

**FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING
AUGUST 23, 2021, 6:00 P.M.
MINUTES**

1. Call to Order

- A. Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Leon Davidoff.
- B. Attendees – Chairman Leon Davidoff, Mayor Shari Cantor, Councilor Mary Fay, Councilor Lee Gold, Councilor Liam Sweeney, Councilor Ben Wenograd, Town Manager Matt Hart and Finance Director Peter Privitera,

2. Business Items

- A. Meeting Minutes of July 20, 2021 – Minutes were approved with no objections.
- B. Proposed Amendments to FY 2021/22 Capital Non-Recurring Expenditure Fund Budget – Mr. Hart asked the Council to recall when the budget was being adopted for the new fiscal year a very lean CNRE budget was presented, in part because revenues and expenditures of the last fiscal year were uncertain. The thinking was possibly realizing some savings through the spending freeze that was initiated last year and maybe realizing some additional revenues, perhaps using some Rescue Plan monies for CNRE Capital Non-Recurring Expenditure Fund purchases. Mr. Hart reported revenues did come in better than expected and there were significant savings on the expenditure side via the spending freeze that was implemented. There is a recommendation that the Town Council at a September meeting approves a list of CNRE projects, most being equipment-related and being able to fund them without using Rescue Plan monies.

Mr. Privitera gave a brief overview of the CNRE list representing equipment and vehicles felt to be necessary or needed. At the end of the fiscal year, there is a projection of \$2.5M surplus in the CNRE; \$1.5M of that are the funds put in last year with the assumption of putting that money back into the fund balance to maintain at 9.1% fund balance. It does not appear this will need to be put into the fund balance and it can be used for the CNRE. Given there will be some CNRE funds available, it was thought now would be a good time to utilize those funds. The Police are looking for additional vehicles, Fire is looking for a couple of vehicles and equipment, IT is looking for some hardware and town surveillance equipment, the Board of Education is looking for some security cameras and town building improvements from Facilities for buildings that do not meet the threshold of capital expenditure which would be bonded. There is also money on the list for energy conservation. If all of these are approved, there would be roughly \$600,000+. There is an item on the list that will be removed, the backup disaster recovery system hardware. As it turns out, it is not hardware but software and it is not appropriate to charge CNRE.

Mr. Privitera did mention that when the adopted budget was approved for CNRE it included \$350,000 as a general fund contribution of CNRE for the first installment of the police body

cameras. There is a recommendation to use ARPA funds for the body cameras. If that happens, then \$350,000 contribution from the CNRE will not be necessary.

3. Communications

Nothing reported.

4. Staff Reports

Mr. Hart stated Mr. Ledwith and Mr. Morin had a conflict this evening as they are involved in a retreat for all school district leaders.

- A. Town Clerk Report – Mr. Hart reported on behalf of Ms. Lebrot, whose report was attached. The land use activity continues to be very busy. The revenue taken in July was a little over \$300,000, which is an increase of more than \$50,000 from the previous year and about \$82,000 goes to the State. The number of instruments recorded was 1200 as compared to 1100 the last year and over 2,000 phone calls were received for various matters last month. The Town Clerk also reported receipt of another grant from the State Library for \$7500 to help digitize some of the historical records, Council minutes and maps. Research is ongoing for another agenda management software. BoardDocs has been used for many years but there is a desire to replace it with a new platform that is even more user-friendly called CIVIC PLUS. The contract with BoardDocs expires at the end of October. The new council will be trained on CIVIC PLUS, which should be very similar to BoardDocs with some enhanced features.
- B. Human Resources Report – Mr. Hart reported on behalf of Mr. Ledwith, whose report was attached. Mr. Hart briefly went over Mr. Ledwith's report. Mr. Hart stated recruitment activity was up and the vast majority of positions filled were for people who had retired or moved on to other organizations. The bulk of the activity was public safety-related. The Town is self-insured as far as worker's compensation and several liability insurances. There is an umbrella policy in place for catastrophic claims. The Safety National contract was renewed at a competitive rate. Regarding CSEA, which covers six units and the contracts went several years in arrears and expired at the end of last fiscal year. Negotiations are ongoing with CSEA for renewal. Negotiations are also going on with AFSCME, which represents a number of street employees. There has been good progress regarding enrolling employees in the State Partnership Plan, which was a key component of the bargaining agreements with both the Police and CSEA. The transition has gone very well to date. The diversity training and conversations have been going very well, working with the diversity firm identified last year. HR is making good progress on developing a job description for the Equity and Inclusion Officer position, which Council approved the position as part of the new budget.

