

Board of Finance

Town of Essex
29 West Avenue
Essex, CT 06426
Via Remote & In Person- 7:00 PM

MINUTES

Thursday December 15, 2022

Members in Attendance:	Campbell Hudson, Mary-Louise Polo, Terry Stewart, Vincent Pacileo III, Ethan Goller, Brian Weinstein
Others in Attendance:	Norman Needleman, First Selectman
	Tracey Celentano, Finance Director
	Kelly Sterner
	Danielle Schumacher, Board Clerk

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM by Chairman Campbell Hudson.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Terry Stewart made a motion to approve the agenda as submitted. Seconded by Mary-Louie Polo. Passed unanimously. Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: REGULAR BOF MEETING ON NOVEMBER 17, 2022

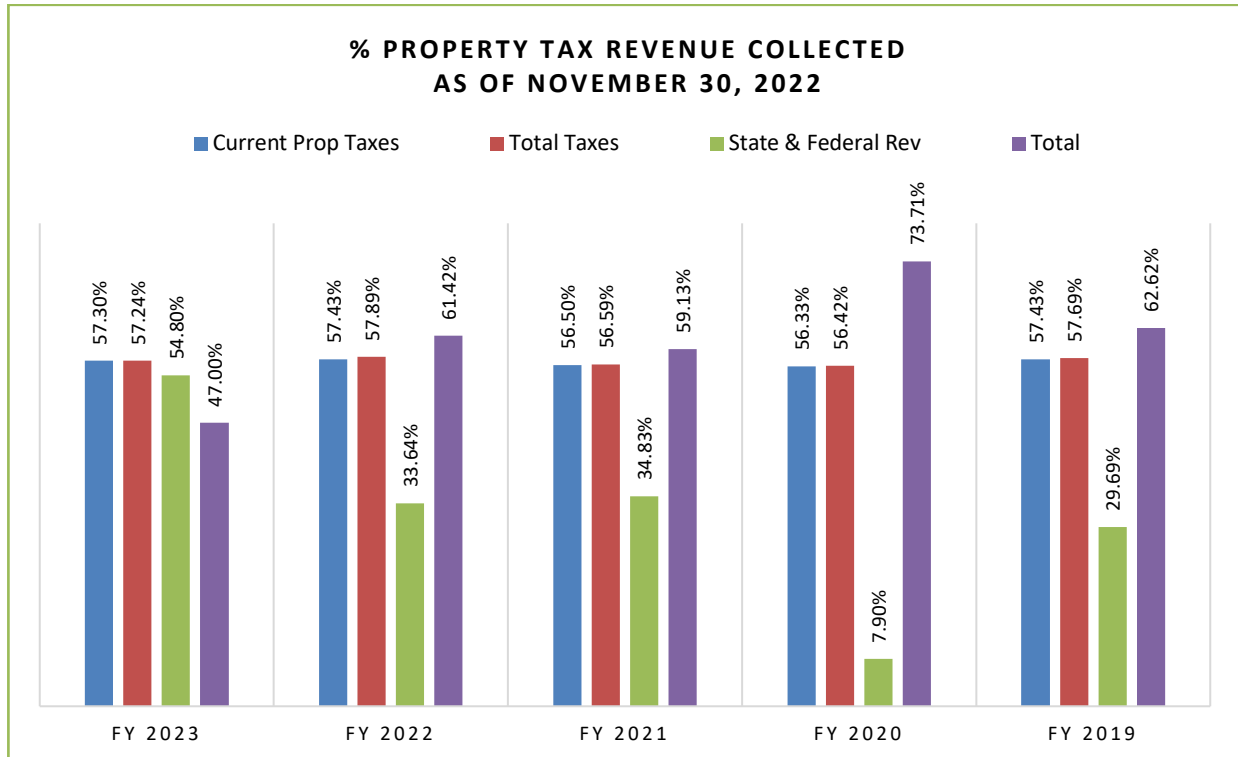
Terry Stewart made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 17, 2022 regular Board of Finance meeting. Seconded by Ethan Goller. Passed unanimously. Motion carried.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT

a. ESTIMATED NOVEMBER YTD UPDATE

REVENUES

Current property tax collections totaled \$131.7K for November bringing the collection rate to 57.30% which compares to historical rates. Prior years' collections and interest & liens added another \$17.5K for total tax collections for the month of \$149.2K.



