



Town of Ridgefield Board of Finance

Approved BOF Meeting Minutes

Tuesday October 18, 2022

I. Call to order

Dave Ulmer called the Board of Finance meeting to order at 7:00 PM on October 18, 2022 in the Town Hall large conference room. Board Members Dave Ulmer, Mike Rettger, Andrew Okrongly and Greg Kabasakalian present.

Others Participating: Rudy Marconi, First Selectman; Kevin Redmond, Town Controller; Dr. Susie Da Silva, RPS Superintendent; Jill Browne, RPS Finance Business Manager; Sean McEvoy, Chair of BOE Budget and Finance Subcommittee; Jane Berendsen Hill Tax Collector.

II. Public Comments

Colleen Cash, High Ridge Avenue, Chair of Ridgefield Arts Council, spoke in favor of the BOS recommendation for \$665,531.26 of ARPA funds to be used for the Arts. The arts were negatively affected by Covid and the request is to support 21 of the town arts and cultural organizations to help them get back toward pre-Covid levels.

Colette Kabasakalian, Washington Avenue, spoke in opposition of the ARPA proposal. She feels that the arts groups have already been supported from other government sources and the BOF should hold onto the funds for future use.

III. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Mr. Rettger to approve the minutes from September 20, 2022 with amendments as proposed. Seconded by Mr. Okrongly. All in favor.

IV. BOE Financial Report

Jill Browne, RPS Finance Business Manager, reviewed the September 30, 2022 financial report for the BOE (which had been distributed in advance of the meeting **). Approximately 89% of 2022-23 budget has been expended or obligated as of September 30. There are still some

certified and uncertified positions which have not yet been filled. Major areas of attention are the fluctuating rates for electricity, oil and natural gas, and finalizing some special education outplacements. Dr. Da Silva reported that they are working with a vendor, Transportation Advisory Services, to complete a comprehensive review of the district's bus routes, routing software and related operational components with the goal of providing optimal transportation service to the RPS community. In response to a question, Dr. Da Silva reported that district enrollment is roughly in line with budget projections and that no unplanned class sections were needed to be added this year.

V. Treasurer's Report

The members reviewed the September 30 Treasurer's Report (which had been distributed in advance of the meeting. **). There were several questions which Mr. Redmond will relay to Ms. McGeehin.

VI. Tax Collector Report

Ms. Berendsen-Hill reviewed the Tax Collector's Report (which had been distributed in advance of the meeting **). She noted that the September collection amount was higher than historical because the town's largest taxpayer had paid at the end of the month rather than the money arriving in October.

VII. Controller's Report

Motion by Mr. Rettger to move Controller's Report forward in the agenda, seconded by Mr. Kabasakalian. All in favor.

Mr. Redmond reviewed the revenue report (which had been distributed in advance of the meeting**). The forecast for Ambulance fees has been increased by \$125,000 from budget following the change to a new collection service. Golf revenues remain strong even though the course will be closing early this year to perform maintenance due to the drought. This revenue forecast has been increased by \$75,000 from budget.

On the expense side, the run rate for Tree Warden is high due to continuing tree work. Fire OT has improved compared with prior year as all but two vacancies are now filled.

VIII. Consideration and Vote on BOF Vacancy

The members interviewed three candidates who had submitted applications to replace Karen Ogden on the Board: Joseph Shapiro, Indra Sen and Michael Valluzzo. The candidates were each interviewed separately and asked a similar set of questions by the members. Following the interviews, the members provided comments on their perspective on the candidates' backgrounds and responses. Following further discussion, Mr. Rettger made a motion to appoint Joseph Shapiro to the board for the balance of Karen's Ogden's term. Seconded by Mr. Ulmer. Motion adopted 3-1, Mr. Kabasakalian voting no.

IX. ARPA Fund Allocation Approval

Mr. Marconi reviewed the recommendation approved by the BOS for the allocation of \$665,531.26 of ARPA funds to be distributed to various organizations within the Ridgefield Arts

and Culture non-profit community. The purpose of the funds would be to offset covid-related losses in revenue and additional expenses these organizations had incurred over the past 2 ½ years. The members discussed questions and concerns, including the uses of the funds relative to other covid costs that might arise in the future, comments that had been received from residents, and the desire for updated information on whether the remaining ARPA fund balance of approximately \$400,000 will benefit from grants and other recoveries that had been projected during the discussion when awarding ARPA funds to the WPCA Phase 2 sewers project. After further discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Rettger to approve the BOS recommendation as presented, seconded by Mr. Okrongly. The motion was approved 3-1, Mr. Kabasakalian voting no.

X. Old Business

None

XI. New Business

Members discussed adding two topics for future meetings: WPCA Phase 2 financial update in November, and review of the status and financial position for open Capital Projects in December.

XII. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 9:55 p.m. by Mr. Rettger, seconded by Mr. Okrongly. All in favor. Next meeting November 15, 2022; Tri Board meeting followed by regular BOF meeting.

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.