



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Mary Bylone, First Selectman

**Town of Colchester
Board of Finance Meeting Minutes
September 16, 2020 – Virtual Meeting – 6:30 PM
Regular Meeting**

(All items on this agenda are subject to possible action.)

RECEIVED
COLCHESTER, CT
2020 SEP 22 PM 1:51
Gayle Furman
TOWN CLERK

***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, Selectman Rosemary Coyle, Tax Collector Michele Wyatt, BOE member Amy Domeika

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Tarlov called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.
2. **ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:** M. Egan made a motion to add item 6c. *Town Treasurer*, seconded by A. Migliaccio. Vote was unanimous. **MOTION CARRIED.**
* Item 7i. will be tabled as the Senior Center Building Committee will be reissuing the RFQ with components being broken down.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Regular Meeting 09/02:** M. Egan motioned to approve the regular meeting minutes of September 2, 2020, seconded by B. Dennler. Vote was unanimous. **MOTION CARRIED.**
4. **CITIZENS' COMMENTS:** None
5. **CORRESPONDENCE:**
 - Attached letter from M. Mlodzinski.
 - Chairman Tarlov received an email from Superintendent Burt. BOE will be commencing contract negotiations with the administration. Per State Statute it is required they will meet with the BOF 30 days prior. It will be scheduled for a meeting in October.
6. **DEPARTMENT REPORT:**
 - a. **Tax Collector:** M. Wyatt reported the collection rate for August is 55.95%, slightly higher than this time last year. Delinquent notices were sent out in August and September. The executive order is due to end the beginning of October. Demand notices will be sent out the first week of October.

- b. **Finance:** M. Cosgrove gave a report through August. Delinquencies on lien fees are down but last year we had the tag sale. Revenue is looking positive with an increase of convenient taxes and building permits. Expenses reflect positions that still need to be filled.
- c. **Treasurer:** Tabled as she was unable to attend.

7. FIRST SELECTMAN:

a. Transfers

- i. **Senior Center Building Committee Appropriation-Discussion and possible action:** Tabled

- b. **First Selectman's Report:** R. Coyle reported on behalf of First Selectman Bylone. The BOS voted to accept the recommendations and changes to the local option ordinance exemption for volunteer firemen and send to the town meeting. The Senior Center Building Committee has finalized the floor plan and is working to agree on the exterior. They should have a cost soon.

8. OLD BUSINESS:

- a. **Memorandum of Understanding - update on process to change Charter:** First Selectman Bylone met with the attorney to determine all the details of the process. She will take to the BOS for them to recommend that the Charter Revision Commission be reestablished.

9. NEW BUSINESS: None

10. BOARD OF FINANCE 2021-2022 DISCUSSION PRIORITIES:

a. Review Policies

- i. **Fund Balance Policy:** Members discussed ideas for a fund balance policy. GFOA guidelines recommend a fund balance of 2 months of budgeted expenses (17%) and if the fund becomes more than the recommended amount or too low. R Tarlov presented drafts of two options, one following GFOA guidelines and another between our current and the GFOA. Both included language to address when funds can be used for mill rate relief. The Board felt the GFOA option was a big step from where we are now and that we should focus discussion on the other. R Tarlov will ask the BOS to review and make suggestions before additional discussion.
- ii. **Nonunion and Elected Official:** A. Bisbikos believes there should not be automatic raises for elected officiations. He believes each newly elected official should have the pay rolled back to the starting number of the official leaving the office. He would like to see a base pay that could be evaluated and adjusted by the BOS and BOF every four years.

R. Tarlov said he does not like automatic raises for elected officials but the policy was created after a period where evaluations were done, but the BOF would remove the proposed raises to reduce the proposed budget. The raises given now are not longevity pay, but intended to be aligned with the cost of living increases. He said the problem is that the negotiated contracts on which this policy is based have been 2.25% and 2.50% annual raises plus Step increases at a time when the CPI and CPI-W have been 1.5%. Our salaries for elected officials are in the middle when compared to what other towns pay.

M. Egan urged A. Bisbikos to approach the BOS as a citizen with the idea as they are the policy making authority.

- b. Review and Update Discussion Priorities:** There has not been another meeting on debt services as waiting for numbers on fire apparatus and Senior Center. There was a demonstration on fire trucks. R. Tarlov believes that by the next meeting they will be ready to present findings. J. Paggioli will present the capital plan. Members provided feedback on what they would like to review at future meetings.

11. LIAISON REPORTS: A. Bisbikos - Park and Rec Commission elected officers. B. Dennler - P & Z are discussing possible changes to regulations for multi-family units. M. Hayes - Walt Cox has become the Health and Safety Officer. Sean Shoemaker was named Interim Fire Chief. M. Egan - BOE developed a face covering policy. A grant was received to help with technology needed because of Covid. They received a donation of security equipment. Enrollment is at 2273. The Senior Center Building Committee agreed on a 14,500 sq ft floor plan. The Senior Center has a tentative open date of October 13th. R. Tarlov - BOS lowered a bond for a development that is close to completion. Amy Domeika - BOE received \$6,000 from the state for PPE. They are meeting with Norm Needleman and Brian Smith to discuss why the amount was so low and if anything can be done. Most kids have chosen the hybrid model. Free and reduced lunches will be offered.

12. CITIZENS COMMENTS: None

13. ADJOURNMENT: A. Bisbikos motioned to adjourn, seconded by M. Egan. Vote is unanimous. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Submitted by,

Dawn LePage, Clerk

Attachments:
Correspondence

From: Marjorie Mlodzinski

Sent: Sunday, September 13, 2020 5:46 PM

Selectman@ColchesterCt.gov

860-537-7220

www.ColchesterCT.gov

To: Robert Tarlov ; Dawn LePage Cc: Tony Tarnowski ; Rosemary Coyle

Subject: Board of Finance - 9/16/20 -

Correspondence for Agenda My auto correct for “pandemic” incorrectly changed it to “epidemic”. Please use this version. I also was under the impression that the meeting was the 17th but understand now it is on the 16th. Sorry for the inconvenience. Thanks, Marge My name is Marge Mlodzinski and I am a member of the Senior Center Building Committee (SCBC). I do not profess to have the knowledge of an architect, a builder or the ability to read blueprints and I probably don’t ever recall hammering a nail in my lifetime. I am, however, in addition to being a member of the Building Committee, also the Chair of the Commission on Aging and I have a deep passion for our senior residents and their future. A recent survey from the Long-Term Recovery Committee, of which I also am a member of, resulted in 65% of our seniors responding indicating that social isolation is a major issue during this COVID-19 Pandemic. This reinforces to me more than ever a need for a new Senior Center, a communal building and location for our aged community to meet for activities, exercise, nutrition, socialization and mental and physical health well-being. I say all of this, as in the midst of this pandemic, we, as SCBC members do not have the ability to knock on peoples’ doors, provide extensive outreach and awareness, provide open forums or workshops, distribute flyers, or publicize openly the desperate need for a new Center to support and provide for our aging residents. Your approval of funds to contract with Construction Solutions Group, LLC (CSG) as Project Manager/Owner’s Representative assures us the expertise to provide, outreach, education, knowledge and resources to get us to Referendum. In addition, their hands-on approach working with a third-party estimator, would identify any challenges with design and make recommendations to alternative approaches as well as assist in engineering in the scope of the work. Without their expertise, I personally don’t have the confidence in us as a Committee having the full opportunity to achieve resident approval at Referendum. I encourage you to approve the funds needed to contract with CSG to better move forward with our efforts to build a new Senior Center. Thank you