

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
FINANCIAL MEETING MINUTES
January 3, 2024**

Present: Ryan Curley-First Selectman, John Dillon, Michael Hernandez (joined meeting at 7:23 p.m.), Robert Hetrick, Jr., Shaun Manning(zoom), Michael Pelton, Jim Tripp (zoom)

Others Present: Fire Chief Rob Puida, Members of the Public and Media

1. FIRST SELECTMAN CALL MEETING TO ORDER

First Selectman Ryan Curley called the Financial Meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. in the Buck-Foreman Community Room located at 265 Main Street, Portland, Connecticut.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ACCEPT AGENDA

Item #7 Monthly Budget Report to be deleted, in its place will be a discussion of Fire Engine 3. Michael Pelton made a motion to accept the amended agenda, seconded by John Dillon, all were in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, motion carried.

4. APPROVE MINUTES: (Regular) December 20, 2023

Michael Pelton made a motion, seconded by John Dillon, to approve the December 20, 2023 minutes, all were in favor, motion carried.

5. COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE

Ryan introduced the newly elected fire chief, Robert Puida, and welcomed him. Rob told how he became a volunteer fireman, how rewarding it is to give back to the community, and encouraged others to do likewise. Ryan asked him to comment on Fire Engine 3, which is 30 years old and now out of service. Repairs are more than it is feasible to pay. Puida said while talking to the East Hampton fire chief at a fire, he offered a loaner of one of their firetrucks. The fire station is very small and a regular firetruck won't fit. With some finagling they were able to accommodate it with a few inches to spare. We can acquire it as a loaner truck. That will allow us to put the tanker on assignment and we will be able to travel to other towns to provide service to them. Further details will be forthcoming. Ryan thanked the Town of East Hampton, their Fire Chief, and Town Manager. We are still finetuning the details but right now the truck is on a 3-month loan unless something happens to E. Hampton's trucks then we will have to return it.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Elwin Guild, Middle Haddam Road, (via zoom) commented on Brainerd Place and assumed that it has not yet been fully negotiated. He suggested that in further negotiations, that

50% of Phase 3 should be a necessary component for taxes consideration. It is supposed to be a mixed-use development and without that, there's not much mixed use.

7. CONVERSATION ON FIRE ENGINE #3

Ryan is was working with Tom Robinson on a draft resolution to procure a firetruck if the BOS so chooses. Firetrucks sell very quickly. The availability of seven trucks a few weeks ago is now down to four. Ryan explained the process. If we want to have a decision in a timely manner, we must schedule a public hearing and a special town meeting. The public hearing must be posted seven days in advance. If we want it done this month, the next regular BOS is January 17. Bob said if we were to move forward, this is just the chassis that is available now and it won't be done until June. We still don't have a long-term plan for replacement. We did not budget for a truck in the amount of \$525,000. Ryan wanted to bring it to the BOS to see if they agree that we should move forward now. Ryan told of revenue sources. A brief discussion ensued.

Michael Hernandez said he is all for it. With the age and number of repairs, it doesn't make sense to repair our firetruck. Tom and Ryan talked about options of bonding or leasing the fire engine, they were ruled out. The interest rates on interest income have gone up and are almost cost-prohibitive. It makes sense to purchase it outright rather than resorting to other sources. The Town Auditor agreed.

Jim Tripp asked if we have a sense of how the 2023 budget finished and money that will be going into the fund balance. Ryan said we have a very healthy surplus. He doesn't have another option at this point.

Michael Pelton asked if East Hampton would be willing to sell us their truck. It is not an option for purchase, it is just to help us until we secure another truck.

John Dillon said that this is a life-saving situation and we know how quickly the supply of trucks goes. We had a very clear explanation of the money situation, and we need to move on it and get the public opinion. Everyone was in agreement. Ryan will move forward to complete the resolution and have it ready for next Wednesday's BOS meeting for the purpose of setting a public hearing and special town meeting date, potentially January 24 at 7:00 p.m.

8. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION ON FIXED ASSESSMENT APPLICATION FOR TCBS PROPERTIES LLC, 1600 PORTLAND-COBALT ROAD

Rich Lasky, Assessor, explained the application and the policy and shared information about the building. He believes all requirements have been met. Ryan said it was to encourage economic development and growth in our town.

Michael Pelton read the resolution and moved to accept it, seconded by Jim Tripp. Vote unanimous, motion carried. Michael Hernandez asked why the owner of the property was

different on the application than what was on the property record. Rich Lasky said it should be the same.

