

Bozrah Board of Finance Quarterly Meeting Minutes  
Bozrah Town Hall, 1 River Road, Bozrah, CT 06334  
September 23, 2019

- 1. Call to Order / Attendance: Chairman Michael O'Connor called the Quarterly Meeting of the Bozrah Board of Finance (BOF) to order at 7:00 pm.**
  - a. **Members present:** Michael O'Connor, Michel Leask, Raymond Barber, Annie Chambers, Evan Gilman
  - b. **Members absent:** Phil Lavallee
  - c. **Others present:** Selectmen: Glenn Pianka (1<sup>st</sup>), Bill Ballinger (2<sup>nd</sup>), and Carl Zorn (3<sup>rd</sup>); Tax Collector, Nancy Renshaw; Town Treasurer, Diana Santo; Board of Education Chair, Jeanne Goulart; BOE Member Jack Santo, BOE Member Robin Barry, Superintendent Jack Welch, Sue Lyon, Ev Brown, Ron Leask
- 2. Public Comment – none**
- 3. Review and approve minutes from the 24 July 2019 Quarterly Board of Finance meeting.**
  - a. **Comments on the Minutes**
    - i. Page 1, item 4 – “pay roll” is one word
    - ii. Page 2, item 6 – replace “there will be not surplus return” with “there will be no surplus return”
  - b. **Motion 1: Annie Chambers made a motion to approve the minutes from the 24 July 2019 meeting as amended. Ray Barber seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.**
- 4. Report from the Treasurer**
  - a. The totals on page 13 of the Town of Bozrah General Government and Capital Budget (approved June 13 2019) include a duplication of Transfer Site Expenses (Total for Line 137). The total general and total general combined are affected and were reduced by \$72,956 in the corrected version of the budget dated 8/8/2019. No other parts of the budget were changed in the corrected version. There is no line item in the budget to support the duplicated amount.
  - b. Account Balances
    - i. Tax Collector account is earning 2.53% interest.
    - ii. Route 82 Water Main Ext. account is earning 2% interest. \$25,000 was paid to the lawyer.
  - c. Revenue and Expense Page
    - i. The only funds received from the state of CT include 67% of Adult Education revenue.
    - ii. Sale of Assets and Miscellaneous Revenue have nothing budgeted for income, but revenue was received including \$750 from the sale of a town truck (F550) and \$5,312 for member equity from CIRMA.
    - iii. Sale of ambulance in June produced revenue for last year's budget. No revenue will be received during this budget cycle for line item 42019.
- 5. Report from the Tax Collector**
  - a. Percent Collection Report as of 9/23/2019 was provided to the Board. The report identifies Taxes due and taxes collected since July 2019.

