



Town of Ridgefield Board of Finance

Approved Special Meeting Minutes

Friday May 29, 2020

I. Call to order

D. Ulmer called to order the Special Board of Finance meeting at 3:00 PM May 29, 2020 via Zoom due to Coronavirus. Board Members D. Ulmer, G. Kabasakalian, M. Rettger A. Freidenrich, K. Ogden present.

II. Vote on Debt Service-Motion to approve \$10,816,865 by D. Ulmer, seconded by M. Rettger. All in favor.

III. Capital Items-Joe Morits discussed fire sprinkler system issue. The pipes, sides and threading issue has been managed. It's addressed each year and have found small leaks, no major issues. Last year the Fire Marshall questioned the system's integrity. Concerned repairs need investigation for the entire RHS sprinkler system. On April 15, 2020 an inspection was done. The school was empty due to COVID 19. The inspection showed several areas of corrosion both mild and serious. There is a cost factor with critical areas. Some areas need addressing immediately. Further testing showed more severe results. There have been daily ongoing conversations with engineers. A water bacteria testing has been done; non drinking water, just the sprinkler water. This is a 12-week project. He's comfortable with the time frame, upgrades and corrections necessary.

Dawn Norton stated that this was never a conversation for Capital budget. We should keep the Operating budget available for the remainder of the project after more serious work has been done.

The estimate has items listed as "excluded" which are items that cover miscellaneous items possibly to be encountered. Unsure if we can go back to previous architects regarding this matter since it's been over 20 years. The issues have developed over time due to threading and bacteria.

Rudy Marconi-during the whole project the system was pressurized. Examinations were done and everything fine. When thin wall pipe is used it created a situation. Thicker walls will be used for replacement. There is a warranty on new installation work.

Greg Kabasakalian-raised question of \$494,320 estimate for project. Response by Joe Morits: There are different levels to all estimates. Reds are considered critical. 2 fire hydrants on the property did not flow water. Each to be investigated with excavation. One under the parking lot, second under sidewalk.

Amy Freidenrich-Back up was requested for BOE items for the Capital budget. She's uncomfortable without having bids/assessments. This information was requested last week and has not been provided. As of now, there is no evidence of bids requested. Greg Kabasakalian agrees with Amy as this is best practice, He wants more granular details. The BOE understands these requests and will provide accordingly.

Motion to accept BOS Capital \$7,731,625 by D. Ulmer, seconded by K. Ogden. All in favor

IV. Discussion of Statute BOE “non-lapsing” fund-creation of a non-lapsing account. This needs to be approved by June 30 with the carry over to be approved by the BOF. A system is in place of education to retain up to \$2 million unspent budget. Statute amended the fund and can be a max of 2% of BOE budget; this must come from the surplus. This has to go to the BOF for approval and BOF can specify as to what usage it can have. Approximate estimate of \$1.1million surplus.

Margaret Stamatis, BOE Chair-special appropriation requires BOE to go to BOF with amount requested. Over a \$50,000 request goes to a town meeting with public comments. There runs a risk of being voted down and then the BOE would not have funds for expenses. A reserve fund may make sense for this year. An executive order by the Governor is only for this year's budget, not a special appropriation.

Per Dawn Norton, BOE Business Manager, the account is a reserve on the BOF books as a part of the fund balance dedicate for a purpose. Per Greg Kabasakalian we don't know the full understanding of end of year budget; we don't know what's going to happen. The fund balance is good for a 1-time expense. Haste makes waste. We may need tax payer's money returned in the form of fund balance. Per Mike Rettger, wants a level of specifications in numbers. If we do account like this, accounting rules need to be set.

Dr. DaSilva, Superintendent-buses may be re-routed through Ridgefield. We'll need to pay for re-routing, additional buses and more cleaning expenses. A school re-opening scenario has been discussed. There are levels of expectations to be required. Scenarios are quite challenging. Per Margaret Stamatis, COVID 19 related expenses are being tracked to be sent to FEMA for reimbursement. Question posed what would happen if funds go quickly. Per Dr. DaSilva it depends on the scenario; special appropriation of some sort. The state of Federal funds could help with this. This could possibly be done after June 30 as books are finalized the end of August.

Margaret Stamatis, BOE Chair-Schools re-open end of August and costs would incur in early August. We need to know amounts of funds and how to tap into them.

Time is on our side for this item. Include this topic for a regular BOF meeting along with the discussion of bank accounts.

V. Vote on Mill Rate-This does not include two programs offered for resident to defer July taxes.

*The tax rate for the Town of Ridgefield be 28.12 mills on the Grand List of October 1, 2019 and that said taxes shall become due and payable on July 1, 2020. Each motor vehicle tax bill shall become due and payable July 1, 2020. Each real estate and personal property bill in excess of \$100.00 may be paid quarterly. If any quarterly installments shall not be paid within thirty (30) days after the same becomes due, then the unpaid quarterly tax thereof shall be subject to interest at the rate of eighteen (18) percent annually or one and one-half (1.5) percent each month, or part thereof, from the due date, or a minimum interest fee of \$2.00 (CGS §12-146). Each motor vehicle tax bill shall be paid in full by August 3, 2020, and if not so paid, interest shall be charged at one and one-half (1.5) percent each month, or part thereof, from July 1, 2020 or a minimum interest fee of \$2.00 (CSG §12-146)."

28.12 on mill grand list

Property/Motor Vehicle payable July 2020 pay in full by August 30

Real Estate-to be paid quarterly.

D. Ulmer motioned to approved, seconded by G. Kabasakalian. All in favor. Vote: 5-0. Motion Approved

*Use of regular language due to low interest and delay only for specific item. Interest reverts according to the statute.

VI. Adjournment-motion to adjourn at 4:10 pm by A. Freidenrich, seconded by M. Rettger. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Mia Belanger

*Thank you to Andrew Neblett for facilitating.