As of November month-end, the YTD total tax collections were \$14,162,614 or 57.24% of the fiscal year total compared to 57.89% as of November 2021 and 56.59% as of November 2020. The Town received Grants in Lieu (\$14.4K) with YTD State and Federal Revenue totaling \$261.2K or 54.80% of budget. Local revenues totaled \$29.9K in November 2022 which pushes the collection rate to 47% and this is trending below historical rates. Year-to-date conveyance taxes total \$68,147 or 61.95% of budget. Total revenues collected stands at 56.46% of budget versus 56.84% for November 2021 and 54.84% for November 2020 month end. These totals reflect the budgeted deficit amount of \$230,123.

EXPENDITURES

Expenditures for the month of November totaled \$1,816,303 bringing spending YTD to \$12.1 million or 46.18% of budget. Selectmen's budget expenditures made up \$477,410 of the total spending. As of November month-end, the Selectman's budget spending YTD is \$4,604,308 or 49.74% of budget compared to 52.98% as of November 2021 and 50.84% at November 2020 month-end. November payroll, including longevity payments, accounted for \$215.2K of the monthly spending. Budgeted expenses include \$180K Special Appropriations/Grant Expenses to reflect the appropriations approved at the 11/9/22 Town meeting (Essex Ambulance and STEAP grant matching funds). Remaining expenditures included regular maintenance, operations, and professional fees.

GENERAL FUND

FY 2022-2023 – IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES/SAVINGS & RISKS/OVERRUNS (11/30/22)

Opportunities/Savings

- Selectmen Office \$64K +/- Elected Payroll
- Municipal Revenue Sharing Grant \$79.6K Not budgeted –did not expect to receive

Risks/Overruns

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------|----------------------------|
| ● 11/9/22 Appropriation | \$50K | Essex Ambulance Stretcher |
| ● 11/9/22 Appropriation | \$130K | STEAP Grant Matching Funds |
| ● Budgeted Deficit | \$230K | |
| ● Harbor Patrol | \$8K | Additional Patrols |

Ethan Goller made a motion to accept the financial report as presented. Seconded by Mary-Louise Polo. Passed unanimously. Motion carried.

5. SELECTMEN’S REPORT

First Selectman Norman Needleman said that he met with Novus, our IT managed service provider, and we are probably going to go to move from a file server to the Cloud. Technology upgrades are complete in Conference Rooms A & B and installation of cameras and wiring has begun in the auditorium.

The River Road sidewalk project (Connectivity Grant) and STEAP Civic Campus Phase II will begin in the Spring. The bridge over Falls River (River Road) was not approved through the State bs Local Bridge program, but we will reapply, and Norman is hoping it will be approved in the next round. He went on to say that they will be repaving North Main Street in the Spring where the water pipes were dug up.

Bruce and the Capital Committee are working with departments to create a plan for potential bonding in 2024

OLD BUSINESS

None

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. ARPA REQUEST – SOCIAL SERVICES ASSISTANCE FUND

Terry Stewart made a motion to approve and recommend to Town meeting an appropriation in the amount of \$25,000 to be allocated from the American Rescue Plan Act Funds to be transferred to the Social Services Fund to support those in Town who need assistance. Seconded by Brian Weinstein. Passed unanimously. Motion carried.

First Selectman Norman Needleman spoke briefly about the program that considering high energy prices (electricity prices going up 50% on supply side in January) they are working on an in-house program to help people who need support on electricity, gas, or oil to get through the winter. They are creating criteria that falls outside of the state limits, especially for seniors and families. If the Social Services funds are unused, they will remain available for upcoming years. Norman believes that this is one of the best uses for ARPA money.

The Board members asked for a financial report on these special funds (Social Services, Dog Fund, Private Duty, Harbor Management etc.) throughout the year.

b. AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS & RELATED COMMUNICATION

Norman Needleman mentioned that the auditors said that we need to create a credit card policy for town employees. Only 4 different individuals have credit cards (First Selectman’s Assistant, Finance Director, Director of Public Works, and Park & Recreation Director.

Terry Stewart asked about the dollar threshold for purchases. Tracey Celentano said that purchases over \$1,000 need to be signed off on by the First Selectman. If a purchase is under \$1,000 the department head may sign off. There are currently systems in place, it just needs to be defined in a policy.

Tracey said that the purchasing policy was the other item mentioned by the auditors which is a bit more complicated. We can create a tiered policy with levels of guidelines to allow operational flexibility

The auditors will send templates of both policies in the upcoming weeks.

Vincent Pacileo III a motion to approve the audited financial statements, Federal and State Single Audits, and communication from Mahoney Sabol for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2022. Seconded by Terry Stewart. Passed unanimously. Motion carried.

7. COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

None

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

9. ADJOURNMENT

Terry Stewart made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 PM. Seconded by Ethan Goller. Passed unanimously. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danielle Schumacher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Recording Clerk