- b. New software update was installed last Tuesday (9/17). Waiting for software user guide.
  - c. All major tax payers have paid their taxes including Optimus, Hillandale, and Solar.
  - d. This is the highest real estate collection in a long time. 99.08% collected for the first tax payment and almost 60% overall (3.585 out of 6.053 million dollars).
  - e. More people paid car taxes than ever this year. Almost 97% MV Regular taxes have been collected and over 97% of Personal Property taxes have been collected. Only one payment is made for these taxes.
  - f. There may be a few tax sales scheduled, if tax payments are not made soon. (Best Way on Route 82 was identified as one of the properties.)
  - g. Tax bills were sent out June 27 and 28. Some businesses on Stockhouse Road and other tax payers received their bills about a month late.
  - h. Chairman O'Connor requested that future tax reports, generated by Tax System software, represent the whole year
- 6. Discussion of Capital Expenditures (5-10 Year strategic planning)**
- a. Board handouts included an overview of a Board of Education facility and capital needs assessment submitted by Superintendent, Dr. Welch.
  - b. Chairman O'Connor commented that he liked the format of the report that identifies the status of current projects and longer-term needs for future planning. This avoids unexpected large expenses at budget time.
  - c. Superintendent, Dr. Welch, reported the HVAC system has been held up waiting for parts. When everything is available, the work will be scheduled.
  - d. The carpeting including the library was completed for just over \$20K, approximately \$5K less than the budgeted amount.
  - e. The cost to replace HVAC is a fixed cost and will be fully expended.
  - f. Clean Air Conveyance Systems project will be considered mid-year depending on the status of the operating budget.
  - g. The Board of Education Facilities Sub-committee met to discuss installation of A/C in all classrooms. Another meeting is scheduled for Nov 7. At that time, it is anticipated more information on the project will be available from a consultant.
  - h. Oil tank removal
    - i. The state requires the underground tank be removed by 2023. Current reimbursement rate is 56.43%.
    - ii. First Selectman Pianka reported a corrosion test is done yearly and a new tank tightness test for leaks will be done early October. Monthly walk throughs will be required. Tank insurance coverage may not be renewed. Above ground is the way to go for the replacement tank (less regulations).
    - iii. Evan Gilman questioned who provided the cost estimate for removal/installation project? Information will be provided. Estimate is similar to what the town paid.
    - iv. Need seed money in 20/21 budget for a replacement project design document.
    - v. The horsepower of the boilers is 1.2 Million BTUs based on a report from New England Mechanical.
    - vi. Any discussion on going to gas? Gas ends at Rachel drive.

## **7. Report from Board of Education**

- a. Teacher contract negotiations update
  - i. First meeting was held on 9/17. Next meeting is an executive session on 9/24.
  - ii. Ray Barber is the Board of Finance representative for negotiations. He cannot vote but will attend meetings.
  - iii. BOE Chair, Jeanne Goulart, reported the state requires that the Board and Teachers reach a new agreement by Nov. 1 or arbitration will be required. There are two options for arbitration: one neutral arbitrator or 3 arbitrators (one for BOE, one for Teachers, one neutral arbitrator appointed by the state).
  - iv. The current agreement expires 6/30/2020. A tentative agreement is being reviewed. If no agreement is reached by October 1, mediation will be required.
  - v. The final contract agreement has to be on file with the town clerk. It can be challenged with a town meeting within 30 days of being signed.
  - vi. There was a discussion regarding the possible impact of the teacher agreement on the town employees, the overall budget, and the balance between the cost of the agreement and the cost of arbitration.
- b. 19/20 budget status
  - i. \$2702 was returned to the town from the budget supplement that was required for Special Education costs.
  - ii. Current budget is still in the black. Board of Education capital funds are held separate from the normal operating expenses.
  - iii. October 1 count has not yet been received from NFA. Projected enrollment is  $70 \pm 5$  or 6.
  - iv. Magnet School Tuition is going down, three students attending Magnet Schools moved to Norwich.

## **8. Report from Board of Selectman**

- a. 19/20 Budget status
  - i. Over budget items
    - 1. 106 Software Support (292%)
    - 2. 109 Legal fees (181%) – due to legal agreement with NPU, some of these fees actually belong to the pipe project and will be covered by the bond. Current overage is higher than actual.
    - 3. 127 Maples Farm Park (116%) – house painted, \$1100 over budget
    - 4. It is not expected that total line items for Maples Farm Park or Assessor will be exceeded.
  - ii. Most of the work on Town Wide Guard Rail is complete.
  - iii. Overlay Town Roads work will be done in the spring. There is still some rework to be done on Scott Hill Road.
  - iv. Auditor will be in on October 15. Peggy will be in on Sept. 26. Aiming for discussing audit report at December meeting.
- b. Public Act No. 19-36 (An Act increasing the Property Tax Abatement for Certain First Responders)
  - i. A copy of the Public Act was provided to Board of Finance members.

