



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Andreas Bisbikos, First Selectman

AGENDA –BOARD OF FINANCE REGULAR MEETING

AUGUST 24, 2022 – via Zoom – 7:00 pm.

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

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88200354027?pwd=GjV9sYGVxgrY9HfDvHvF5XMAInFd.1>

Or Telephone:

US: +1 312 626 6799 or +1 646 931 3860 or +1 929 205 6099 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 669 444 9171 or +1 669 900 6833 or +1 253 215 8782

Webinar ID: 882 0035 4027

Passcode: 178676

BOF Members Present: Andrea Migliaccio, John Thomas, Art Silosky, Tim Vaillancourt, Mike Egan, Mike Hayes

BOF Members Absent: None

Also Present: First Selectman, Andreas Bisbikos; Finance Director: Debbie Kratochvil, Tax Collector: Michele Wyatt, Town Clerk: Gayle Furman

1. CALL TO ORDER – 7:01 pm.
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None
4. ADDITIONS & DELETIONS: None
5. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS: D. BOUCHARD: Talked about Tom Hennick email. Had a question about the HR position and spoke about Town Hall hours of employment. Objects the increase in revenues of delinquencies.
6. CORRESPONDENCE: A.Migliaccio submitted an email from Tom Hennick. Board has no questions or comments.
7. DEPARTMENT REPORTS
 - a. Tax Collector: Reviewed Collection Report mailed June 30th, 2022 to be paid by August 1, 2022. Tax Sale, October 28th at Town Hall. Noted anyone interested can pick up a package in her office for the tax sale. Michelle discussed the taxes we have collected as of July 2022, remaining principle is \$655,543.35 which is good. The first Bloom Energy payment arrived totaling \$227, 767.68. We will do another bill in January. They were easy to work with. New electronic bill payment system expected Sept. 19th. Presented program from State of Connecticut for Homeowners who experienced Covid-19 financial hardships. Michelle informed the Board that her office is being inundated with phone calls regarding people wondering where their motor vehicle and personal property bills are. Citizens want their bill. Very frustrating for her office and taxpayers not to have their bills. Citizens are saying the want to see the bill and not make partial payments or other

RECEIVED
COLCHESTER, CT
2022 SEP 12 AM 11:05
Gayle Furman
TOWN CLERK

arrangements.

- b. Finance: A.Migliaccio: Asked the Board if they had any questions on the Revenue or Expenditure reports. A.Silosky: Asked Debbie the number of line items that are already overbudget, town clerk and payroll. D. Kratochvil stated it was discussed in last week's meeting, but she is happy to review again. She noted most salary items will be over because on July 1st contractually people had to get the raises that were in their contract. The numbers in the budget are from 2022. The town's clerk office is so far over budget because when the increases were included at that time, the assistant town clerk was not certified. Now the town clerk has been certified and makes more per hour. A. Silosky: Asked if certain budget items will then be adjusted throughout the year. D. Kratochvil: Stated that payroll will have its adjustments and every salary line will be ok other than the town clerk due to the certification. All the other salaries, even though they are showing over right now, were budgeted correctly for 2023 with the correct salaries.

8. FIRST SELECTMAN:

- a. Transfers: None
- b. First Selectman's Report: A. Bisbikos: Reported that he sent out a memo that the Town of Colchester, will enter a budget freeze, effectively immediately. Any purchases will need approval. Critical purchases will take priority. No overtime unless there is an emergency. SLR reported that the Director of Operations positions will not be needed this budget cycle. They will fill it with a building maintenance employee next billing cycle. By not filling in the Director of Operations position, it will leave \$90K in the budget which can be used to handle inflationary concerns. All MOU's for individual employees will be reviewed where applicable, in a case by case basis. He is meeting with all his department heads.

9.