**RESOLUTION
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Town of Portland, Connecticut
January 3, 2024**

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FIXING OF REAL PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS

WHEREAS, the Town has an existing policy to encourage the growth and expansion of commercial and industrial parcels by allowing for the fixing of real property assessments where a proposed development meets the requirements of CGS Section 12-65b; and

WHEREAS, Tom Clausi d/b/a 1600 Portland Cobalt Road LLC has built new construction 5,040 square feet commercial/industrial storage and mixed-use office at 1600 Portland-Cobalt Road [Map 16, Lot 31-1] (the "Property") an existing business; and

WHEREAS, it is in the Town's best interest and is consistent with its economic development policies and its Policy on Fixing Real Property Assessments ("Policy"), in particular, to encourage this proposed development; and

WHEREAS, Tom Clausi, the owner of the Property, submitted a Fixed Assessment Application to the Town, dated December 12, 2023, to fix its real property assessment for the proposed development of the Property in accordance with CGS Section 12-65b and the Town's Policy (the "Application"); and

WHEREAS, Town staff has reviewed the application and confirmed that it appears to meet the eligibility requirements for a fixed tax assessment as set forth in the general statutes and the Town's Policy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, after due consideration and review, the Town of Portland hereby approves the Application and authorizes the First Selectman to execute a tax assessment fixing agreement for the purpose of fixing the real property tax assessment on the Property in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth in CGS 12-65b and the Town's Policy.

9. APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Robert Hetrick nominated Captain Scott Cunningham to the Emergency Management Advisory Board, seconded by John Dillon. Vote unanimous, motion carried.

Regarding the question from the last BOS meeting, as to whether Robert Hunter could be nominated as an Alternate to the Veterans Affair Committee, they reached out to the Chair of the Ethics Commission and there is nothing saying you can't do it and it is up to the BOS. Ryan Curly has no reservations. John Dillon nominated Robert Hunter as an Alternate on the Veterans Affair Committee, seconded by Jim Tripp. Vote unanimous, nomination carried.

10. REFUNDS OF EXCESS PAYMENTS:

Robert Hetrick made a motion, seconded by Michael Pelton, to reimburse Honda Lease Trust [\$110.69]. Vote unanimous, motion carried.

11. STATUS REPORTS

Ryan Curley shared the following:

- The survey wrapped up and closed at the end of the year. He thanked all who participated (975 residents). They are reviewing it and filtered out miscellaneous survey inputs. There is a joint meeting scheduled with the BOS and BOE for Wednesday, January 17, at 6:30 p.m. in the Buck Foreman Room.
- The Christmas Tree pickup will take place from January 8 through January 19. Residents can also bring their tree to the transfer station.

John Dillon reported on the BOE meeting he attended. He told of the Portland Pathway Transition Academy where students learn life skills. They need a new facility that is handicap accessible. He told of the new State Statutes regarding age: in the 2023-24 school year, a child must be five by January 1 but in 2024-25 they must be 5 by September 1. Usage request forms will be updated for people who want to rent the facility. The 2024 graduation date was set for June 13. The budget was distributed and the budget process will be starting.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT

Bill Willinsky, Chairman of Veterans Affair Committee, commented on Bob Hunter's nomination being held until this meeting. The committee was formed in 2005. When someone comes forward to volunteer, it should be expedited to get them on the board. He was somewhat upset but glad they got it resolved. He hopes that in the future, there will be no questions regarding nominees. Ryan clarified why it was held until this meeting for approval.

Tracy Frangione, 15 Spring Street, asked why refunds were given in the BOS meetings. Ryan explained that it was for a variety of reasons when an overage had been paid on taxes and referred her to the Collector of Revenue, Cindy Gotta, for further clarification. The funds could not be refunded without the approval of the BOS.

13. BOARD OF SELECTMEN GENERAL INFORMAL DISCUSSION

14. FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

- **Review Policy on Fixing Real Property Assessments**

Robert Hetrick asked for a subcommittee to be formed to review the policy on fixing real property assessments. Bob Hetrick offered to chair the subcommittee, John Dillon, Shaun Manning will serve as members, Rich Lasky will advise. Recommendations will be brought back to the BOS. The subcommittee will meet on January 9 at 5:00 p.m.

- **Review Town Charter**
- **Ethics Ordinance**

16. ADJOURN MEETING

Shaun Manning made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Bob Hetrick, all were in favor; the meeting was adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Hoy
Board Clerk