- ii. This will increase existing abatement of up to \$1,000 to \$1,500 this year and \$2,000 next year. The consensus of the Board of Selection was to support this act. The approximate cost is \$3,000 in year one and an additional \$3,000 in year two for a total additional cost of \$6,000.
  - iii. Current tax abatement budget is \$10,408. There are many stipulations regarding qualification for the abatement. Some first responders do not own homes and/or cars and receive less than the maximum abatement.
  - iv. Support of this act may help retain firemen.
  - v. It is the consensus of the Board of Finance to support adoption of Public Act 19-36 in the Town of Bozrah.
  - vi. **Motion 2: Ray Barber made a motion that the Board of Finance supports an increase in tax abatement for 1<sup>st</sup> responders in accordance with Public Act No. 19-36. Annie Chambers second the motion. Motion passed unanimously.**
- c. ZEO/IWWC Contract
- i. Tom Weber resigned effective June 30, 2019. The town has been searching for a solution and has decided on CME Engineering Firm in Storrs, CT to provide this service. CME works with 13 towns in CT. Feedback from those towns is positive.
  - ii. Board of Selectman has signed a 2-year contract with CME at the rate of \$2,000 per month. \$20,000 is needed to cover the remaining 10 months of this fiscal year. Based on the current budget, approximately \$14,000 more is needed. (51036 ZEO has \$3090, 51037 Wetlands Enforcement has \$3090).
  - iii. The contract covers 6 hours per week ( $\approx$ \$83/hour). Is it necessary to use the time weekly or can it be accumulated for use over the term of the contract? BOS assumes time is accumulated on a monthly basis since it is billed monthly. If no work is done in a given month, the fee is still paid. There is quite a bit of work to be done. They have a legal background in what needs to be done. A specific person is assigned to Bozrah.
  - iv. Action can be taken on this Board of Selectman request in item 9. To hear and act on the request needs to be added to the agenda.
- d. Economic/Capital Investment Strategy
- i. Board of Selectman has been acting as the Economic Development Commission. We have a new chairman on Planning and Zoning. Commissions are getting training on economic development.
  - ii. First Selectman provided a memo with an excerpt from an email that lists 7 items that identify economic/capital investment strategies.
  - iii. Board of Selectman has been working a long time on an inter-municipality agreement with Norwich Public Utilities with little progress. NPU has finally agreed to allow Bozrah to buy 20,000 gallons of additional capacity for \$250,000 and has given Bozrah 5 years to exercise their right to purchase. Bozrah may not need all 20,000 gallons. Optimus has 12,000 gallons of capacity, but it may be a wise investment to move forward on this purchase. October 3 is grand opening of Optimus. BOS is planning on extending the lines.

- iv. First meeting of Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) will be held on Sept. 25. Regulations need to be adopted which will probably be some version of the Norwich regulations. Some seed money will be necessary to get this off the ground. Auditor can tell us the best way to setup operating budget for WPCA. Eventually, Bozrah will be billing for waste. Currently Norwich is doing this billing.
- v. There will be future action on WPCA as well as economic capital investment strategies.

**9. Such other business as the Board may vote to hear**

- a. **Motion 3: Ray Barber made a motion to hear and act on a request from the BOS to fund the Zoning Enforcing Officer Contract and Inland Wetlands and Water Courses Contract. Annie Chambers seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.**
- b. BOS funding request for Zoning Enforcing Officer Contract and Inland Wetlands and Water Courses Contract was added to the agenda.
- c. **Motion 4: Ray Barber made a motion to add \$7K to line item 51036 ZEO and \$7K to line item 51037 Wetlands Enforcement from the general fund. Annie Chambers seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.**
- d. The BOS budget has been increased by \$14,000 to accomplish the work previously done by Tom Weber.

**10. Final Public Comment – none**

**11. Adjourn**

- a. **Motion 5: Ray Barber made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Michel Leask seconded the motion.**
- b. Next meeting is December 16, 2019.
- c. **Meeting was adjourned at 8:26 pm.**

Respectfully submitted for the Board,

*Michel Leask*

BOF Secretary