10. BUDGET DISCUSSION:

A.Migliaccio: Summarized that last week the BOF moved a number to BOS in a 4:2 vote. The BOS was supposed to make a meeting date but did not. The BOF budget is currently on the table of the BOS. This budget is not on our table for re-negotiation. Andreas will hold a special meeting soon to discuss next steps to move the town forward. She further discussed the repercussions by not moving to a meeting date, we missed our opportunity for a September, 20th referendum. G. Furman reviewed next meeting date options since the BOS did not make a meeting date. Conversation ensued about meeting date options and when Michele could get the car tax notices out. Michele stated she could get the bills out as soon as possible, but they would be due in November if the budget passes. A.Migliaccio asked the First Selectman and Finance Director what would happen if the next budget failed. A.Bisbikos: Stated that there will be lay-offs and most likely services will be cut. There is not way around that. I do not want to be in that position. If the Board of Selectman continue with obstructionist politics like they did last time, potentially dragging this out and doing this is something that is dangerous for our town. It will affect our bond rating. He consulted with our Town Attorney, Mr. Ritter, regarding the effects of dragging this out and stalemating. There is a process in place. The Board of Finance has done its job. They voted a number through. The BOS has one job, and one job alone. Find the town meeting date. At the town meeting, the public can weigh in as is their right. Once the meeting occurs, we can move forward to a referendum date. The BOS is not going to stop the BOF number from going through. We need to respect our branches of government. The BOS is not about the numbers. The next time the BOF would look at this budget is only after a referendum failure. We are at a critical point in our town, and we have to move things along. Put politics aside and put the town first. D.Kratochvil: Stated she thinks it's the right move to put the departments on a spending freeze, but noted how much more work a freeze is, on every single department. Debbie stressed the extra work on weighing in on every single bill that comes through the office. It's a tedious task that is not something that would normally fall on our daily schedules. Every department head is understandably upset that they have to be questioned on every dollar. It's not easy to run your department under that type of atmosphere. The longer this drags on and the longer we have to be doing this adds strains on every department. A.Migliaccio: Talked about cash flow and that with the next failed budget referendum that non-essential services will be impacted. Hopes the boards can

work together to move forward. M.Egan: Noted if Andreas is taking the recommendation from SLR, the BOS should review the completed report to weigh-in and concurs with Andreas regarding the freed-up money can help address issues in that department with the commodities.

11. LIAISON REPORTS: M.Egan: Spoke to the personnel challenges the school is having regarding filling positions and are keeping an eye on class sizes.
12. CITIZENS COMMENTS: G.Transue: reminded that every budget department needs to watch their numbers with careful oversight. You're teaching the public if you want a low budget, you may not get some services. This is happening on the federal level and in some cities in Connecticut that have actually had to shut down. Gerry asked that this budget be looked at month to month not just end of year. A.Migliaccio commented that we do get monthly reports that track expenditures. Our current reporting is reflecting 2022's budget making the reporting look off, but when we do have a budget the reportings will update for revenues and expenditures. D.Kratochvil: States she has a plan to put in place, waiting on a budget. The plan is, the departments will be given expenditure reports monthly, which has never been done in the past, to hold them accountable. I will be sending these reports out to the departments prior to the BOF meetings. My staff has been instructed not to process invoices that will get us over budget without approval. This has not been done in the past and is a huge shortfall that has been in place. It will no longer be in place. They will each be held responsible and accountable. A.Bisbikos: Stated Debbie has identified areas where the town has not been efficient in finance. Our town has been too complacent with a long-term employee and has complete confidence in Debbie's restructuring and plans. D.Bouchard: Spoke in support of the Board of Selectman not setting a meeting date. A.Migliaccio responded to D.Bouchard that our form of government puts forth the number of the budget to the BOS, and the BOS has to set the meeting date. That's it. Their job is to make a meeting date, not ask questions about the number. Andreas is going to host a special meeting for this topic to address that concern. BOS will find that they do not have the power to kick the number back to the BOF. It's not the way our government work. The budget is on the Board of Selectman table and it's up to them to make the next move. A.Bisbikos: Stated the BOS there is no renegotiating this issue here. He spoke with Attorney Ritter on this topic. If the BOS continue to play stalemate, they will be very close to committed a charter violation. They have one job and one job alone to send it to a town meeting. There is no back of forth between the BOS and the BOF under any circumstances. K. Paquette: Supported the comments D. Bouchard made. She asked if the software charge was still in and the senior bus was still out. A.Migliaccio: Commented the software was never on the reduction list at any point on time and has also not been purchased. Your vote for the budget should not be whether to support software. Regarding the senior center bus, it's been in agreement that it could be deferred past the budget. Noted that your vote for the budget is not for or against software, for or against a bus driver, for or against Andreas, it should be because your town needs a budget to operate or we will use services. Please use your vote as to whether or not you want your town to operate, have money for all departments, not just the senior center, but every department needs a budget that Debbie can help them track so we can have a successful year. Any budget promoting anything other than that, your elected official is doing you a major disservice by trying to sell it any other way. K. Kardys: Made comments regarding Andrea's behavior and supports the BOS not setting a meeting date. Stated Andreas should be careful where you put your barbed words at.

13. ADJOURNMENT: J. Thomas: Motioned to Adjourn M.Egan Seconded All in favor: Motion passed.