

**FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MEETING
DECEMBER 13, 2021, 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 Adrienne Billings-Smith, Alberto Cortes, Leon Davidoff, Mary Fay and Mark Zydanowicz, Director of Finance Peter Privitera, Financial Operations Manager Lisa Newton, Grants Manager Pattie Lewis, Police Chief Vernon Riddick, Interim Director of Community Services Duane Martin, and Director of Leisure Services Helen Rubino-Turco.

2. Business Items

- A. Ordinance Appropriating an Amount Not to Exceed \$2,500,000 in the Capital Improvement Fund for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 for the Construction of the Eisenhower Park Swimming Pool and Bath House and Authorizing the Issuance of Bonds of the Town in an Amount Not to Exceed \$2,500,000 to Finance the Appropriation and Pending the Issuance Thereof the Making of Temporary Borrowing for Such Purpose – Mr. Privitera stated the current facility was built in 1964 and has a lot of issues that are not economical to fix, so the decision was made to replace the pool. Some funding has been appropriated through the Capital Fund but the pool shut down during the aquatic season and unless this Ordinance is addressed quickly, there will not be a pool available for a couple of years. Because of the amount, it requires a Public Hearing, possibly at the January meeting, and then it will be held for 30 days for the petition process. Hopefully, the process will be completed by mid to late February. However, the design team needs to be hired before then. If we wait to hire someone until sometime in February, there will not be enough time to design and have the construction completed by the 2023 aquatic season.
- B. Resolution Appropriating Funds for the Eisenhower Park Swimming Pool and Bath House Project – Mr. Privitera stated the appropriation resolution is for \$149,000. The money would be appropriated from the Tax Overpayments account. If approved tomorrow night, we can hire the design team the following day and they can start working on the design. By the time the bond authorization is ready, they will have a design in place and it could go out to bid. It will take over a year to build the pool and bath house but the pool would be open for the 2023 aquatic season. If the resolution is not approved, then it will not be done in time for the 2023 season – it will be shut down for 2 years. The bond authorization ordinance permits reimbursement for the Town for the \$149,000, which would go back into the Tax Overpayments account. As part of the Town Manager's proposed Capital Budget for next year, he is proposing the de-authorization of \$2M for the Flood Mitigation Infrastructure Project. He is doing this because when appropriation of the ARPA funds happens, there will be money in there to do the FMI project from the ARPA funds to start it. Mr. Privitera

requested the passage of the resolution to appropriate \$149,000 and the ordinance for the construction of the Eisenhower Pool and Bath House.

- C. Resolution Amending the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 General Fund Budget to Fund Transfers to the Capital Non-Recurring Expenditure Fund and to Accrue for Expenditures Related to Tax Assessment Appeals – Mr. Privitera stated they usually go to Council in September or early October when the auditors have completed their preliminary work but the auditors are having staffing issues and this is taking more time than anticipated. The \$1,740,000 is the current number. It might change slightly but not in a significant way. The first proposal is to transfer \$790,000 into an unallocated CNRE account, which is funded from CNRE or General Fund contribution. If this is transferred into a CNRE, it will bring the fund balance to a little under \$1.2M, which can be used for future appropriations for capital purchases. The second proposal is to transfer \$400,000 into an accrual account for tax appeals. There are still two cases pending. The \$400,000 would cover any exposure. If it is found the funds are not needed, then it would be transferred into the General Fund. The remaining \$550,000 would flow to fund balance, so the Town could maintain its 9.1% fund balance ratio.
- D. Resolution Appropriating American Rescue Plan Act Grant Funds – Mr. Privitera stated the Town Manager had prepared a list a while ago, which was shared with Council, on the appropriation of funds. Some of the proposed expenditures needed more time for Council review but some could be moved on immediately. The biggest change is the Flood Mitigation Infrastructure Improvements for \$3.2M with the de-authorization of \$2M. The funds would go toward permitting, survey and design of the Flood Mitigation Infrastructure project, which will span several years. The contracted engineering firm stated if they do not start moving on the project now, we will not be able to spend all of our ARPA money before the deadline. The remainder of the items on the list were felt to be appropriate. The entire amount for the body cameras (\$350,000) was appropriated through the CRNE fund balance from the current year as the first year payment; however, if this is approved, it would not be needed and could go toward other projects. Chief Riddick spoke on the Town's surveillance cameras. The amount is approximately \$500,000, which would be used to create and expand a camera program in West Hartford. There would be cameras with the video going to a center being viewed by Intel personnel. People would be informed the cameras are there for prevention and to provide safety and security to all residents and visitors. Should something occur, the video could be reviewed and hopefully, bring the perpetrator to justice. This would be done in conjunction with the drone program.
- E. Resolution Appropriating Grant Funds Awarded Under the Department of Transportation's Click It or Ticket Campaign – Mr. Privitera stated this grant is received every year and approval is needed for the resolution so the funds can be appropriated.
- F. Resolution Appropriating a Leary Firefighters Foundation Grant – Mr. Privitera reported this was a \$25,000 grant in the form of firefighting equipment bailout kits, which assist in emergency egresses for firefighters who may get stuck in a burning building and has to make an emergency egress through a window.

- G. Resolution Amending the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget of the Community Development Block Grant Fund and the Capital Projects Fund to Support a Futures Inc. Project – Mr. Privitera stated this was a change order for a project already approved allowing for the appropriation of additional monies to go toward the installation of a wheelchair lift.

3. Communications

4. Staff Reports

- A. Current Year Operating Budget Projection as of October 31, 2021 – Mr. Privitera reported a projected \$56,000 surplus and stated property taxes were up, a FEMA reimbursement was received, building permits were up and property and conveyance taxes were up; however, the investment income is struggling. There are few short-term investment options available making more than 15 basis points. On the expenditure side, as of the end of last year, all of the non-public safety contracts had not been approved and money had been placed in contingency and upon approval, the money would be transferred out to balance out the operating departments. This has now been done and the contingency amount has been reduced by approximately \$1.4M. There are more reductions but this is the biggest adjustment to the increases in the departments. Police is up but part of the increase is due to contract settlement for the current year with some related to overtime and some to not having full staff. The Fire Department was down 10 positions until recently, which have been filled. Most are in the academy and some will require [pre-cepting 29:55] for paramedics. There are still some people out for a variety of reasons (on-duty injury, maternity, etc.) and once FMLA starts, it is paid at time-and-a-half. The projections for November are being completed and will be submitted at the first January meeting.

5. Future Agenda Items

- 6. Adjournment** – The meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.
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