

Minutes of the Board of Finance meeting held on Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. at the Old Lyme Memorial Town Hall, 52 Lyme Street, Old Lyme, CT 06371.

To join this meeting by phone dial +1-605-472-5727 and enter access code 3819718.

**Present in Person:**   **Regular Members:** BJ Bernblum, H. P. Garvin III,  
Jude Read, Andrew Russell, Kim Thompson  
**Alternate Members:**

**Present in Person:** Timothy Griswold, First Selectman, ex-officio  
Matt Ward, Selectman  
Martha Shoemaker, Selectwoman

**Present via Phone:**   **Regular Members:** David Kelsey  
**Alternate Members:** Maria Marchant

**Absent:**                   **Regular Members:**  
**Alternate Members:** Matthew Olson, Katherine Thuma

**Guests:**                 Tom Meyer, Facility Manager/IT Coordinator  
Jennifer Datum, Registrar of Voters  
Ian Neviasser, Superintendent of Schools, Regional School District #18

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Mr. Kelsey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., reporting that he and Mrs. Marchant will be present via the phone.

Mr. Kelsey requested a motion to move guests up on the agenda. A motion was made by Mrs. Thompson, seconded by Ms. Read, to move Information Technology and Registrar's – Primaries and Referendums up on the agenda. Motion carried.

## **General Government**

### **0060 Information Technology Department**

Mr. Griswold highlighted Mr. Meyer's two positions explaining that Mr. Meyer is responsible for the areas of Info. Tech. and Facility Manager, both of which require more hours than are allocated in the budget. There was discussion of separating the two positions.

Mr. Meyer explained to the Board his role as both the Facilities Manager & IT Coordinator. He detailed some of the major projects that he has been responsible for since he took over for Phil Parcak

last July. Mr. Meyer reported that both functions of his job require more hours than are allocated. He stated that he works 25 hours a week and both positions could easily take the entire timeframe each. Mr. Meyer detailed his role as the Info. Tech. Coordinator and highlighted some of the upcoming projects which include surveillance cameras at various Town buildings and the Police body cams. Within the Facilities role, he has been exploring new entry doors with keyless entry for the Town Hall and other buildings. Like the surveillance cameras, both projects require someone who understands both IT and has construction knowledge. Mr. Meyer feels his strengths are in the area of IT and there are many time-consuming projects in the works. There was a discussion about CT Comp within the Consultant line as it has increased from \$82,000 to \$123,406.

Mr. Griswold stated that the Info. Tech. budget increases are in the Supplies, Software Upgrades, Office Supplies, Contract VTH, Contract GIS, Contract Laserfiche, Contract ERSI, Contract domain.gov lines, as well as the part-time Tech and Consultant lines. All other lines remained the same. Tabled for this evening.

#### 0050 Registrars – Primaries and Referendums

Mrs. Datum explained that she was the Deputy Registrar for a year before becoming the Democratic Registrar of Voters in December, when Marilyn Clarke retired. Since then there have been many “unknowns” to the voting system that will impact the budgets in many ways. For example, in this coming year, there will likely be two known Referendums, possibly a Primary, and the Municipal Election. Each event takes numerous hours to coordinate all the efforts, staffing, ballots, calibrating tabulators, etc.,. The increases in the Registrars’ budget increases include Elections, Mileage, Dues, Contracted Services, Printing, Other/Miscellaneous, Primaries, Education and Training. There are decreases in the Administrative Assistant line and the Advertising lines.

Mrs. Datum apprised the Board about early voting in CT. If passed before April 15<sup>th</sup>, then early voting will have additional financial ramifications on the Registrars’ budget. Right now, CT is one of only four states without in-person early voting, but the CT voters overwhelmingly voted to change that. The legislature will decide how early voting in CT will work, including when, where, and for how long early voting will be available before an election. The legislature must pass an early voting bill that will allow at least fourteen days of early voting during the thirty days before Election Day. If less than thirty days, early voting may have a more expansive form of absentee balloting. Early voting may include at least one Saturday and one Sunday to offer the option to vote on weekends for people who cannot take time off from work, childcare, school or other commitments. Every town and city must have at least one designated early voting location and it should be accessible for people with disabilities.

