

## Board of Finance

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

### MINUTES

Thursday January 19, 2023

<b>Members in Attendance:</b>	Campbell Hudson, Mary-Louise Polo, Terry Stewart, Vincent Pacileo III, Brian Weinstein
<b>Others in Attendance:</b>	Norman Needleman, First Selectman
	Tracey Celentano, Finance Director
	Jim Francis, Treasurer
	Danielle Schumacher, Board Clerk
	Andrew Kressley, Essex Fire Engine Company #1
	Dana Novorio, Assistant to Finance Director
	Kelly Sterner

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by Chairman Campbell Hudson.

*Vincent Pacileo III made a motion to amend the agenda to add the Municipal Property Sinking Fund Request and the ARPA Request for Tree Work. Seconded by Brian Weinstein. Passed unanimously. Motion carried.*

#### 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

*Terry Stewart made a motion to approve the agenda with the following two new items added:*

*7b. Municipal Property Sinking Fund Request – Finance Department Furniture*

*7c. ARPA Request – Public Works Ground Maintenance (Additional Tree Work)*

*Seconded by Vincent Pacileo III. Passed unanimously. Motion carried.*

#### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: REGULAR BOF MEETING ON DECEMBER 15, 2022

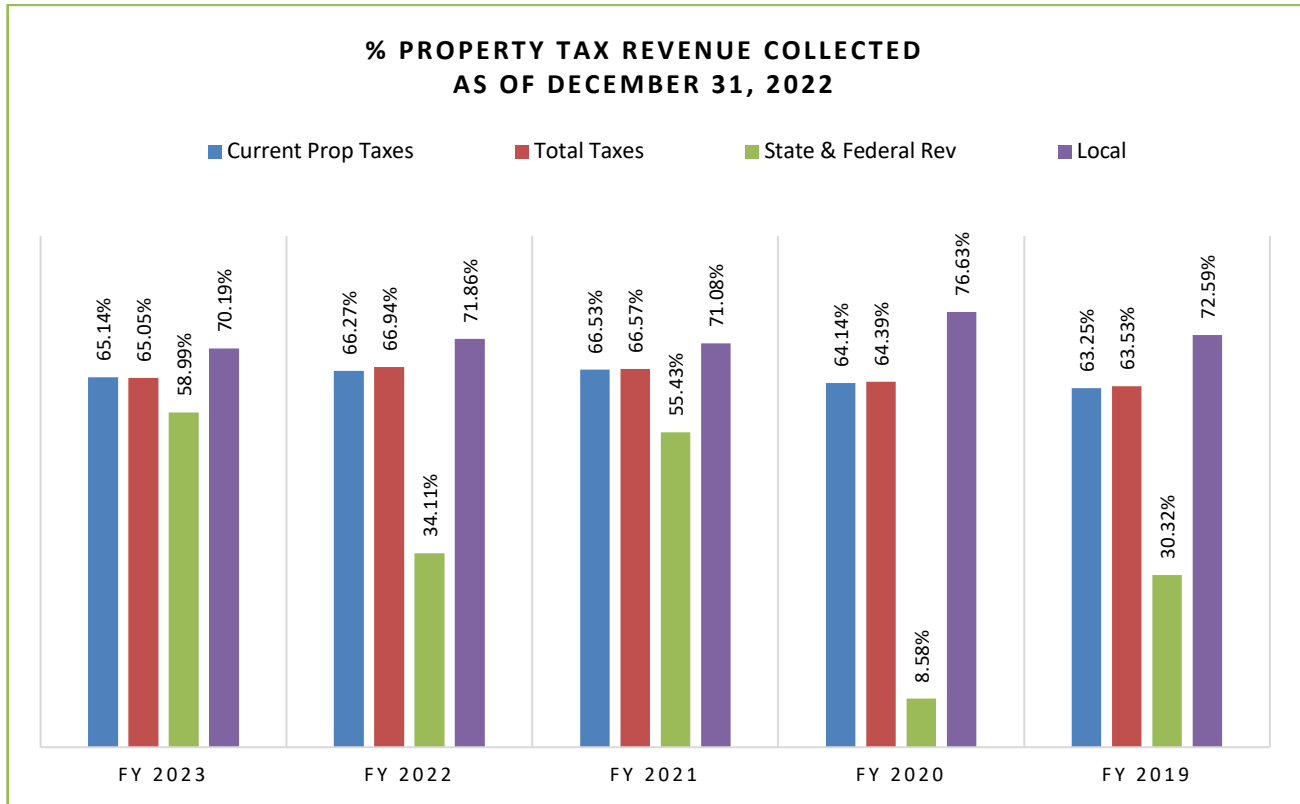
*Vincent Pacileo III made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 15, 2022 regular Board of Finance meeting. Seconded by Brian Weinstein. Passed unanimously. Motion carried.*

#### 4. FINANCIAL REPORT

##### a. ESTIMATED DECEMBER YTD UPDATE

##### REVENUES

Current property tax collections totaled \$1.9 million for December 2022 which is slightly below December 2021. This brings the collection rate to 65.14% compared to 66.27% in December 2021. Prior years' collections and interest and liens accounted for \$7.4K.



As of December month-end, the YTD total tax collections were \$16,095,003 or 65.05% of the fiscal year total compared to 66.94% as of December 2021 and 66.57% as of December 2020. State & Federal Revenue in December consisted of \$2.4K for Veterans Tax Relief funds and \$17.5K for Tropical Storm Ida Category G reimbursement. State and Federal grant revenue is favorable to prior years. Local revenues totaled \$137.6K in December and \$416.4K (70.19% collected) YTD, which are comparable to prior years. Interest income, Conveyance Taxes and Local PILOT Revenue is trending positively. As of the end of December, Conveyance Tax Fees has exceeded the full budget. Town Clerk Fees collected are at 41.45% of budget in December but posting of collections were delayed due to computer issues (Cott Systems). Total revenues collected year-to-date came in at 64.48% of budget versus 65.64% for December 2021 and 66.02% for December 2020 month end. These totals reflect the budgeted deficit amount of \$230,123.

