



# Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Andreas Bisbikos, First Selectman

## BOARD OF FINANCE MEETING December 15, 2021 – via Zoom – 6:30 PM Minutes

Meeting was recorded

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**BOF Members Present:** A. Migliaccio, A. Shilosky, J. Thomas, M. Hayes, T. Vaillancourt, M. Egan  
**Also Present:** First Selectman A. Bisbikos, CFO M. Cosgrove, Tax Collector Michelle Wyatt, Selectman Debbie Bates, BOE member Marguerite Gignac, Registrar Karen Romero

1. CALL TO ORDER – Chair A. Migliaccio called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm.
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA – None
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Regular Meeting 12/01/21: Motion by M. Hayes to approve the minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> by J. Thomas. **Vote was unanimous, motion carried 6-0.**
5. CITIZENS' COMMENTS – None
6. CORRESPONDENCE – None
7. CLEAR GOV
  - a. ClearGov presentation – The Board welcomed Robert Battaglia from ClearGov to the meeting. M. Egan asked A. Bisbikos to give a synopsis on how the town will pay for ClearGov before Robert gives his presentation. A. Bisbikos said that Colchester needs to move forward with implementing new technology. The program would enable financial data to be available for the public in a simplified way to get a better understanding. A. Bisbikos stated that one of his campaign promises is transparency and implementing ClearGov would provide that. The past administration did not implement OpenGov effectively. OpenGov had integration problems with MUNIS. ClearGov is compatible with the town's current program MUNIS. 60% of ClearGov's clients use MUNIS. A. Bisbikos stated that he will not implement this program until citizens get to give their input, and then will go through the process. Robert Battaglia began his presentation. He explained that ClearGov is a cloud-based budgeting company that is designed to be compatible with MUNIS. ClearGov offers a digital budget book software (offering an automated process from MUNIS and Excel data), transparency software, and meets GFOA criteria. The program will allow the town to present the budget better for more citizen engagement. A demonstration was shown on ClearGov and how the program generates charts, tables, graphs, etc. from the data and can be customizable. The data shown will include all aspects of the budget including expenses, revenue, performance metrics, and goals. M. Egan asked how far back the data could be integrated. Robert explained that during the onboarding of the program the town can provide as much historical data as they would like for ClearGov to input which will be backed by the Cloud. The program also provides Capital Fund budgeting for easier presenting with spreadsheets, images, and attachments. Projects can also be itemized by Departments. Each project will have its own page and will give updates on what is happening with each project. The program is a website-based budget but offers easy to print PDFs. The Transparency Center breaks down the budget and is essentially the town's open checkbook. Expenses show citizens how their tax dollars are broken down into the budget. M. Hayes asked how many man-hours would be required to transfer information into ClearGov and keep it updated. Robert explained that the town would send its data from MUNIS to ClearGov and would have the buildout in 4-5 weeks. Currently the GFOA budget book is built by town staff but the software does it in less time with additional visual tools for presentation. Robert concluded the presentation stating that

the annual subscription included ALL services. A. Migliaccio said that the software will be a budget item for the next town budget. T. Vaillancourt commented that it is a campaign promise to the public for this type of transparency. M. Hayes said he had concerns if the program will be used. A. Bisbikos said that the past administration failed at promoting OpenGov. A. Bisbikos will promote ClearGov to the public to make the budget process as easy as possible and to give everyone a better understanding of the budget. Public engagement and feedback is the goal. M. Egan added that the program being cloud-based and compatible with MUNIS are positives and it sounds promising. J. Thomas noted that this program is the greatest tool he has seen so far that will be a timer-saver and help the town move forward with accountability.

#### 8. SURVEY MONKEY

- a. First Draft Review – M. Hayes said the Sewer and Water question on the survey should be omitted. He suggested adding a question on how citizens feel about ARPA funds being used for (building) maintenance. He asked for clarification on why the question on citizens utilizing the Town Green was constructed. J. Thomas said that the question was there because the town spends money to maintain the Green and this question would provide feedback on how to utilize it more. The town currently has a grant for improvements to the Green that needs to be used. A. Bisbikos suggested a draft statement on re-evaluation be sent to the public. A. Migliaccio will start the draft. A. Shilosky suggested that A. Bisbikos asks for input from the town Assessor before the Board of Finance releases their statement.

