



Town of Ridgefield Board of Finance

Approved BOF Meeting Minutes

Tuesday January 18, 2022

I. Call to order

Dave Ulmer called the Board of Finance meeting to order at 7:00 PM January 18, 2022 via Zoom. Board Members Dave Ulmer, Greg Kabasakalian, Mike Rettger, Andrew Okrongly and Karen Ogden present.

Others Participating:

Town Officials: Kevin Redmond, Controller; Molly McGeehin, Town Treasurer; Maureen Kozlark, BOS; WPCA board members Amy Siebert, Gary Zawacki, Corinne Ketchum; Matt Formica, WPCA engineering advisor; Christofer Christiansen, Ridgefield Pension Commission chair

II. Public Comments

None

III. Election of Officers

Ms. Ogden nominated Dave Ulmer to serve as BOF Chair for the 2022 year. Seconded by Mr. Kabasakalian. All in favor.

Mr. Okrongly nominated Mike Rettger as BOF Vice Chair for the 2022 year. Seconded by Ms. Ogden. All in favor.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Mr. Rettger to accept December 21, 2021 minutes with no changes, seconded by Ms. Ogden. All in favor.

V. Treasurer's Report

Ms. McGeehin reviewed the December 31, 2021 Treasurer's Report, which had been distributed in advance of the meeting.** She noted that she had also distributed copies of the December 2021 Janney statement as well as a report of BOE bank balances as of December 31 2021 to the members in advance of the meeting.

VI. Tax Collector Report

Ms. Berendsen-Hill was not available for the meeting so Mr. Redmond reviewed the December Tax Collector's Report, which had been distributed in advance of the meeting.** Total collections continue to run about \$600,000 favorable to budget.

VII. Water Pollution Control Authority Sewer Project Update

Amy Siebert and Matt Formica of the WPCA reviewed a report on the status of the sewer plant upgrade project (attached as Exhibit 1). The first phase of the project, covering the main treatment plant renovations, was originally scheduled for completion in March 2022, but due to Covid-related supply issues, the contract has been extended to August. Given continuing supply-chain issues, the completion date will more likely now be December. At this time the original contract cost has not been amended for these delays, and the WPCA has communicated its concerns about the timeline to the contractor. There have been two requests for draws against the project contingency budget, with \$200,000 approved and \$260,000 under review, leaving a balance of \$2.18 million. There will likely be a need to draw against this contingency for additional engineering oversight costs resulting from the project delays.

The second phase of the project, involving the decommissioning of the secondary treatment facility near Route 7 and upgrade of the sewer line to the main plant, was also reviewed. The contract for that phase was signed in December, with a target completion date of June 2023, at a total contract cost of \$9.3 million. The contingency for this contract, after allowance for the costs of the extended bidding process this Fall, is currently \$341,000.

The report also summarized the status of grants and other cost offsets to both phases of the project. A Clean Water Fund grant for the second phase of the contract is anticipated in the amount of \$1.1 - \$1.4 million, depending on some questions regarding road paving costs. There is also discussion underway on the possible sale of the land for the auxiliary plant after decommissioning, with that negotiation being handled by the Board of Selectmen. In response to a question, Mr. Formica confirmed that the \$9.3 million contract cost of the second phase is a total cost of the project, and does not already incorporate the effects of these possible offsetting funding sources.

The representatives from WPCA responded to and discussed questions from the members on their report. It was requested that the BOF receive an update on the project status and costs in another few months.

VIII-Pension Commission Update

Mr. Christiansen and Mr. Okrongley reviewed a report on the several town pension plans overseen by the Pension Commission (attached as Exhibit 2). The report described the size and status of each plan, recent historical investment returns and budgeted contributions to the plans, information about how plan contributions are determined, and peer comparisons with comparable area towns as to funding status and assumed rates of return. Mr. Christiansen and Mr. Okrongley also reported on discussions between the Pension Commission and the Board of Selectmen on possible changes in the approach for calculating the annual indicated funding contribution the plans, and said that the same presentation was being made to the BOS the next day to continue those discussions. Mr. Christiansen noted that the report was being presented for information and background for the

members, as decisions regarding annual funding are the responsibility of the BOS and BOE, and no action was required of the BOF.

IX. Controller's Report

Mr. Redmond reviewed the town budget report and revenue forecast, which had been distributed in advance of the meeting**. He reported that not much had changed of significance since the prior month's report, with revenues continuing to be favorable and expenses overall remaining in line with budget. In response to a question from the prior meeting, Mr. Redmond report that \$400,000 of Town Aid Road funds had been approved for use for road paving projects, with the remainder of the current TAR fund balance being held in reserve as a contingency for snow removal costs.

X. ARPA-BOS Request

Mr. Ulmer reported that the BOF had received a request from the BOS to approve the use of \$344,480 of ARPA funds, for the purchase of Covid test kits being distributed to town residents. The BOS thought this is a reasonable expense and appropriate use of ARPA funds.

The members discussed the current status of ARPA funds, including review of an exhibit prepared by Mr. Redmond showing an estimate that approximately \$3 million of available ARPA funds would remain if this current request were approved, after receipt of the 2022 portion of funding and including an estimate for the sale of land relating to the sewer project. It was noted that the estimate did not reflect any other potential funding offsets relating to the sewer plant project, as would be returned to the ARPA account under the BOF resolution approving that request. Mr. Ulmer also presented the idea that given the expected budget surplus that seems to be developing for the current fiscal year, the BOF could also make the decision in this year's budget process to return some of that surplus to the ARPA account, given the prior allocation of \$1.55 million of ARPA funds in the current year budget calculation.

Following further discussion, a motion to support the BOS request for the use of ARPA funds to pay for Covid test kits was made by Ms. Ogden, seconded by Mr. Kabasakalian. All in favor. Mr. Ulmer indicated he would discuss with First Selectman Marconi whether this would require action by a town meeting.

XI. Old Business:

None

XII. New Business

At the February BOF meeting, the BOE has been asked to provide a report on Special Education costs and on ESSER funds and their usage, in addition to their regular financial report.

XIII. Adjournment - Motion to adjourn at 9:00 p.m. by Mr. Rettger, seconded by Ms. Ogden. All in favor. Next meeting February 15, 2022.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Mia Belanger

** Materials that were distributed in advance of the meeting in the BOF members' packets are maintained on file in the Controller's office.