



## TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY

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

### **Special Meeting Minutes Wednesday March 10, 2021 ZOOM**

Present: William Stowell, Chairman  
Rita H Smith, Board Member  
Joseph Drauss, Board Member  
Vincent Cipriano, Board Member  
Dawn Albizu-Calabrese, Board Member  
John Jenusaitis, Alternate  
Natrajan Kuppuraj, Alternate  
John Moriarty, Alternate

Absent: Stephen Ruccio, 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 7:00 PM with the pledge of allegiance. He appointed John Jenusaitis in place of Stephen Ruccio as a regular member.

#### **Approval of February 24, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes**

**VOTED:** Unanimously on a motion by Joseph Drauss and seconded by Rita Smith to **APPROVE** the February 24, 2021 special meeting minutes.

#### **Reports**

- Chief Financial Officer Reports

Robin reported that items are coming in better than forecasted and she doesn't see any items standing out. She said that some items are coming in over budget, but they are offset by the other items coming in under budget. She said they are finalizing the audit, and hopefully this will be the last week. She reported a surplus for last year. Robin is hoping to have the auditors in next month to give a presentation.

- Tax Collectors Report

Brenda reported that things are moving along well, better than anticipated. She said this is the

last month to take advantage of the 3%. Lien notices will be going out, and the delinquent motor vehicle bills went out last week. She said things are status quo. Bill asked how the drop box outside town hall was working out. Brenda said it has been working fine, people seem to like the fact that they can access it at any time. It's working well for all departments.

- Special Duty

Bill said it appears that Eversource Electric and Munger Construction are the biggest companies right now, and we are keeping the numbers in the zero-to-thirty-day-range. Amy said she had received 2 payments from Frontier today. Ed St John warned to be careful with Frontier because they are in bankruptcy.

### **Old Business**

- FY21-22 Budget Discussion

Bill said that he has gone over the budget with Robin in detail and they have prepared a few documents for review for tonight's meeting. Robin reviewed the changes with the board. They were as follows: (01-15-02-6102) Tax-travel & office expense increase \$690 to cover recertification, (01-15-02-6106) Tax – dues & publications increase \$850 for the tax bill inserts, (01-17-02-6102) Registrars Travel & Official Exp increase \$2700, (01-18-01-6003) BOF - Recording Clerk increase \$300 for additional meetings, (01-19-02-6106) BOAA- Dues & Publications increase \$200 for additional dues and legal notices, (01-34-02-6141) Water Commission – Heritage decrease \$5000, (01-35-01-6006) Fire Department – Fire Chief decrease \$90.85 because there was a 2% increase rather than 3%, (01-40-02-6100) Police – Power & Controls decrease \$5000, (01-41-02-6011) Northwest decrease \$3,742.06 because only a 3% increase, (01-47-01-6003) B&G Temporary Salaries increase \$15,000, (01-47-01-6007) B&G Overtime Salaries increase \$4,000, (01-47-03-6420) B&G Water Testing increase \$5,000, (01-60-02-6113) P&R Water Usage increase \$4,000 based on current and past year usage, (01-66-06-6903) Medical Insurance/Reserve decrease \$120,000 to reduce reserve due to Covid-19, (01-72-00-6973) Computer Equipment/Technology increase \$10,000, (01-81-81-3704) Transfer in from Unassigned Fund Balance reduce \$250,000 to reduce tax payer liability, and (01-81-81-3705) Transfer in from Medical Reserve increase \$150,000. Robin said they are creating a new department for Fenn Farm (01-76-00-9850) which will include a new account for LPOSAC clerk with \$1,000.

Ed St John said it was a joint decision between himself and Bill to recommend softening the mill rate for the town. Bill said they will give the extra money back to the taxpayers. Ed said the reduction to the general fund will help residents because of the 1.9% mill increase last year. He feels they can afford to put this money in there which will help reduce the budgets and mill rate. Robin said they will need to figure out how much money they want to put in the budget for Fenn Farm. Bill reviewed the history of expenses for Fenn Farm with the board. He said that every year they tend to go over the \$4,000 budget and he feels it should be doubled to \$8,000. Bill said it does not mean it all needs to be used but at least it will be available if they need it. Ed said they are off to a good start and have a new commission now. He also feels that a budget of \$8,000 is better than \$4,000.