Mrs. Datum commented the CT legislature should fully fund early voting, so early voting. However, the amounts of reimbursement from the State are unknown at this time. After discussion, it was decided to table this item pending the State’s decision on Early Voting.

A motion was made by Mr. Russell, seconded by Mrs. Thompson, to move Regional School District #18 budget discussion up on the agenda. Motion carried.

**Regional School District #18 – Board of Education**

Supt. Neviaser detailed the Operating budget, which is comprised of Certified Salaries (increased by \$415,250 or 2.74%), Non-certified Salaries (increased by \$80,035 or 1.99%), Employee Benefits (increased by \$220,276 or 5.66%), Instructional Programs (increased by \$116,825 or 7.63%), Special Education (decreased by \$82,318 or -6.82%), Support Services (decreased by \$1,629 or -1.99%), Administrative Services (increased by \$186,549 or 20.60%), Pupil Transportation (decreased by \$124,384 or -12.40%), Plant Operation and Maintenance (decreased by \$62,373 or -1.54%), Operating Budget (increased by \$748,231 or 2.35%), Debt Service (increased \$265,650 or 8.96%). The Total Budget will increase by \$1,013,881 or 2.91%. Mr. Neviaser stated that total budget for the 2023-2024 is \$35,844,345.

Mr. Neviaser explained that contractual obligations of Certified, Non-certified Salaries and Plant Operations and Maintenance are the main drivers of this budget. He noted that, while the High School enrollment is decreasing, the enrollment at the elementary school level is increasing. Mr. Neviaser stated that the District is continuing to maintain the same quality programs and educational benefits with small class sizes. He stated that the District is continuing to grow in student population due to people leaving urban areas and the quality of the curriculum.

**211-1100 Other Associations****7001 Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library**

Ms. Read stated that the PGN Library request is \$385,000 and she requested it be moved until March 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.

**7002 Lyme Academy of Fine Arts**

Ms. Read stated that the Lyme Academy of Fine Arts request is \$20,000 to help the Academy continue to expand community outreach, and to make the public aware of the many programs available to them. She stated that the Lyme Academy has experienced increasing enrollment within its full-time Core program with nearly 40 students currently enrolled, and expanded the part-time, Continuing Education programs. The Young Masters program, an after-school youth arts program, currently has 20 students enrolled. The workshops taught by visiting instructors have been consistently sold out, and the free weekly lectures by visiting historians, curators, critics and artists have been well-attended by the public. Ms. Read met the new Executive Director, Wendy Burry and the Academy is hoping to increase enrollment to 80+ students, the level that the Academy had when it was part of the University of New Haven. After discussion, it was decided to pass on voting for this budget until next week.

7003 Florence Griswold Museum

Ms. Read stated that the Florence Griswold Museum request \$15,000 and has requested to be moved until March 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.

7004 Lyme Art Association

Ms. Read stated that the Lyme Art Association is requesting funding of \$8,000. The grant assistance helps keep the gallery operating and open to the public and free of charge year-round. Public arts programs are also presented to the community free of charge throughout the year.

Ms. Read stated that the Lyme Art Association is asking for an increase in its Capital support (from \$10,000 to \$20,000) for its Second Century Capital Campaign. The Town's support has helped with exterior restoration and in fundraising goals for the next phase of the project includes replacing the aging and leaking skylights and roof, insulating the attic and replacing lights. After discussion, it was decided to pass on voting for this budget until next week.

7006 Old Lyme Historical Society

Ms. Read stated that the Old Lyme Historical Society is requesting a \$8,500 grant, (an increase of \$1,000). The Historical Society is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization that was incorporated in CT in February 2005. The Society is governed by its Board of Trustees, consisting of up to 25 trustees and over 300 active members. The Historical Society bought the Grange Hall several years ago and has worked very hard to make many needed improvements as well as to make the building more efficient. The building has two levels and is now handicapped accessible to everyone in town because of the lift that was installed a couple of years ago. Ms. Read stated that the projects that the Society is working on are replacing the front steps and the old entry in the back of the building. After discussion, it was decided to pass on voting for this budget until next week.

