

**NORFOLK BOARD OF FINANCE
MINUTES OF DECEMBER 13, 2022 MEETING**

Members present were: M. Sconyers, G. Allyn, S. Anderson, G. Mudge, N. Ritson, J. Tarrant and alternates L. Battis and J. Bickford.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by M. Sconyers.

The November 10, 2022 minutes were approved on Motion of J. Tarrant, second by N. Ritson, and unanimously approved.

Under correspondence, the Tax Collector's requests for refunds were approved on Motion of J. Tarrant second by G. Allyn and unanimously approved.

The First Selectman reported that so far, the Town has only had to plow snow 2-3 times which is better than last year and it is nice to see the cost of fuel is slowly creeping down. The gas spill will create some issues regarding spending already made and spending that will need to continue. The First Selectman has been in contact with Federated Insurance and Shipman & Goodwin is assisting the Town. In particular Attorney Andrew Davis is primarily involved and is very knowledgeable having been involved in the BP oil spill. The Town will get reimbursed for the many expenditures related to the gas spill, however it will be a long process. The First Selectman has sent many documents, including invoices the Town has paid or will pay, assisting with housing, equipment that was damaged and needed to be cleaned. The turnout gear for the fire department was damaged. The Chairman of the BOF inquired when monies will be refunded but the First Selectman does not yet know.

The First Selectman shared a budget handout of costs, projects, long-term debt and current debt. Mountain Road bridge is completed. The First Selectman is doing paperwork for the State of Connecticut, which could take months. The Mountain Road bridge has been inspected and reviewed. The Town will receive 50% reimbursement for Mountain Road bridge. The total cost for Mountain Road bridge was \$1,411,000; the Town's portion is \$706,000. The Town will also be receiving funds from Aquarion; thus far the Town has received \$187,000. Another \$190,000 payment is expected from Aquarion. The other bridge is the River Place bridge. The Town has incurred \$1,300,000. The River Place bridge is approximately \$2,700,000 for the construction. Thus far, the First Selectman has submitted 15 sets of paperwork for reimbursement and received two payments of approximately \$87,000.

The First Selectman discussed future projects: the cost of the Maple Avenue project is estimated at \$2,300,000. The Town has received a \$500,000 STEEP grant. Due to the route of the gas spill, a portion of the project is saturated with gasoline and in need of remediation. The road has to be pulled up. At this time, wells are being dug on Maple Avenue to alleviate the gas, and venting pipes are in use. The estimate is \$300,000 to dig up the road and replace the water and sewer lines as a result of the gas spill. The loan for Maple Avenue is projected out to 2053.

Regarding the roof at Botelle School: Garland has provided an estimate of \$1,800,000 for replacement of the standing seam metal roof. The roof is roughly 32 years old. While there is a program through the State - the School Construction Grant Program, there are a lot of stipulations attached to the program and it is very difficult to get a school construction grant. Garland has advised that it may be more economical to not go the school construction grant route.

Regarding the Mountain Road bridge near Westside: the preliminary engineering work has been completed to qualify for the federal bridge program. The federal government will reimburse at least 80% for this bridge and the Town will be responsible for 20%.

In the last 2 years, there have been budget allocations for the design work for the new firehouse. The preliminary design has been completed in terms of the concept, there are not yet working drawings. A civil engineering firm is conducting studies regarding wetlands and the structure and working on an application for the Inland Wetlands Commission.

Next year's budget will include savings of approximately \$125,000 which was included in this year's budget for the firehouse design and interest payments while working on the bridges of approximately \$113,000. The new tanker truck is being delivered at the end of next week: \$212,000 from ARPA funds was utilized for this expense.

There is a meeting Tuesday 12/20 at 7:00 p.m. at Botelle School regarding the gas spill to answer questions.

The Treasurer reported that the Tax Collector has collected more than 50% of taxes and that people are sending in money early.

Regarding the Fiber Optic plan: M. Sconyers relayed that he and the First Selectman spent an hour on Zoom with Kim Maxwell and a representative from Frontier. Chairman Sconyers does not see how the Town can spend \$578,000 for properties that will not be wired at Frontier's expense without knowing exactly how many "passed" properties there are. The plan does not include a comprehensive listing of what properties will and will not be served. Chairman Sconyers and the First Selectman also learned that Barkhamsted is getting 100% of the cost of fiber optic installation paid by Frontier and possibly this is true in Falls Village as well. M. Sconyers moved that the Board table any further discussion regarding fiber optic installation until the Board receives answers to the many outstanding questions, second by S. Anderson, and unanimously approved.

Under 2/3 vote, Chairman Sconyers invited the Board of Education to the Board of Finance's January meeting. Chairman Sconyers indicated that approximately 16 6th graders will be graduating, leaving a population of 50 at Botelle. He would like to discuss consolidation.

There was no Public Comment.

On Motion of J. Torrant second by N. Ritson and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer M. Ryan, Secretary