

BOARD OF FINANCE

**Town of Essex
29 West Avenue
Essex, CT 06426
Via Remote Attendance Only – 7:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

Thursday – February 18, 2021

In attendance via zoom: Keith Crehan, Chairman, Edward Tedeschi, Mary-Louise Polo, Vin Pacileo III, Ethan Goller and Campbell Hudson, Vice Chairman

Others in attendance: Norman Needleman, First Selectman
Tracey Celentano, Finance Director
Kelly Sterner

Meeting called to order at 7:08 p.m.

ROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

Ethan Goller moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Campbell Hudson. Passed unanimously. Motion carried.

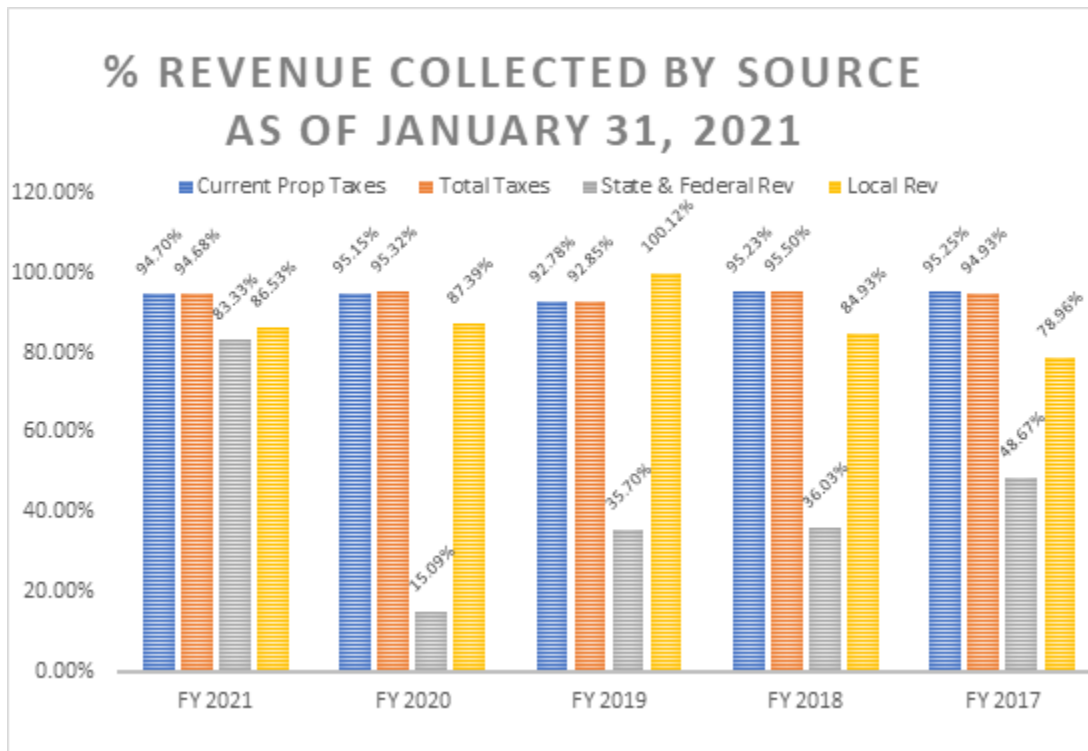
APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

Campbell Hudson moved to approve the minutes of January 21, 2021, seconded by Ed Tedeschi. Passed unanimously. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

REVENUES

The current tax collection results at the end of January is an early indicator of how our tax collections will finish the year. For FYI, January current property tax collections totaled \$6.53 million which brings us to a collection rate of 94.70% and compares similar but slight below prior fiscal years but not low enough to cause concern. Prior years' collection rates, interest and liens accounted for \$34.3K for the month.



As of January month-end, the YTD total tax collections were \$22,097,302 or 94.68% of the fiscal year total compared to 95.32% as of January 2020 and 92.85% as of January 2019. State Revenue in January consisted of \$26K for State Education Grant and Town Aid Road Grant totaling \$107.9K. Local revenues totaled \$102.8K in January and \$576K (86.53% collected) YTD, which are slightly below 2019. Interest income continues to trend lower while Town Clerk Fees and Conveyance Taxes are trending significantly higher. As of the end of December, Conveyance Tax fees exceeded the full budget amount of \$95K. Town Clerk Fees collected are at 84% of budget in January. Total revenues collected came in at 93.59% of budget versus 93.20% for January 2020 and 91.44% for January 2019 month end.

EXPENDITURES

Expenditures for the month of January totaled \$1,599,192 bringing spending YTD to \$14,909,332 or 60.5% of budget. Selectmen's budget expenditures made up \$654,336 of the total spending. As of January month-end, the Selectmen's budget spending YTD is \$5,593,748 of 64.8% of budget compared to 63.8% as of January 2020 and 62.6% at January 2019 month-end. For the month, payroll and fringe benefits accounted for \$219.8K of the monthly spending. This makes up 33.6% of the Selectmen's budget spending for the month. We anticipate February

will reflect the multiple snow events we have been experiencing.

Keith Crehan discussed a recent request from Brian White, Reg. 4 Superintendent, with regards to a 10-year boiler (the newer one) needing repair at EES. The cost for the repair will be approximately \$10k for repair. Keith Crehan gave him the go ahead and told them to put it in their maintenance budget. We can discuss later whether the money will come from a transfer or pulled from the capital account. It will be considered a replacement. We can discuss this and other things further when they present their budget.

Ethan Goller inquired about the State & Federal Revenue while not a lot of money, on a percentage basis has been significantly higher over the last 3 years and asked Tracey to comment on it. Tracey indicated that this year's miscellaneous State and Revenue totaling \$92k is higher primarily due to \$81K COVID expense reimbursement.

Keith Crehan also mentioned that he noticed in a recent article that the Governor's budget kept the Town of Essex budget flat for revenue. Norman stated that he believes municipal revenue will appear to stay flat.

Campbell Hudson moved to accept the financial report, seconded by Ethan Goller. Passed unanimously. Motion carried.

SELECTMEN'S REPORT:

Norman, Tracey, and Kelly have had several meetings regarding the budget. Norman discussed the R4 ADM increase to 41.38% from 39.75% and the financial impact of \$604K on the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget. However, per Brian White, Superintendent, R4 is still working on their budget and revisions are expected. Going forward the ADM numbers look a bit more stabilized around 41%. Norman also mentioned that Andy Morris, a BOF former Chairman, recently passed away. He and Norman were very close friends.

Norman also indicated that our snow plowing budget may be over this year due to the multiple storms, and we also have a good handle on the sidewalks.

Ethan Goller inquired about SB 5383 about raising the tax abatement to \$2,000. There is a bill out there that he will support, however, it is not a reimbursable expense from the State it comes out of the Town pocketbook. We're willing to do it but not sure if there are enough legislators around us to support it. Ethan is under the impression Killingworth has adopted it. Ethan indicated he wanted to hear our perspective from the Town. Norman responded that he most likely would try to negotiate it down. Campbell discussed the rumor that local police will soon be required to wear body cameras and have cameras in their cars. He asked would this increase be a one-time cost. Norman responded that most likely it will be something, however, not sure what as we already have dash cams in their cars.

Mary-Louise Polo inquired as to how the 75+ and 65+ age resident vaccinations are going in Town. Norman indicated that Nutmeg Pharmacy and our Health Department are doing a great job. We appear to be getting more doses as the weeks go on.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ADJOURNMENT:

Vin Pacileo moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 p.m., seconded by Campbell Hudson. Passed unanimously. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Yvonne Roziak
Recording Secretary