#### 9. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- a. Tax Collector – November Reports. 56.45. M. Wyatt said that the numbers are lower than usual because the adoption of the budget was not until late September, and usually people pay in July. All bills are now online and bills will be mailed out this Friday.
- b. Finance - CFO M. Cosgrove stated that the PILOT payment has been received by the town in full and is larger than usual due to the state grant. Building fees are slightly behind. It is still too early for expenditures to have a significant impact but are comparatively the same as last year. M. Cosgrove explained that some expenditures such as seasonal budgeting is a full paid contract despite the use of services (ex: snow plowing). Other contracts are just in response to services utilized. The February budget is impacted by heating and electric. Budget transfers for Union contracts will be held off until all contracts are received. Some salary budget lines are impacted by vacancies within the department.

#### 10. FIRST SELECTMAN

- a. Transfers – None
- b. First Selectman's Report – First Selectman A. Bisbikos reported that there is a new Fire Chief appointed, Steven Hoffmann. Public Works has begun irrigation on the fields at Rec Park. There is a FOI Act Workshop that will take place via Zoom on December 21<sup>st</sup> (see the town website and Facebook page for more information). There is a meeting with Incord for the CTIP tax abatement. The basketball courts are being worked on. The meeting for the \$2.5M bond to offset the Senior Center building project will be held December 21<sup>st</sup> at 2pm. The town is considering an independent consultant to review ARPA requests before it is sent for approval by the ARPA committee and Board of Selectmen. First Selectman A. Bisbikos has formally authorized the design phase of the new senior center.

#### 11. OLD BUSINESS

- a. By-Laws Update – A. Migliaccio said the Board will table this until next week.
- b. Budget Calendar Update – A. Migliaccio emailed with Superintendent Jeff Burt to coordinate budget presentation, and with Town Clerk Gayle Furman. The calendar will be completed next meeting.

12. NEW BUSINESS - The Board of Finance liaison for the Senior Center Building Committee is Art Shilosky. Mike Hayes is now the liaison for Parks and Rec. A. Bisbikos will send out the zoom link for the bond meeting to the Board.

13. BUDGET DISCUSSION – Superintendent Jeff Burt will be at the next Board of Finance meeting to discuss where the Board of Education is with their budget. A. Migliaccio is optimistic that this will be a smooth budget season.

14. LIAISON REPORT – T. Vaillancourt: ARPA committee has approved between 28-30 projects that will move forward for the Board of Selectmen to review. He agreed that an independent consultant would be good to vet applications. A. Bisbikos said that to hire an independent consultant may put a pause on the process, but applications are still welcomed and encouraged at this time. A. Migliaccio: Commission on aging is organizing a health fair for spring 2022. Their project with JJIS has provided care packages for 27 seniors this holiday season. M. Egan: Board of Education, Superintendent Burt said that the projection of enrollment for 2030-2031 has gone up from last year's projection. There could be future staffing issues with an enrollment increase. The report is available on-board doc. The

budget calendar for the BOE will begin on March 8<sup>th</sup>, with workshops on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup>. Final presentation of the budget will be April 5<sup>th</sup>. There is a proposal to reimburse tier 2 for fingerprinting up to \$60. Superintendent Burt has met with First Selectman A. Bisbikos to discuss HR Director's salary be budgeted 20% and 80% school. The substitute teacher program would like to offer a sign-on bonus and change the permanent building substitutes to three substitutes. There is also discussion on adding a position for a contact tracing acceleration specialist position to be approved. The schools would like to implement a new phone system which would cost around \$150K to replace the old system.

15. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS – None

16. Motion to adjourn by M. Egan, 2<sup>nd</sup> by A. Shilosky. **Vote was unanimous.** Meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.

Submitted By,

Rachel Fuller, Clerk