There is a new performance management process for frontline employees. There are still a few kinks that need to be worked out. Human Resources is working closely with Finance on the MUNIS software upgrade. The payroll portion has been completed. The

next component is the recruitment module, which will be worked on over the coming year.

- C. Information Technology Report – Mr. Hart reported on behalf of Mr. Morin, whose report was attached. Mr. Hart briefly touched on multifactor authentication, a cybersecurity measure aimed at people trying to access the network off-site. The project has gone well and went online August 1. There is over 600 staff utilizing the feature now. The department implemented a new helpdesk system, which is working well. A question had been received on how to expand outdoor wireless capacity in the public spaces; parks, Town Center, Blue Back Square, etc. The department is working on a proof of concept to facilitate that. The department continues to work on digitizing operations, including Human Resources with a digital platform and there will be a pilot program with the police department utilizing a particular online recruitment software. Mr. Hart stated Mr. Morin has completed the recruitment to hire a new information technology manager. The position was approved in last year's budget. Shawn Nagel will start on September 1 in the managerial position. He was an existing IT employee who will be promoted to the position.
- D. Department of Financial Services Report – Mr. Privitera briefly went over his report, which was attached. The projections for the prior fiscal year have been improving. The fiscal year has not closed out yet. The taxpayer will provide a report at the end of the month. The auditors are coming in and it is expected there will be some adjustments made by the auditors but there should be enough surplus to achieve the 9.1% fund balance ratio. The expectation is if there is any surplus over and above that a recommendation will be made to the Town Manager regarding the use of those funds. The last quarter was good in closing. All of the tax categories and current levy of the prior year and interest in liens came in about \$1.9M over budget. The building permits came in very strong at \$235,000 over budget. Conveyance taxes were \$666,000 over budget. Land recording fees were right down the line. On the expenditure side, \$375,000 was pulled from departments at various points during the year due to concerns over balancing out the year but the budgeting was very conservative and when the year finally closes out there will be a significant amount of money from the departments as surplus, even from the Fire Department. Fire, DPW, Leisure, Social and Library came in with significant savings.

There was some uncertainty if reimbursement was going to come for storm Isaias or if it would happen in time to accrue the money for the current fiscal year. As it turns out, the money did accrue in time and another \$600,000+ was picked up in revenue. Mr. Privitera reported on the results of the first tax collection, which was right in line or better than in previous years at 48.24% of the levy and the tax collector, based on that, is projecting finishing out the year in the same area where it currently stands, roughly 99.35%. Mr. Privitera also briefly touched on the implementation of the financial system. This is approached in phases. The first phase was to implement all financials in accounting, payroll for Town and board employees and the self-service portal for Town employees. This has been implemented. Phase two is being finished, which includes the self-service portal, HR portal for employee benefits, open enrollment period. The only area that was

pushed back was the pension payroll, which had to be pushed back due to the recent settlement of all contracts the two-person HR Department was buried in calculating retro-payments and updating all salary tables. It could not be pushed out a couple of months as the end of calendar year reporting for the federal government will be due.

It was decided to push the payroll pension out to April. The last phase will begin upon completion of that, which is working with the Board of Education with their HR accrual, EEO reporting and onboarding as well. The ultimate goal is to get rid of as much paper as possible.

- E. Town Manager's Report – Mr. Hart reported an indoor mask mandate was implemented last week for the Town of West Hartford, in concert with Public Health and Safety officials and consulted with the Executive Policy group to try and limit community spread of COVID-19 with the Delta variant. This mandate is for any indoor area whether private or publically owned where the public has access either by right or invitation and applies to any indoor place with one or more workers. Everyone under the age of 2 is exempt from the order, as well as persons with a physical condition that makes wearing a mask problematic for them and individual homes. Mr. Hart spoke briefly about the heavy rainfall from recent storms. Storms like those help emphasize the importance of the stormwater projects. Mr. Hart spoke briefly about the work on the American Rescue Plan funding. The goal is to have the proposal ready in September. There will be a variety of projects designed to promote sustainability, diversity, equity and inclusion and accessibility. Infrastructure will be another significant category. There will be several projects designed for public health and safety and quality of life. There will be recommendations to utilize some of the money for the non-profit community, specifically the arts and cultural institutions with something similar for the small business community with security cameras as a focus. As part of this, there will be a recommended process to engage the key stakeholder groups.

5. Adjournment

- A. Meeting adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

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