the way votes are cast may need to be addressed by secretary of state
 - There may be a disadvantage to doing this; elected alternates that are inactive for most of their tenure might be discouraged from running in future elections. Hard enough to fill ballot slots as it is.
- f) Query about instituting a report by Chair and Vice-Chair on correspondence with other town boards and committees as a regular agenda item for BoF meetings. Determination that this will become a standard agenda item.
6. **Public Comment:**
- a) Joe Gross- Facts from School Modernization Committee (SMC) and School Building Repurposing Committee (SBRC): May 18 SBRC - No money left for Having difficulty determining cost and expenses to maintain the former MS/HS complex; April 20 SBRC-same question. In all of their minutes it never shows that they got an answer to how much it cost to run this building. SMC-minutes going back to 2017 show they asked the same question and had difficulties determining an answer too. Can't see putting another penny into this building and insists it should be demolished. Asks what happened to money slated to demolish building, Does not expect BoF will get any answers on the cost to run this building since these two committees weren't able to get answers. Feb 8, 2018; 1352 Yay to 611 Nays, better than 2:1, demolish building. Leaves BoF with a question: "who were the representatives from the Lighthouse School and the Connecticut Coastal Academy that took the tour back in March of 2020" there are political maneuverings going on here that we need to be aware of. Worked hard to retire, wants to spend his retirement money the way he wants to spend it, doesn't want the town to spend it for him. Has done a lot of work gathering the information from the SBRC and the SMC and is happy to share it with anyone that wants.
7. **Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn at 8:45pm by Chairman Dan Spring, 2nd by Dan Smith. Approved 6/0/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Akin
BoF Secretary