Roger Tory Peterson Estuary Center

Ms. Read stated that the Roger Tory Peterson Estuary Center is requesting a grant from the Town in the amount of \$10,000 (same as last year). A few years ago, the Center purchased the Bee and Thistle and has been working on renovating the building.

Mr. Griswold stated that the Center is applying for three different grants, including the Connecticut Audubon Society's application for Congressionally Directed Funding from the Historic Preservation Fund to support renovations to its building. This funding will assist the Center to upgrade its aged HVAC, plumbing and electrical systems and provide for the replacement of windows necessary to create an energy efficient and climate-controlled building.

The other grant, Connecticut Audubon Society's application for Congressionally Directed Funding from the Fish and Wildlife Service for conservation and resource management. These funds will include the development of an accessible nature trail that will connect with the artists' trail of its immediate neighbor, the Florence Griswold Museum and the conservation and enhancement of habitat for birds, marine and other wildlife and the restoration of the riparian border along the Lieutenant River as a living shoreline. After discussion, it was decided to pass on voting for this budget until next week.

### **Lymewood and Ryefield Manor and HOPE Tax Abatements**

Mr. Griswold stated that he received financial information from Ryefield Manor (Shoreline Affordable Housing) and is waiting for financials from Lymewood and HOPE. Mr. Griswold stated that last year an 80% tax abatement was granted for Lymewood, and Ryefield, and 100% for the three HOPE properties. Mr. Griswold stated that HOPE'S ownership interest in the three properties is the land and the occupants own the structural improvements, subject to a deed restriction. HOPE leases the land to the occupants under 99-year leases. All leases have one option to extend the lease term for an additional 99 years. The residents own the residential home structures, pay property tax based on the assessed value, and pay any administrative and land use fees to HOPE.

Mr. Griswold detailed the tax abatements in relation to the Mill Rate calculation. The other abatements include Elderly Tax Relief (\$30,000), EMS/OLFD Volunteer Tax Abatement (\$35,000), Ryefield Tax Abatement (\$22,000), and Lymewood Tax Abatement at 80% (\$22,000), and HOPE Abatement at 100% (\$7,000),. After discussion, it was decided to pass on voting for this budget until next week.

### **General Government**

#### **0040 Treasurer's Office**

Mr. Griswold stated that there is a significant increase (\$15,400) in the Contracted Services (Auditor) line. Mr. Griswold spoke with Ron Nossek about the increase and Mr. Nossek explained that the cause for the increase is the increase in salaries of new accountants. After discussion, it was suggested to remain with Clifton Larson Allen, LLP (the CPA firm) through the fiscal year 2023 audit and go out to bid this fall.

A motion was made by Mr. Russell, seconded by Ms. Read, to approve \$243,159. Motion carried.

0095 Health Department

The Health Department's major budget item is the Ledge Light Health District under Contracted Services, which is calculated on a per capita fee to be \$59,000. Mosquito Control includes the Mosquito Management, Inc.'s fee. Mr. Griswold stated that he spoke to the owner of Integrated Mosquito Control, the Town's contractor, and asked why the annual budget increased from \$39,000 to \$57,000. The owner replied he didn't supply that number and said the Town should budget \$40,000.

A motion was made by Ms. Read, seconded by Mr. Russell, to approve \$104,284. Motion carried.

0110 Insurance

Mr. Griswold highlighted the costs of the Town's insurance, which includes premiums for Health/Dental Insurance (\$747,000) and fees (\$10,000 for a third party to administer the short-term disability), Life Insurance (\$16,000), Property/Liability (\$135,000), and Workers Compensation (\$94,000), Fire Department (\$50,000), Bonds for Officials (\$2,000) and, after discussion, it was decided to increase the Cyber Security Insurance (to \$28,000).

A motion was made by Mr. Russell, seconded by Ms. Read, to approve \$1,082,000. Motion carried.

202 Boards and Commissions0200 Harbor Management Commission

The Harbor Management expenses represent Clerk, Contracted Services for removing, storing and replacing the dinghy dock at Ferry Road each year and hauling the moorings, Postage, and the Miscellaneous line. The Contracted Services line increased from \$1,200 to \$5,000 to provide for future professional fees related to landings and mooring locations.