- Possible approval of BOF budget to be voted on at joint BOS/BOF meeting March 18, 2021

Bill explained that these are all suggested changes. No one had come forward with questions. The total original fund expenditures on 2/10/21 was \$12,005,829.15 and the adjusted general fund expenditures on 3/10/21 is \$11,519,736.24.

**VOTED:** Unanimously on a motion by Joseph Drauss and seconded by John Jenusaitis to **SEND** the new amount of \$11,519,736.24 to the joint meeting on March 18, 2021 for approval for a separate vote by the Board of Selectman and the Board of Finance.

Bill explained at the last meeting they discussed having the town attorney send a letter to Rob Fenn concerning any work done needed to be brought to Public Works to verify work needed to be done by the town. Once the new commission is up and running there will be a liaison to public works. Bill said that everyone received a copy of the letter that Dana sent out to Rob on February 24, 2021. Bill received a response dated February 2021 from Rob Fenn. He read the letter into the record. Bill gave an overview of the situation that started back in November regarding the work done that cost about \$2,800.00. He was unable to determine who authorized the work. All Bill is saying is that work needs to be authorized and have a purchase order before it is done. He explained that Fenn Farm is town property now.

### **New Business**

- Discussion on BOS to hold joint meeting with BOF on 3/18/21

Bill said that Ed St John had composed a list of Capital items which require a separate vote at the referendum. This will be discussed at the joint meeting, but he wanted to present those items to the board tonight in case they had any questions. The total Capital items for consideration total \$250,000. Ed said this needs to be approved by the BOF. Ed said that future items for consideration would be the fire department replacement apparatus engine/tanker \$800,000-\$875,000. Bill said he would like to see ongoing how many SCBA's are needed. He would like an update on what the plan is. He asked for the same thing for the radios, and what they are putting \$20,000 for in vehicle reserve. He asked that the answers be sent out before the next meeting. Ed St John said there are line items under the budget for these items, and this is to adjust those line items to cover the cost.

Bill noted there has been a change to the town charter. They had concerns regarding who set the agenda, runs the meeting, and who calls the meeting during the joint meeting of the two boards. He received a letter from the town attorney which said it is all procedural in nature. The first 3 items can be voted on by the BOS. It does require an affirmative separate vote by both the BOS and BOF. Both require a quorum and need a majority vote. The BOS and BOF would do an agenda and each board would take minutes. Bill felt they only need one agenda and need one recording clerk to take the minutes, a separate agenda could be confusing. The town attorney felt that was fine. There only needs to be 3 items on the agenda. The first item would be the discussion and vote on the FY21/22 budget where the BOS will vote first and then the BOF after. If there is an affirmative vote, then they will schedule the public hearing, and if there is not then they will need to schedule another meeting soon. The second item would be to vote on the capital items. Before they go to referendum, they need to be approved by the BOF. Bill felt this should be voted on first by the BOS as well, and then the BOF. The third item, depending on the outcome of the vote, would be setting a special meeting for both boards or to move forward and send the decided-on information to a public hearing. Ed St John felt the proper person to set the agenda was Robin.

- Method of holding future meetings via zoom/in person

Robin said that on March 19, 2021 the executive order changes the maximum capacity to 25 people. She said it is up to the board to decide if they want to continue to utilize zoom for the meetings or meet in person. Ed St John suggested the public hearing be in person. Bill said he would like it to be hybrid. It was decided that the April public hearing will be by hybrid and the regular will continue to be on zoom.

**Public Comment**

None

**Adjournment**

VOTED: Unanimously on a motion by Vincent Cipriano and seconded by Joseph Drauss to **ADJOURN** the meeting at 8:34 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rachel Primus, Recording Clerk

Cc: Board of Selectmen  
Board of Finance and Alternates  
Janine Bowler, Town Treasurer  
Email Notification for Website  
File