



TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY

*Board of Finance
1212 Whittemore Road
Middlebury, CT 06762*

Meeting Minutes of the Board of Finance Wednesday August 12, 2020 at 7:00 PM Shepardson Auditorium & Zoom

Present: William Stowell, Chairman
Stephen Ruccio, Board Member
Joseph Drauss, Board Member
Dawn Albizu-Calabrese, Board Member

Absent: Keli-Ann Bollard, Alternate
Rita H Smith, Board Member
Vincent Cipriano, Board Member

Also Present: Ed St John, First Selectman
Robin Stanziale, CFO
Ralph Barra, Selectman
Elaine Strobel, Selectman
Rachel Primus, Recording Clerk

William Stowell opened the meeting at 7:04 PM

Approval of June 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes

VOTED: Unanimously on a motion by Stephen Ruccio and seconded by Joseph Drauss to **APPROVE** the June 10, 2020 meeting minutes.

Reports

• Chief Financial Reports

Robin Stanziale provided reports for the fiscal year end that ended June 30th and the three month of July for the current fiscal year. The reports are unaudited and they are still making changes. She reported there was a surplus for the end of the last fiscal year. A lot are due to specific instances, some having to do with positions that weren't filled for the year, the police contract not previously being signed, as well as Covid 19 not allowing for travel, no referendum and the lack of being able to have certain programs. She said the revenues are up and the expenses are down. Robin said this will most likely not continue for this year's budget. She said the legal, technology, building and grounds and fire department are all over budget. A discussion ensued regarding the August storm. Robin said the special duty for July was done, but was not able to post about \$29,000 revenue for the town before tonight's meeting.

- **Tax Collectors Reports**

Brenda said the report contains numbers based on the first installment of payments. She said that people are taking advantage of the low interest program, both businesses and residents. The lock box was up 1 million dollars and the cloud was up from last year as well. She said that more people are taking advantage of these options as well as taking advantage of the drop box at the town hall. Brenda said that delinquent notices will go out next week.

- **Police Special Duty**

Bill Stowell said the reports are in the packets. There was \$115,974 in additional charges leaving a balance, after payments of \$73,212. Of that balance amount \$48,154 is under 30 days' delinquent and \$24,600 is 60 to 90 days' delinquent.

Old Business

None

New Business

- **Budget Transfers**

Robin said there is one transfer of \$50,000 from the designated contingency line for snow and ice removal. She is asking the Board to approve a transfer from Contingency snow and ice (01-07-1006974) to snow and ice removal reserve (01-52-036445). A discussion ensued regarding the auditor's suggestion on making transfers for the year end. There was no budget transfer, as no member made a motion.

- **Appointment of Auditor Discussion**

Bill Stowell explained that the town had signed a letter of agreement with the auditors earlier in the year, but now because of Covid-19, they have received a letter from the auditors regarding more requirements and they estimated an increase in cost of \$7,000. They are asking the town to sign the stipulated agreement for the estimated amount, along with completing 4 pages of questions they are asking us to answer. Robin said they are making a number of changes to the audit due to Covid 19. They are estimating it will take an additional week to week and a half. She said that she has reached out to other towns and accounting firms and none have heard of any additional fees being charged. The town does have the option to change firms. Bill said he is concerned about the additional estimated charges. It's a 25% increase. He questions if they can find someone who can do the audit and have it done on time. He did note that they can ask the State for an extension. Bill said he just wanted to make the board aware of the situation, and he will call a special meeting if they need to. Steve said that he supports Bill and Robin for what they have done. He said that the point of changing auditors is to get the best service they can. He feels we should send a message that we will sit on this for a while. He said they had an agreement and 25% is ridiculous. Joe Drauss felt the town should stay with the same accountant, one that is familiar with the town. He doesn't want to start fresh with a new firm. Robin also noted that Sandra said the audit will not be done at the town hall, it will be done remotely.

- **Economic Development Presentation**

Terry McAnliffe, representing the Economic Development Commission, showed the board a copy of the June 16, 2016 meeting minutes which was the last time he had been before the BOF. He gave an overview of what they do. Terry said they receive a \$1900 budget a year. Of that \$200 goes towards their website and \$850 toward Advance CT. He explained that Advance CT gives them access to commercial online data bases. He showed the board what the website looks like. Terry explained that they do not receive a lot of traffic on their website, but that the town's

website gets majority of it. He said they will be getting a new vendor and will combine both the town and economic development. Terry said the most important role they have is to attract businesses to Middlebury. He said he has been talking with a lot of commercial brokers and businesses and has been receiving a lot of feedback from them. He said that Middlebury is more expensive than other towns. There are less options of places to build and types of buildings to rent. They need to sell Middlebury as an upscale business address. Their biggest competition is Oxford. He said they need to market Middlebury better. Middlebury center has 3 gas stations which makes it an undesirable location. He is proposing stricter restrictions and regulations for Middlebury center. Terry noted there is no centralized location where you can do one stop shopping in town. He wants to do marketing, brochures, video, and emails to promote Middlebury. They need to figure out how to make Middlebury more appealing, make it look better to people driving into town. He said he wants to come up with commercial development guidelines. Terry noted that they have created Celebrate Middlebury which has been a success and will be able to hold it again this year.

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

VOTED: Unanimously on a motion by Stephen Ruccio and seconded by Dawn Calabrese to **ADJOURN** the meeting at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rachel Primus, Recording Clerk
Cc: Board of Selectmen
Board of Finance and Alternates
Email Notification for Website
File