

## **Board of Finance**

Town of Essex  
29 West Avenue  
Essex, CT 06426  
Via Remote & In Person- 7:00 p.m.  
Conference Room A

### **MINUTES**

Thursday March 24, 2022

**Members in Attendance:** Campbell Hudson, Mary-Louise Polo, Keith Crehan (Chair), Ethan Goller (via Zoom)

**Others in Attendance:** Norman M. Needleman - First Selectman  
Stacia Rice Libby- Selectman  
Bruce M. Glowac - Selectman  
Jim Francis - Treasurer  
Tracey Celentano - Finance Director  
Kelly Sterner

**Absent:** Vincent Pacileo III  
Brian Weinstein

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM by Chairman Keith Crehan.

#### **1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

*Mary-Louise Polo made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Campbell Hudson. Passed unanimously. Motion carried.*

#### **2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES- REGULAR BOF MEETING ON FEBRUARY 17, 2022**

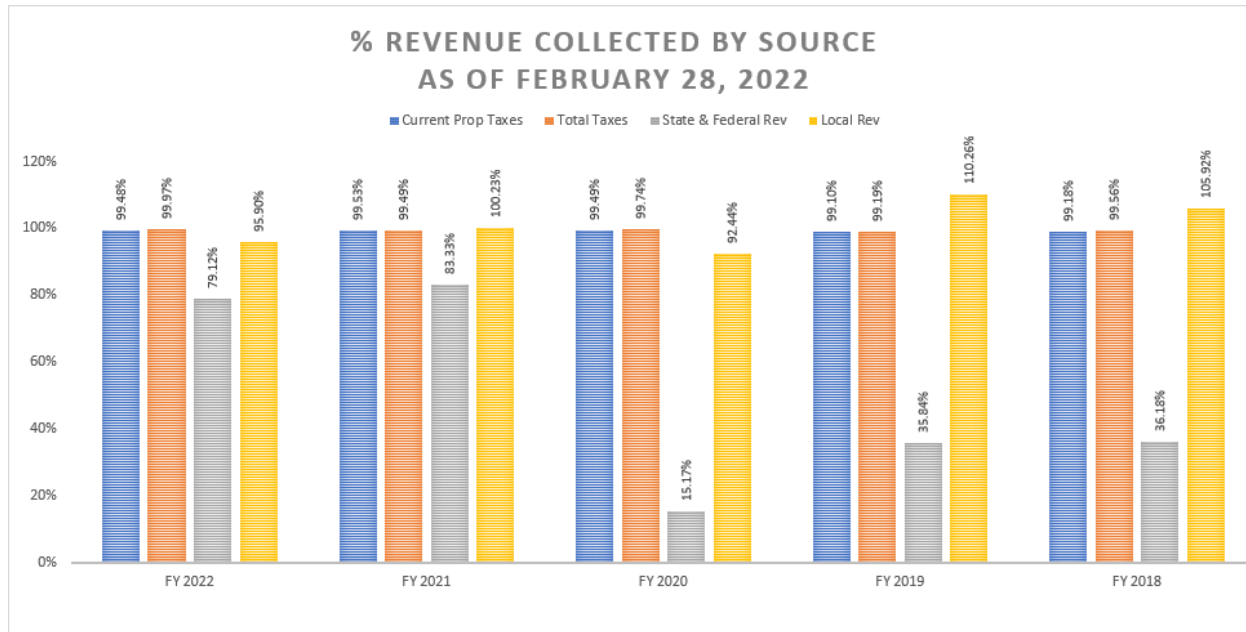
Ethan Goller indicated that on page 3 under the selectman's report "foe" should be changed to "for".

*Ethan Goller made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 17, 2022 Board of Finance Meeting (as amended), Seconded by Mary-Louise Polo. Passed unanimously. Motion Carried.*

#### **3. FINANCIAL REPORT**

##### **a. ESTIMATED FEBRUARY YTD UPDATE**

Kelly Sterner presented the financial report to the Board



## REVENUES

February tax collections brought in \$1,083,017 with current property taxes accounting for all but \$17.4K of the total. This brings the current tax collection rate to 99.48%.

As of February month-end, the YTD total tax collections were \$24,243,937 or 99.97% of the fiscal year total compared to 99.49% as of February 2021 and 99.74% as of February 2020. State & Federal Revenue in February included a FEMA reimbursement totaling \$89,361 for Tropical Storm Isaias expenses incurred in August 2020. Local revenues totaled \$49K in February and \$578.5K (95.90% collected) YTD, which are comparative to prior years. As of the end of February, Town Clerk Fees have reached budget and Conveyance Tax Fees exceeded the full budget amount by \$103.8K. As expected, both Conveyance Taxes and Town Clerk Fees have leveled off and receipts are now at monthly budgeted amounts. Total revenues collected came in at 98.33% of budget versus 98.51% for February 2021 and 97.43% for February 2020 month end. Note - Totals include the budgeted deficit amount of \$290,794.

