



# Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Mary Bylone, First Selectman

Town of Colchester  
Board of Finance Meeting Minutes  
October 7, 2020 – Virtual Meeting – 6:30 PM  
Regular Meeting

\*\*\*All members and citizens were present via Zoom webinar

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Rob Tarlov, Michael Hayes, Mike Egan, Andreas Bisbikos, and  
Andrea Migliaccio, Bernie Dennler

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: CFO Maggie Cosgrove, First Selectman Mary Bylone, Treasurer Jennifer Pulse,  
Superintendent Jeff Burt, BOE members: Mary Tomasi, Chris McGlynn, Amy Domeika

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Tarlov called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

2. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: None

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Regular Meeting 09/16: B. Dennler motioned to approve the regular meeting minutes of September 16, 2020, seconded by M. Hayes. Vote was unanimous. MOTION CARRIED.

4. CITIZENS' COMMENTS: None

5. CORRESPONDENCE: See attached

6. UPDATE FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION: Negotiations with the 12 administrators for a three-year contract that would start July 1, 2021, will begin in November. Superintendent Burt explained that CT is a binding arbitration state. If negotiations are not agreed upon an arbitration panel will be brought in which is costly. The BOE will be discussing how to approach the budget process for next year with a three-year plan taking a look at a serious loss of learning due to the pandemic. How to remediate and the recovery process will be a priority.

7. DEPARTMENT REPORT:

a. Tax Collector: None

b. Finance: Short-term bonding notes were rolled over for one more year given the lost interest rate of less than .50% and the WJMS project not being closed out yet.

c. Treasurer: J. Pulse and M. Cosgrove gave an overview of the role of the Treasurer. In the past, there have been mixed feelings on the need for a treasurer.

8. FIRST SELECTMAN:

a. Transfers: None

[Selectman@ColchesterCt.gov](mailto:Selectman@ColchesterCt.gov)

860-537-7220

[www.ColchesterCT.gov](http://www.ColchesterCT.gov)

RECEIVED  
COLCHESTER, CT  
2020 OCT 13 PM 2:04  
Gayle Furrman  
TOWN CLERK

b. First Selectman's Report: First Selectman Bylone reported that 197 people were tested at the drive-up Covid testing held at Town Hall on Wednesday. The number of cases in Colchester has substantially increased in the last month along with the acceleration in Eastern Connecticut. Town Hall is opened to the public by appointment only due to the uptick. Halls Hill paving for the gas line, and Paper Mill bridge projects are nearly completed. There will be restrictions to the Town Clerk's office due to having to process the absentee ballots. The number of Covid cases in town is putting a strain on the EMS.

#### 9. OLD BUSINESS:

a. Memorandum of Understanding - update on process to change Charter: No update

#### 10. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Fire Department Subcommittee - Discussion and Possible Action: B. Dennler reported that six pieces of equipment were identified that are at the end of their lifespan including two open cab units that are no longer permitted but are still being used. The total cost of replacement equipment is estimated to be \$4.6 million. A. Migliaccio questioned the group working on the needs of the fire department being referred to as a "subcommittee" on the agenda and a "focus group" on the website. R. Tarlov said it was his mistake and should have been "focus group" on the agenda. She also asked if there would be a presentation to the BOF as is usually done by a group asking for money and if there was anything the Fire Department asked for and was told no. First Selectman Bylone said she is working with the Fire Department to put together information that would be needed to go to the referendum which would include a presentation. R. Tarlov said at the October 22nd Joint Board meeting with BOS there would be discussion on debt services and how the requests from the Fire Department and Senior Center Building Committee fit into that plan. A. Bisbikos questioned the legality of the Debt Service Subcommittee meeting on July 15th saying that there was no agenda or minutes posted. B. Dennler said the focus groups for the Fire Department were open to the public and emphasized that what they are recommending to meet the needs of equipment is a starting point. M. Egan urged everyone to focus on the equipment needs and the urgency of the matter after having to have borrowed a truck from Clinton earlier in the year. R. Tarlov said the purpose of this discussion was to present the recommendation of the Focus Group and determine what additional information this board needs in order to make a decision on the apparatus. A. Migliaccio would like a presentation on the equipment needs as well as any other issues and needs of the Fire Department. First Selectman Bylone will ask Don Lee to give a presentation at the next meeting.

#### 11. BOARD OF FINANCE 2021-2022 DISCUSSION PRIORITIES:

a. Debt Service Subcommittee: The subcommittee met with the Town's Financial Advisor to discuss in funding the purchasing of fire equipment and a new Senior Center, what outcome the Town desired for the debt service plan. The advisor will meet with the committee next week to review options and will then do a presentation to the joint boards on 10/22. Because of future debt service reductions, the Advisor

is relatively confident that the projects can be done with minimal impact on the mil rate attributed to debt service.

b. Capital Plan Update: Discussion was moved to the next meeting.

c. Review Policies

i. Fund Balance Policy: The BOS reviewed the draft and made recommendations. Members reviewed the suggested changes. A. Migliaccio felt the policy has been working and changing it as little as

possible should be considered. R. Tarlov reminded members that the policy was created when the town was at 7% and did not think we would ever get above 10%. He also does not think the policy is explicit enough on the use of fund balance for mil rate relief and a rating company could question it. A. Migliaccio is concerned that by making it too explicit it will not allow for flexibility that might be needed in unforeseen situations such as this year. A. Bisbikos said that in the Cautionary Zone four BOF members could potentially drain the funds.

M. Cosgrove said that per the Charter, BOS approval would also be needed so by requiring approval of 4 BOF members it actually strengthens the protection. Members discussed if a subcommittee of BOF and BOS members should look at the policy and then go back to the board to review. Due to some members not being comfortable with all members not taking part in the conversation there was consensus among members to continue the discussion with full board participation. Members should send language suggestions to R. Tarlov prior to the next meeting so they can be distributed to all members.

d. Review and Update Discussion Priorities: No update

12. LIAISON REPORTS: None

13. CITIZENS COMMENTS: None

14. ADJOURNMENT: A. Bisbikos motioned to adjourn, seconded by M. Hayes. Vote is unanimous. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Tarlov adjourned the meeting at 9:01 pm.

Submitted by,

Dawn LePage, Clerk

Attachments:

Correspondence

Unassigned Fund Balance Policy Suggestions for Discussion