A motion was made by Ms. Read, seconded by Mrs. Thompson, to approve \$6,738 for Harbor Management Commission. Motion carried.

**Harbor Management Capital Item:** Mr. Griswold stated that Harbor Management Capital included \$10,000 for Hydrographic Surveys (Black Hall, Four Mile and Calves Island Mooring Field) and \$60,000 for the Buttonball Road Property and dock. A discussion ensued and the consensus was to reduce the Buttonball dock amount to \$20,000 and add \$60,000 to that line item for FY2025.

0290 Sound View Commission

Mr. Griswold stated that the Sound View Commission's budget represents Postage, Legal, Contracted Services (for providing the Port-o-potties at Sound View and maintaining plantings and shrubs for planters at the end of Hartford Avenue), Printing, Other/Miscellaneous (for flags, signs, banners, landscape, etc.), and Golf Cart registrations. There are increases in Contracted Services, Other/Miscellaneous and Community Services. There are two new lines: 1) cleaning the proposed restroom trailer, and 2) operating the proposed restroom trailer (\$32,300). There was a discussion about the cost of the trailer maintenance and upkeep vs. the port-a-potties. It was decided not to fund the restroom trailer.

A motion was made by Mr. Russell, seconded by Ms. Read, to approve \$26,665 for the Sound View Commission. Motion carried.

0292 Open Space Commission

Mrs. Thompson stated that discussion for Open Space's request is scheduled for March 21, 2023.

213-0011 Sanitation

**213-1300-0011-000 Municipal Refuse Collection (CWPM):** For removal of household refuse and recycling - \$591,000

**213-1300-0011-001 Disposal of Recycling (CWPM):** For disposal of recycling - \$135,000

**213-1300-0560-000 Disposal of Municipal Refuse (CWPM):** For disposal of refuse - \$300,000

**Total for Refuse and Recycling: \$1,026,000.**

Mr. Griswold stated that the Town's contract with CWPM for the removal of refuse and recycling will expire on June 30, 2023. He met with CWPM to discuss the four-year option in the contract and was told that, because of rising fuel cost, repair and maintenance, etc., the increase would be 5% annually, or 20% increase over the life of the contract. After further negotiations, CWPM brought the percentage down to 4% for each of the four years of the contract. It was noted that, when the CWPM contract was negotiated in 2018, the following bids were received:

- |                      |           |
|----------------------|-----------|
| 1) CWPM              | \$520,000 |
| 2) All-Waste         | \$735,000 |
| 3) Willimantic Waste | \$809,500 |
| 4) Solari Brothers   | \$824,000 |

Mr. Griswold explained the two contracts with CWPM. The first contract (that will expire in June) is to haul the refuse and recycling from households in Old Lyme to New London (refuse) and Bozrah (recycling). The second contract provides for the disposal of refuse (Preston Burn Plant) and the recycling (Casella, formerly Willimantic Waste in Mansfield). CWPM is also willing to provide a quote to dispose of materials collected at the Transfer Station. After discussion, it was decided to hold off on voting until next week, March 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **Other Business**

Ms. Read stated that she spoke with, Jeri Baker, the Chair of the Senior Center Building Committee about having to find and rent space in the interim while renovations are being done. Ms. Baker wants the rental fees to be part of the operating budget and does not want the rental fees included in the building project budget. Ms. Read stated that Ms. Baker, along with several seniors in support of the project, will be attending next week's meeting to update the Board.

Mr. Griswold stated that the Mystic Air invoice that was discussed a couple of weeks ago still has not been paid. The invoice will be split with the Town of Lyme (75%/25%). There may be other expenses that must be paid.

A motion was made by Ms. Read, seconded by Mr. Russell, to approve an appropriation of \$19,500 for the Senior Center Expansion project. Motion carried.

Mr. Kelsey stated that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 p.m. Budgets for Capital Expenditures, Capital Project Funds, Revenues, Minutes, and Other Business will be reviewed and discussed.

A motion was made by Mr. Russell, seconded by Mrs. Thompson, to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 p.m. Motion carried.

***Respectfully Submitted,***

***Michele E. Hayes***  
***Secretary***