## EXPENDITURES

Expenditures for the month of February totaled \$1,839,700 bringing spending YTD to \$18,251,771 or 77.12% of budget. Selectmen's budget expenditures made up \$313,851 of the total spending. As of February month-end, the Selectmen's budget spending YTD is \$6,277,474 or 70.9% of budget compared to 69.50% as of February 2021 and 67.8% at February 2020 month-end. For the month, payroll and fringe benefits accounted for \$235,153 of the monthly spending. Expenses for the snow events (Seasonal Payroll, Overtime, Plowing, Sand & Salt) totaling \$18,555 are also recorded in February.

### b. ARPA REQUEST- THATCHBED ISLAND

Selectman Bruce Glowac said that this is a request for the Thatchbed Island project. It is a reclamation project and the intent is to bring in tubes/barriers and fill with dredgings to establish the old boundaries of the island. They would also like to remove the pile of rocks on the south end of the island, which is a navigation hazard, and move it to the projected barrier (where the island would be). They are anxious to get something done and the Board of

Selectmen approved an amount not to exceed \$30,000. In the end this whole project will create positive revenue.

***Motion made by Campbell Hudson to approve and recommend to Town Meeting an appropriation in an amount not to exceed \$30,000 to be allocated from the American Rescue Plan Act Funds for the protection and restoration of Thatchbed Island, Seconded by Mary Louise Polo. Passed unanimously. Motion carried.***

#### 4. **SELECTMEN'S REPORT**

There is going to be significant water company work in Centerbrook & Ivoryton starting next week. They will be going down Foxboro and New City replacing the water main as well as starting at Cumberland Farms into Ivoryton, up Summit. The state is adamant the work gets finished by July 31<sup>st</sup> because they are coming in and paving. The water main ends at Bushy Hill.

#### 5. **OLD BUSINESS**

None

#### 6. **NEW BUSINESS**

##### a. **BOS BUDGET PRESENTATION**

The Expenditure Projection schedule was briefly reviewed. The total Education increase is \$144,049 or .86 percent. Region 4 has a decrease of 1.55 percent due to debt service decrease and Essex Elementary BOE Budget currently reflects a 3.60 percent increase. Essex BOE will present their budget next Wednesday, March 30<sup>th</sup> to the BOF. The overall Town budget reflects a modest increase of 2.77% Norman is recommending a bifurcated mill rate to separate motor vehicles as shown on the projection schedule.

##### **Current FY 2022-2023 Budget Highlights include:**

- 2.75% wage increase for all employees except Police which reflect a 3% increase per CBA
- Selectmen's – increase due to an employee moving up a step/level and a part time position was made full time.
- Assessor – increase due to additional hours to part time position
- Fringe Benefits –estimated 5.5% increase for health insurance.
- General Insurance – 2 percent decrease workers' compensations
- Legal Services – decrease due to reductions in legal and planning & zoning budget line
- Technology – increase due to new software programs. Some budget lines are up and some are down. Tax collector and assessor noted increases in area of quality data services and Vision. Munis is doing a required upgrade this year. The main increase is due to the Point Permitting Software for the Land Use Department which will be adding the health module. Point Permitting is also building some space to digitize and upload the land use documents so people can see the documents from their computers. The other significant increases are with Novus. Their increase is about \$3800. Software licenses such as Microsoft 365 were upgraded. The Public Works Software program is being negotiated.
- Board of Finance – increase due to federal audit fees
- Park and Recreation Department – reflects additional costs in park operation and maintenance and repairs line due to the department has assumed some of the garden club responsibilities.

*These minutes have not yet been approved*

- Ambulance / EMT Services – increase in the Workers’ Compensation insurance premiums
- Animal Control – an increase of \$2,500 and there are now two ACO positions.
- Emergency 9-1-1 - a projected 3.5% increase estimated for Valley Shore
- Harbor Patrol – an increase in the budget for additional harbor patrol boat shifts.
- Police Services – an increase in the police budget to allow for a fourth part time officer for extra cruiser patrol shifts.
- Resident State Trooper – Budgeted for an anticipated 6% increase.
- Water – an increase of 2.44% per CT water.
- Health Department – an increase in the part time payroll due to additional hours and hiring a food inspector and the health director receiving their longevity this year.

b. Bifurcated Mill Rate

If the budget were to include a \$200K deficit, the forecasted mill rates would be 18 % for motor vehicles 22.80% for real estate and personal property.

**c. LoCIP PROJECT AUTHORIZATION**

The paving of Ox Bow Lane was included in the Town’s capital improvement plan. Every year we pick a capital project to be reimbursed by the Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP). This is the first year the Town must receive authorization from BOS And BOF to submit the request for reimbursement.

*Motion made by Keith Crehan to approve the acceptance of the “reclamation and repaving of Oxbow Lane in the Town of Essex, CT” as part of the Town’s Capital Improvement Plan for the fiscal year 2021-2022. Furthermore, the Board recognizes the project as a local capital improvement project and upon acceptance, authorizes submission for state reimbursement in the amount of \$40,852 under the Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP).*

7. **COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

None

8. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

*Ethan Goller made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 PM, Seconded by Keith Crehan. Passed unanimously. Motion carried.*

Respectfully Submitted,



Danielle Sanso  
Recording Clerk