



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

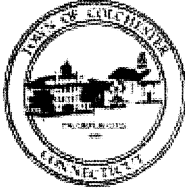
Bernie Dennler, First Selectman

Board of Finance Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 24, 2024 @ 7:00 PM
Hybrid: Town Hall – Meeting Room 1 & Via Zoom

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COLCHESTER, CT
2024 JAN 30 AM 8:54
GAYLE FURMAN
TOWN CLERK

1. Call to order and Roll Call
 - a. Scott Chapman, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM
 - b. BOF Members Present: John Thomas, Scott Chapman, Tim Vaillancourt, Mike Hayes, Mike Egan, Karen Belding
 - c. BOF Members absent: none
 - d. Others present: Bernie Dennler (First Selectman)
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Correspondence
 - a. None
4. Minutes Review
 - a. Motion to approve made my M. Hayes; second by M. Egan. No discussion. Motion carried with all approving.
5. Citizens Comments
 - a. None
6. Additions to agenda
 - a. Motion to add item considering a clerk for the board into New Business; Motion carried unanimously
 - b. Motion to add discussion item about audit of tax item into New Business; Motion carried unanimously
7. Budget schedule
 - a. T. Vaillancourt asked for update on town financial reports and data clean-up. B. Dennler updated that expenditure reports have not been finance office focus yet – rather closing fiscal year activities, W-2s, etc. have been the focus as they were time-sensitive first. Work on items related to expenditure report will be focus in the next few weeks and ahead of budget presentation.
 - b. M. Egan indicated that time in Feb and Mar in various forums and meetings that progress needs to be made to move forward appropriately.
 - c. S. Chapman clarified that forums are to collect thoughts from the public prior to the budgets being formally presented.
 - d. B. Dennler pointed out that this budget schedule mirrors the 2019, pre-Covid schedule, which is a good reference back to how the schedule worked at least that year.
 - e. No concerns or issues with schedule expressed; updated version of budget schedule available on website.
8. Department Updates
 - a. Finance Department
 - i. B. Dennler asked Michelle to give update on behalf of finance department.
 - ii. W-2 reconciliation just finished.
 - iii. MUNIS open for 24-25 data to begin being inputted by department heads.
 - iv. Finance office working on salary estimates for use in budgeting.
 - v. 1099 list due by Jan 31 and work is being done to complete that.



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- vi. Work underway on identifying and listing problems in expenditure reports – corrections will be focus in next two weeks. Some expenses that were not booked to correct accounts have been re-classified already.
 - vii. Some upcoming expected payments and transfers were discussed.
 - viii. Revenue report: no ambulance fees were booked yet this year, so there will be sum coming through there soon. Discussion occurred around how this is booked and statement was made that this is an accounting function to reconcile this monthly and this will be reinstated as a practice now.
- b. Tax Collection
- i. Update on taxes collected through December
 - ii. Supplemental motor vehicle bills are out
 - iii. Working with finance office on straightening out discrepancies in the expense reports for the department.
- c. First Selectman Report (B. Dennler)
- i. No transfers
 - ii. Update on new fire apparatus – 4 new trucks in process of being delivered and going into active use
 - iii. Update on the complication with 5th new fire truck where the vendor pulled out of the contract. Still working on options to get the department the truck somewhere else within budget.
 - iv. Senior center project update – lots of progress on construction.
 - v. Board of selectman – putting together 2 ad hoc committees: 1) facilities planning and 2) recreation needs & coordination. Both will be tasked with recommending strategic plans keeping feasibility and affordability as priorities.
 - vi. Board of selectman ClearGov update – contract being targeted and a summer 2024 public launch is the goal.
 - vii. Ambulance contract – in the last couple weeks, office received an invoice for a cabin chassis, but cannot find any history of it, or a second larger contract for the rest of the ambulance, going through purchasing procedure nor any identified funding source from any kind of planning or purchasing procedures. Going forward, it is possible to plan for this, but cannot find awareness or planning for how to pay for this now. Fire department did state this is not an emergent situation. Fire department was able to get out of the larger of the two contracts (~\$300k+), but not the smaller one (chassis) - ~\$60k. There is no funding for this in the budgets right now, nor was it approved by the Board of Selectman/Board of Finance. May need to take delivery of chassis and then sell it to recoup; reason to believe could recoup money this way.
 - viii. HR director position vacant – priority to get this filled and interviews underway.
 - ix. Group discussed creating a working group to complete a review/refresh of the purchasing policy and B. Dennler indicated department heads will also be refreshed on the purchasing policy.
9. Correspondence – None
- a. S. Chapman clarified that FOIA requests do not need to copy entire board
10. Old Business - None
11. New Business



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- a. Budget forum topics discussion. Clarified the public comments content for these sessions. Discussed departments board want updates from ahead of forums. Also discussed some more complicated aspects of the budget – such as how to budget for operational costs of new senior center building.
- b. Discussion on possibility of hiring a clerk to do minutes for BOF. There is \$70 budget per meeting. B. Dennler said he has asked clerks in town hall and so far none have agreed to do it. Discussion on who and how to post for this.
- c. Tax collector office audit discussion. B. Dennler, along with T. Vaillancourt and S. Chapman receive FOI request related to this – but prior to that request first selectman did not have any knowledge of this audit. Researched in email and found predecessor sent a request to the audit vendor for this report, based on a complaint FS received about the tax collector office. Email chain stopped there and could not find anything else in office. Contacted the auditor – who confirmed the report was completed and delivered to prior first selectman. Could not provide copy today due to resource being out of office. First Selectman asked if there was a finding or problem need to be aware of and they stated that there was not a finding or problem indicated in report. Full report pending the contact being back in office and forwarding to current first selectman. FOI will be fulfilled then as well.

12. Liaison Reports

- a. T. Vaillancourt attended Board of Selectman, but nothing beyond First Selectman update already to report
- b. T. Vaillancourt attended senior center committee; updated that building progress is good. Gave details around work being done in the next few weeks and an upcoming meeting.
- c. S. Chapman met with chair of commission on aging; along with former chair, provided a great background on what the commission does and services provided to town. Really provide a lot of services the compliment and add on top of what is done at the senior center.

13. Citizens Comments

- a. R. Coyle: 1) stated that there were estimates done on operational expected estimated budgets for the senior center 2) noted that procedure for hiring a clerk is to post within town hall first and then external if no one internal posts for it
- b. J. LaChapelle: stated reasons why he copied the entire Board of Finance on FOI request
- c. D. Bouchard: 1) stated concerns with roles/responsibilities and process on the Board of Finance 2) noted that State of Connecticut early voting may impact budget schedule 3) stated would like to see the early meeting brought back into budget schedule for superintendent/first selectman to state quick goals and overview prior to forums
- d. M. Dubreuil: stated concerns over impact of not going through with contracts to purchase ambulance; also questioned if there was a signed contract in place or if it was just in planning phase. B. Dennler clarified that he has a copy of signed contract in his possession.

14. Adjournment

- a. M. Egan makes motion to adjourn; T. Vaillancourt seconds; roll call vote passed unanimously. Adjourned at 8:14 PM.

Submitted By:
Karen Belding
Member, Board of Finance