

**FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 7, 2022, 6:30 P.M.
MINUTES**

1. Call to Order

- A. Chairman Liam Sweeney called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Attendees – Mayor Shari Cantor, Deputy Mayor Liam Sweeney, Councilors Leon Davidoff, Mary Fay and Ben Wenograd, Acting Town Manager Rick Ledwith, Director of Finance Peter Privitera, Town Clerk Essie Labrot, Town Assessor Joseph Dakers and Deputy Corporation Counsel Gina Varano.

2. Business Items

- A. Supplemental Resolution Appropriating an Additional \$16,000 to the Office of the Town Clerk to Support Increased Expenses – Mr. Ledwith stated the additional \$16,000 would go toward the additional volume of transactions related to absentee ballots and land records. The appropriation would involve moving \$16,000 from the Mortgage Electronic Registration System account and allocating \$14,500 to Temporary Payroll and \$1,500 to Office Supplies. Ms. Labrot reported the turnover in the Assistant position created the use of part-time staff in a significant way the last 1½ years, especially with 2 assistants resigning in the past 2 years. Another part-time assistant will need to be brought on to help with the upcoming elections and the recent increase in land recordings.
- B. Ordinance Amending Tax Exemption Procedure for Ambulance-Type Vehicles – Mr. Ledwith stated the Ordinance provides a tax exemption for a vehicle that is equipped or has been modified to transport medically incapacitated persons or is the primary means of transportation for a person with disabilities. Atty. Varano stated the change being requested would be to part C, which would extend the time period to apply for the exemption from 30 to 120 days. Mr. Dakers stated the reason for the amendment was to allow applicants time to submit their application and bring the vehicle in for inspection to ensure the modifications required under the statute have been completed. Currently, some vehicles have to be sent away to have the modifications made, which can take longer than 30 days.

3. Communications

4. Staff Reports

- A. Financial Services – Mr. Ledwith stated Mr. Privitera submitted an update on the operating results through the first six months of the fiscal year. Mr. Privitera stated for the first 6 months there is a projected surplus of \$188,268; revenues were up a little over \$1.1M, taxes are coming in strong and the current levy is projected to increase by \$300,000. The supplemental motor vehicle has significantly increased by \$350,000, incremental revenues are up about \$257,000 because of a FEMA reimbursement, building permits are up \$100,000

over the adopted and advance taxes are \$300,000 over adopted. However, the low interest rates provide very few opportunities to invest, so projections on investment earnings are down about \$280,000. Overall, expenditures are up approximately \$950,000 over adopted with the most significant being the Fire Department, which is at \$1.5M (primarily overtime due to vacancies, FMLA and injury). Per Mr. Ledwith, Chief Priest stated the overtime would start to come down the second week of February. The Police Department is up about \$608,000, also primarily due to overtime secondary to retirements and vacancies. Leisure and Social Services is up a little over \$300,000 with the primary driver being the relocation of residents secondary to the 3 buildings flooded. When the budget was adopted, the wage increases were in contingency. There has been a large decrease in the contingency. The non-departmental budget is down almost \$1.7M and \$1.3M is because of the distribution of the wage increases.

There was also a decrease of about \$245,000 due to a lower number of busses running and other adjustments in this area. The Board of Education is also projecting a \$100,000 surplus in their budget. Mr. Ledwith reported on a conversation he had with the revenue collector and at the end of the second collection, taxes were continuing to come in strong. The tax collection rate projection for the year is in the 99.3% range.

- B. Town Clerk – Ms. Labrot provided some statistics on her written report regarding last month’s revenue, including the amount going to the State and the number of instruments recorded for the month. Also, the Department of Health Death Registry has been implemented. There will no longer be handwritten death records with information on them and any errors could be corrected easily. In addition, this registry will allow access to other towns’ records, so a resident of West Hartford who would normally have to go to Hartford and wait six weeks for the certificate can now get it immediately.
- C. Information Technology – Mr. Ledwith stated Mr. Morin would provide his report at next month’s meeting.
- D. Town Manager – Mr. Ledwith stated the Finance Department was preparing the Fiscal 2023 Budget. A meeting was had last week with all directors to review their budgets. The next step is to compile the individual budgets into a total budget. Mr. Ledwith also stated on February 8 he would be announcing the appointment of Cathy Lombardi as the Acting Director of Human Resources. Also, Mr. Ledwith stated they would be interviewing 4 candidates for the Equity Officer position on February 24.

5. Future Agenda Items

6. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

/axb