### **EXPENDITURES**

Expenditures for the month of December totaled \$2,431,279 bringing spending YTD to \$14,542,949 or 55.46% of budget. Selectmen's budget expenditures made up \$594,911 of the total spending. As of December month-end, the Selectmen's budget spending YTD is \$4,056,467 or 56.18% of budget compared to 60.00% as of December 2021 and 57.10% at December 2020 month-end. December expenditures include Audit Fees (\$15.6K), Library allocations (\$110.8K), as well as \$31.2K for 911 services. 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).

**GENERAL FUND**

**FY 2022-2023 – IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES/SAVINGS & RISKS/OVERRUNS**

**As of 12/31/2022**

**Opportunities/Savings**

- |                                   |           |  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--|
| • Selectmen Office                | \$64K +/- | Elected Payroll                          |
| • Municipal Revenue Sharing Grant | \$79.6K   | Not budgeted – did not expect to receive |
| • Conveyance Taxes                | \$35K +/- | Real Estate Activity                     |

**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         |
| • Police Services       | \$10K +/- | Accreditation (PT Officer) |
| • Electric              | TBD       |                            |

*Terry Stewart made a motion to accept the financial report as presented. Seconded by Vincent Pacileo III. Passed unanimously. Motion carried.*

**b. ARPA SUMMARY**

*ARPA summary included in package*

**5. SELECTMEN'S REPORT**

First Selectman Norman Needleman spoke to the Board. He said that the Capital Committee has been meeting and they are working on the River Road sidewalk project. Bob Doane is finalizing the plans including a pedestrian bridge and DOT has approved the State bid process for acquiring bids. Public meetings will be scheduled to inform the public. Plans are to begin the sidewalk bridge the summer of 2023.

We will be applying for the State and Local Bridge Program in March which is a 50/50 reimbursement. They are working on pricing the rapid replacement after experiencing the road being blocked during the recent storm.

Discussion and planning have begun for the Civic Campus Phase II project (Hubbard Field). Norman does not think it will be happening in 2023. If anything, they may start on the building this year, most likely tear down the old brick building and building a new one that is accessible with adequate storage.

He went on to say that the grand list is stronger than he thought.

**6. OLD BUSINESS**

None

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. FIRE DEPARTMENT SINKING FUND REQUEST**

Essex Fire Department Chief Andrew Kressley spoke to the Board. He said that the department's current air packs are in their last year of service according to NFPA. They are now approaching 20 years old and in the past 3 months several have needed to be taken out of service for repairs. In order to avoid costly

repairs and federal issues due to requirements he says it is time to move forward with taking money out of the sinking fund.

Norman Needleman said that this request is time sensitive as this current quote is guaranteed until February 1<sup>st</sup>.

Chief Kressley said that the request is scheduled for a special town meeting this coming Monday. They will be purchasing 42 packs with the most appropriate options for the department. They are very similar to the packs used by surrounding towns.

They have applied for a federal grant for the past 3 years in a row and were shut out again. They are requesting to move money from fire department equipment sinking fund so that air packs can be ordered.

***Terry Stewart made a motion to approve and recommend to Town Meeting an appropriation of an amount not to exceed \$440,000 from the Fire Department Sinking Fund for the purchase of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) Air-Paks as recommended by the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Mary-Louise Polo. Passed unanimously. Motion carried.***

Terry Stewart asked how often the air packs are used.

Chief Kressley said that in a given month packs are used half a dozen to a dozen times. Any time a firefighter gets out of the truck at a fire they have an air pack on and are ready to go. Packs are also used at the training center. Norman Needleman said air packs were often used during the first 9 months of the pandemic when we did not have enough PPE. Packs were work with Tyvek suits and then afterwards would need to be cleaned with Clorox to get rid of anything potentially hazardous.

Vincent Pacileo III asked if the packs being purchased also have a 20-year lifespan. Chief Kressley said that it is not exactly 20 years. The standard is called out by number of new versions, the new packs will be operating under the 2018 version.

Vincent Pacileo III also asked if they had received any feedback on why our previous applications were not accepted. Norman Needleman said that they consider the number of fires that we actually have in town and do not include mutual aid fires.

**b. MUNICIPAL PROPERTY SINKING FUND REQUEST MOTION**

First Selectman Norman Needleman said that this is a continuation of the improvements that have already been made to the Finance Office. The furniture will allow the staff to utilize the space efficiently and become organized.

***Vincent Pacileo III made a motion to approve and recommend to Town Meeting an appropriation of an amount not to exceed \$12,000 from Municipal Property Sinking Fund for the purchase of furniture for the Finance Department as recommended by the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Terry Stewart. Passed unanimously. Motion carried.***

**c. APRA REQUEST MOTION- TREE WORK**

Norman Needleman stated that the number of dead and dying trees is ever increasing. Tree Warden Augie Pampel made up a list of trees and they went out to bid. It ended up being about \$19,000 more than we have in the budget. He said that we need to keep people safe and keep the power on. The past storm that we had there were 3 major incidents involving fallen trees.

*Mary-Louise Polo 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 complete additional Tree Work (Public Works-Ground Maintenance) as recommended by the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Brian Weinstein. Passed unanimously. Motion carried.*

**8. COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

None

**9. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

*Terry Stewart made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 PM. Seconded by Mary-Louise Polo. 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