

## BOARD OF FINANCE MEETING MINUTES FOR FEBUARY 17, 2022

Board of Finance meeting was called to order at 6:03 by chair, Richard Nygard. Seated at the meeting were Richard Nygard, Andrew Gardner, Michael Jordan was seated for Virginia Carmany, Steve Cline was seated for John O'Hare, William Bernhart and Michael Joplin.

First Select woman, Charlene Janecek was present as well. By prior arrangement, Michael Joplin was asked to do the minutes.

Richard Nygard read the following letter into the record from Susan Wright during Audience of Citizens:

Dear BoS and BoF members,

Unfortunately I am not able to make the meetings tonight but wanted to comment on the items below.

After seeing the minutes regarding the purchase of Police cameras as well as the Audio Video quote my concern are as follows:

1. Why are the cameras an emergency purchase since I believe they have been discussed for awhile? The former Selectman said in her August 11 2021 Selectman's Report she was working on it. So what happened?
2. Because it's now been considered an emergency it does not have to follow the process of getting three quotes which means we have no comparisons for such a large expense.
3. Was there an RFP done for The Audio Video quote from ct Comp?  
I didn't see one but may have missed it.
4. Have other companies offer bids on this? Again a large sum of taxpayer dollars based on one quote.
5. Are the only quotes the BoS are accepting from ct Comp? And why is that acceptable?

Personally, and in all businesses, I have worked for, getting an RFP and quotes from other companies, made sense to be sure that you are not over paying, missing something another company would bring to light, and to assure due diligence when spending, in this case, taxpayers dollars.

Respectfully,  
Susan Wright

### **New Business – Police Body Cameras**

The first part of the meeting and opening discussion was a letter submitted by Susan Wright regarding the purchase of police body cameras as well as cameras mounted in police vehicles. The term "emergency purchase" has been used in the initial phase of searching for and acquiring the necessary equipment. The letter was an attempt to understand why the process the town is in the midst of could be considered an emergency. The letter asks explicitly why the search for this equipment couldn't be acquired through the normal competitive bidding process.

First Select woman, Charlene Janecek, gave a lengthy and detailed explanation with regard to this question. Janecek also mentioned that she had written a letter for distribution on this topic but it seems the letter did not get distributed in time for this meeting.

The central point Janecek cited was the recent development in the state of Connecticut which determined that body cameras must be in place by July 1. If cameras are not operational on that date, towns will be fined \$100 a

day and the police without cameras will not be able to patrol. The lead time in acquiring the equipment is 2 to 3 months presently, that lead time could increase. Hence, decisions in this regard must be made with a certain urgency in order to meet the deadlines. Janecek indicated she wanted to move forward on the cameras. Janecek also reported on the CT Comp IT component of the project; that there is an ongoing discussion with the town of Deep River to share cost of the new system, perhaps reducing the financial burden by \$59,000 to the town. Further study was warranted on this component.

Richard Nygard remarked that the BoS had voted on the emergency status of this project and therefore able to bypass the regular competitive bidding process as part of the Policy of requiring an RFP and going out to bid. The current cost for the cameras is \$40k for 4 body cameras and 3 car cameras and the CT Comp IT component is currently at \$80k.

Andrew Gardner requested that the Body Cameras and IT be bundled with the WPCA projects and go out for Town Approval under ARPA and not delay the process as the ARPA committee prepares policy and procedures. These projects seemed obvious for consideration.

Richard Nygard indicated setting up a special meeting of BoF and ARPA committee to move these projects forward urgently.

Further discussion indicated that Charlene wanted to understand the possibility and savings regarding partnering with Deep River, Peter Evenkow indicated if there was money within the current budget to utilize (e.g. BoF contingency) the project would not need to go to Town Meeting, but then would not be able to utilize ARPA funds.

Bill Bernhart stated he would like to see these proposals pass through the process the ARPA Committee is proposing (sent to Charlene for review) which would allow the committee to deal with time sensitive projects.

Ed Meehan stated that there is a 30% grant program through OPM which we would be eligible for if the expenditure was submitted by June 31<sup>st</sup>. We would lose this grant if we didn't submit in time.

