

MINUTES
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING
LOCATION: REMOTE (ZOOM)
February 16, 2021

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the Board of Finance was held on Tuesday, February 16, 2021. In response to the Governor's Executive Orders regarding COVID-19, Board members and the public were able to attend the meeting remotely using the ZOOM online meeting platform. In attendance at the meeting were Mayor Elinor Carbone, Comptroller Alice Proulx, Fire Chief Peter Towey, Treasurer Daniel Farley, Purchasing Agent Pennie Zucco, Board of Education Business Manager Ed Arum and Board of Finance Members Christopher Beyus, Laurene Pesce, Christopher Anderson, Mark Bushka and James Wright. CLA auditors Leslie Zoll and Alaina Clausen also participated by ZOOM. Board of Finance member Lance Boynton was absent.

Mayor Carbone called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED

On a motion by Mr. Anderson, seconded by Mr. Wright, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the regular meeting held January 19, 2021. Mr. Bushka abstained.

On a motion by Mr. Anderson, seconded by Mr. Bushka, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the special meeting held February 9, 2021. Mrs. Pesce abstained.

PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL AUDIT

CLA West Hartford Principal Leslie Zoll provided a summary of the audit for the year ended June 30, 2020 and presented some financial highlights, including an increase in net assets for governmental activities and fund balance increases for the General Fund, Bonded Projects Fund and WPCA Infrastructure Projects Fund over the previous year. CLA West Hartford Director Alaina Clausen gave an overview of the federal and state single audits, discussed some required governance communication and presented findings with respect to the Board of Education's encumbrances. Ms. Zoll also provided updates regarding the upcoming GASB standards and she informed the Board that BlumShapiro merged into CLA, effective January 1, 2021, but fees and staff did not change. Mr. Bushka asked how the City's undesignated fund balance and pension funding compared to other towns of comparable size and Ms. Zoll reported that the City's OPEB liability was relatively high but she was not concerned undesignated fund balance. Mr. Beyus requested clarification regarding the Board of Education's plan to address encumbrance issues going forward and Mr. Arum explained that the issue presented in the audit was the result of personnel changes in the Board of Education's Finance Department. Mr. Bushka also requested an update on the City's progress toward addressing the management letter recommendations for 2019 and Comptroller Proulx reported that nothing specific was done with respect to fraud risk assessment. However, she reported that the IT Department was working on cyber security assessment and the Purchasing Department signed up for updates and an educational series pertaining to uniform guidance. Lastly, Mrs. Pesce requested feedback from Ms. Zoll regarding the City's response to the ransomware attack that occurred in August, 2020 and Ms. Zoll reported that the City appears to be doing the right things.

TAHD CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUNDS

On a motion by Mrs. Pesce, seconded by Mr. Bushka, the Board voted unanimously to authorize the Mayor to appropriate a sum equal to 10% of the Municipal Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) received from the State of Connecticut to be paid to the Torrington Area Health District in accordance with the terms of eligible uses of the funding as defined in the letter from the CT OPM dated December 16, 2020. Mr. Bushka requested clarification regarding the City's actual COVID related expenses compared to the \$528,508.48 that the City would be receiving from the CT OPM and Mayor Carbone reported that the City's expenses to date were approximately \$160,000. Mayor Carbone and Chief Towey emphasized the critical role that the TAHD has had for the City during the past year and the Chief further explained that the CRF distributions were intended to offset some of the expenses incurred by municipal and regional health districts, such as the TAHD. Mr. Beyus and Mrs. Pesce expressed their support for allocating the funds to the TAHD. Mr. Wright asked if the other municipalities that benefit from the TAHD planned to contribute any additional CRF funds and Mayor Carbone confirmed that each municipality would be contributing its proportional share to the TAHD.

BUSINESS BY DEPARTMENT HEADS

On a motion by Mr. Beyus, seconded by Mr. Wright, the Board voted unanimously to consider business by Department Heads. No business was reported.

BUSINESS BY MAYOR & MEMBERS

On a motion by Mr. Beyus, seconded by Mr. Bushka, the Board voted unanimously to consider business by the Mayor and members of the Board of Finance.

Mrs. Pesce welcomed the arrival of Bad Dog Brewery and expressed her excitement about Salt 2.0 coming to the old Mertz building.

Mr. Wright requested an update on the Yankee Pedlar Inn and Mayor Carbone reported that the City filed a petition with the CT Superior Court to appoint the Torrington Development Corporation (TDC) as receiver of the property. She noted that a hearing was scheduled to be held on March 10, 2021.

Mr. Anderson thanked Ms. Zoll and Ms. Clausen for the audit presentation and stated his apprehension to borrow money from the fund balance for the FY 2021/2022 budget cycle to offset a potential mill rate increase.

Mr. Bushka requested an update on the City's snow removal budget and Mayor Carbone stated that she would provide an updated report after Superintendent of Streets Bill Mayers calculates the financial impact of the next forecasted storm.

Mr. Beyus expressed his support for the local businesses.

Mr. Wright requested an update regarding the upcoming meeting schedule to review and discuss the proposed FY 2021/2022 budgets. Mayor Carbone reported that the budget calendar was revamped to afford the Board of Public safety the opportunity to have a detailed review of the proposed public safety budgets and she requested volunteers to serve on the budget subcommittee. Mrs. Pesce and Mr. Beyus volunteered to serve on the budget subcommittee.

Mayor Carbone addressed the uncertainty of the State's budget, as it pertains to revenue projections for the City of Torrington and reported that she provided written testimony to the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee regarding Senate Bill 873, which seeks to revamp the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) program.

Mrs. Pesce requested that a live public comment section be added to the agendas going forward.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. Anderson, seconded by Mrs. Pesce, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 5:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jonathan Draper, Asst. City Clerk

ATTEST:

Carol L. Anderson
CAROL L. ANDERSON, MMC
CITY CLERK