

**TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING
AUGUST 15, 2022, 5:00 P.M.
MINUTES**

1. Call to Order

- A. Call to Order – Meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m., by Deputy Mayor Liam Sweeney, Chair.

Present: Deputy Mayor Liam Sweeney, Chair; Councilor Leon Davidoff, member; Councilor Mary Fay, member; Mayor Shari Cantor; Rick Ledwith, Town Manager; Peter Privitera, Director, Finance Services; Essie Labrot, Town Clerk; Catherine Lombardi, Acting Executive Director of Human Resources.

2. Business Items

- A. Approval of June 13, 2022 Minutes – Chair Liam Sweeney moved to approve the minutes. There were no objections.
- B. Ordinance Making an Appropriation for the Replacement of Tennis Courts at Conard High School and Hall High School in an Amount not to Exceed \$495,000 in the Capital Improvement Fund for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 and Authorizing the Issuance of Bonds in an Amount not to Exceed \$495,000 to Fund the Appropriation – Rick Ledwith, Town Manager, reviewed the plan. The town received \$3M in funding from the State Bond Commission to cover the cost of this project. The RFP resulted in a bid which came in 17% higher than the original estimate due to inflation. This ordinance will provide the town with funds to hire a contractor, Classic Turf Company, and begin work. Councilor Mary Fay asked about the price differential. Rick Ledwith stated it was estimated at \$3M and the bid was \$3,495,000. Peter Privitera, Director, Finance Services, stated the increase in cost was \$400,000 and this will allow an extra \$95,000 if needed.
- C. Resolution Appropriating the Unexpended Funds of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant – Rick Ledwith, Town Manager, reviewed that the town was awarded a \$350,000 grant to fund firefighter certification classes. The funds were not fully spent due to COVID, and this would allow the carry-forward of \$268,000 into the current fiscal year to continue the classes. The funds would be available to expend until August of 2023.
- D. Current ARPA Funding Status Resolution Appropriating an Historic Documents Preservation Grant – Essie Labrot, Town Clerk, explained this grant from the State Library provides a maximum of \$7,500 for office improvements regarding microfilming documents. The funds will be used throughout the fiscal year for microfilming and securing vital records.
- E. Resolution Appropriating Additional Funds to the Office of the Town Clerk to Purchase Equipment – Essie Labrot, Town Clerk, said this money will be spent on a printing device for

the print shop, which will be shared with the Board of Education. She explained that new equipment is needed, and it is more cost-effective to use their own print shop than outside services.

- F. Resolution Closing Completed Capital Projects in the Capital Projects Fund – Peter Privitera, Director, Finance Services, stated this is housekeeping needed to close out completed projects so the remaining money can go into a reserve account, which will allow the amortization of capital assets.
- G. Current ARPA Funding Status – Rick Ledwith, Town Manager, reviewed that at the last meeting \$2M was allocated for the Small Business and Nonprofit Grant Program, which rolled out in July. Applicants were able to apply for up to \$10,000, and 140 applications were received. The ARPA Grant Committee meets next week to begin review of the applications. There will be \$600,000 remaining even if all applicants are awarded the maximum amount, so the program will be reopened on a rolling basis until all \$2M of the grants have been expended. The original award resolution is before the Town Council on September 13. At a future meeting, they will present to the Council regarding spending the remaining awards on a rolling basis. Chair Sweeney asked for clarification on the remaining unallocated funding, which will be approximately \$600,000. Councilor Fay asked if the criteria is on the website, and Chair Sweeney stated that everything is on the town's Economic Development site, and the information has been distributed by various outlets.

Rick Ledwith stated that after the expenditure of grants, the current ARPA balance will be \$11.2M for the town allocation and \$12.2M for the county allocation. He discussed a Spreadsheet on Civic Clerk which was provided. There are a number of pending original projects on the spreadsheet including Wayfinding signage, Center reconstruction, and Sustainability projects. Center and Sustainability do not need to be acted on currently. The Wayfinding signage project can move forward if the committee wants to bring it to Council in September. This project will help promote the town's identity and enhance visitors' experience in town. It will bring economic benefits to local businesses. An RFP was issued to hire a consultant for \$87,000. The remaining balance would be for design, construction, and placement of signage. If approved by Finance and Administration, it will be brought forward to the Council. They will then enter into a contract with the consultant and form a committee. They will work through Community Planning and Economic Development, providing updates to the Council through the fall. Mayor Shari Cantor added that she hopes the committee moves this forward to council.

Rick Ledwith highlighted several other items from the spreadsheet. First, the budget called for hiring an Assistant Director of Social Services with funds from both ARPA and the General Fund. He recommends moving that forward using ARPA funding of \$60,400 for their portion. Also, in December 2021, the council had approved purchase of a mobile command vehicle for \$375,000, but the true cost was \$415,000. They would like to fund that shortfall of \$40,000 through ARPA funds since the original purchase was made utilizing ARPA funds. Thirdly, there was a vehicular crash study proposed by the Community Development Department, which they would like to do this year, but they are not ready to move forward on that yet. Rick Ledwith recommends to move forward with the Assistant

Director of Social Services at \$60,000 and the Mobile Command Vehicle shortfall of \$40,000. Councilor Fay asked why the vehicle was not purchased at the budgeted price when approval was granted. Peter Privitera, Director, Finance Services, explained they moved to purchase it immediately after appropriation, but the cost was an estimate by both Police and Fire Departments, and some of the equipment prices had gone up. At the time, he asked that it be ordered at \$375,000 without some of the equipment in order to meet the budgeted price, hoping for a change order at a later date to add that equipment. Chair Sweeney moved to place these items on the Council agenda.

Chair Sweeney asked about Center reconstruction, and Rick Ledwith explained that it is not ready yet. An architect and engineering firm has been hired, and he will be providing Community Planning and Economic Development Committee an update. This project will be picking up steam in September with community outreach and a traffic study. At the end of the study, the team will be ready to provide recommendations to Town Council. Chair Sweeney asked about the remaining ARPA balance if all projects are approved, which will be \$6.5M for the town and \$12.2M for the county funds. Rick Ledwith recommended this be discussed more at the next Finance and Administration meeting to allow staff to dive a little deeper into considerations for both balances. He recommended setting this as an agenda item for the next meeting. Chair Sweeney would like to have some community input on how to allocate funds and ensure it is being used to help people who fell behind and enhance the town.

3. Communications

4. Staff Reports

- A. Town Clerk Report – Essie Labrot, Town Clerk, said that the highlights of her report were already discussed regarding the two resolutions. She gave an update on the Department's activities.
- B. Human Resources Update – Catherine Lombardi, Acting Executive Director of Human Resources, said they have been very busy recruiting and gave an update on the Department's activities.

5. Future Agenda Items

7. Adjournment

Chair Sweeney moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:52 p.m.

/jaw