Rick Nygard indicated there might be additional funds available from COST (Counsel of Small Towns) that might reduce costs as well. He reiterated a desire to keep this project on track by the end of the month or within an additional week or so. Bill Bernhart agreed a special meeting of the joint boards was a good idea and could be scheduled soon to address the project and ensure the ARPA committee had the ability to deal with urgent and time sensitive projects appropriately.

### **Continued Business:**

**APRA Projects:** The next portion of the meeting was a discussion of WPCA projects with chair, Ed Meehan. Nygrad indicated that projects had changed from Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>. Meehan had provided a document regarding the WPCA projects from Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>. The discussion was a fairly brief presentation of the five main projects in the near future for WPCA. The projects have been prioritized and Ed noted the need for inland wetland permits. The first project is the repair of the sewer line behind the Colt House and the new man hole installation hopefully this spring. The second is the completion of generator repair and final billing for those services and is out with CERMA for insurance and with help establish our deductible/component of the costs. Third is behind 4 Water Street for 300 feet of new pipe and will need an inland wetlands permit and the lead time might push this project into the fall and it might be expensive. Beyond those items there is an emergency generator transfer switch which must be installed and the creation and updating of an area map with accurate information which has a database for future maintenance and estimating in conjunction with GIS software. Estimates total \$98k. For the first portion of this list WPCA may be seeking ARPA funds. The second portion is more likely town budget.

This information as well as a document from Susan Wright with answers from Ed Meehan should be attached with the meeting minutes.

Nygaard indicated some of the projects requests might be able to wait until second year ARPA funding that will be awarded in April.

Bill Bernhart indicated the ARPA process definition and forms have moved forward in short order thanks to Michael Cressman and Steve Cline.

Preparation of meeting minutes: Michael Joplin will do meeting minutes for this meeting and Deb Vilcheck will prepare for the next BoF meeting. Charlene indicated she is looking for a someone to take on this task.

### Reports:

Nygaard announced the initial budget has been published and distributed.

Budget Status was reviewed by Peter Evenkow. New items: \$168k from R4 surplus and \$109k from Supervision as 'revenue'. FEMMA reimbursement is coming in. Expenditures: removed Treasurer savings as the former Treasurer is coming back, \$25k under in medical insurance.

First Selectman's Report: The final portion of our meeting was a report Charlene Janacek. In an attempt to increase the security in the area of town hall parking lot there is a proposal to install security cameras. Cameras to be installed on the four corners of the building adjacent to parking as well as a camera in the office area of the police department. Cost is \$7,403.55. A second item for security was cited as well: replacing the locks, as an upgrade, in the area of the police office and storage area.

Charlene mentioned that the Police vehicles will be parked at Town Hall as the police will. No longer be able to take the cars home and there has been some petty theft around Town Hall warranting this project as well as the safety of people who may work late at Town Hall.

M. Jordan inquired if the cameras in the police cars could be utilized. Charlene indicated that most likely if the cars were not in use the cameras most likely would not be activated.

Janecek gave a brief report on 59 Winthrop Rd. and the ongoing environmental study at that location. Phases 1 and 2 have been completed by the environmental engineers. The written report, phase 2, will not be available until the end of the month. It has already been determined that some cleanup is required and federal funds might be possible.

Richard Nygaard indicated the audit report is complete and it will be presented to the Board of Finance at our regular meeting. He thanked Peter for all the work necessary to prepare.

2. Chester Creek dredging in the areas of the marinas will begin end of March or beginning of April.

### Approval of meeting minutes:

Motion to approve the minutes from January 20, 2022 was made by Bill Bernhart, seconded by Andrew Gardner and approved unanimously. Steve Cline was thanked for his work on the meeting minutes.

A motion to approve the REVISED BoF meeting minutes from November 1, 2021 was made vs. the meeting minutes that had been prepared by the BoS for that joint meeting. Rick indicated that he and John O'Hare reviewed the recording of the meeting and prepared these revised meeting minutes per the request that the BoS meeting minutes did not fully reflect the meeting. He continued that the Attorney representing the BoF

indicated that the BoF could adopt their own version of the meeting. Motion by Andrew Gardner and seconded by Mike Jordan. Approved unanimously.

Open Items: On hold

Audience of Citizens: No comments

Motion to Adjourn made by Andrew Gardner and second Michael Joplin. Approved unanimously at 6:47 pm.

Meeting minutes prepared and submitted by Michael Joplin and Virginia Carmany