

**Town of Redding  
Board of Finance Regular Meeting Minutes  
Monday, 11/27/2023  
7:30PM via Zoom**

*Filed subject to approval.*

**Present:**

- Ward Mazzucco, Chair
- Karen Gifford, Vice Chair
- Jamie Barickman
- Robert Dean
- Jenifer Wyss
- Roger Van Ausdal

**Also Present:**

- Jim Sanders, Finance Director
- Wes Higgins, Treasurer
- Julia Pemberton, First Selectwoman
- Peg O'Donnell, Selectwoman
- Members of the Public

Chair Mazzucco called the meeting to order at **7:38PM**.

- 1. To Approve the Minutes of the Board of Finance Meeting held on Monday, 10/23/2023.**

**Motion:**

**Vice Chair Gifford made a motion to approve the minutes of the Board of Finance (BOF) Meeting held on Monday, 10/23/2023. Ms. Wyss seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.**

- 2. Public Comment.**

Chair Mazzucco opened the floor to Public Comment. There was no Public Comment.

- 3. Discussion & Possible Action: Election of Chair and Vice Chair.**

**Motion:**

**Mr. Barickman made a motion to nominate Karen Gifford as Chair of the BOF. Vice Chair Gifford declined the nomination, and no one seconded the motion. No vote was taken.**

**Motion:**

**Ms. Wyss made a motion to nominate Ward Mazzucco as Chair of the BOF. Vice Chair Gifford seconded the motion. There were five yes votes (Mazzucco, Gifford, Dean, Wyss, & Van Ausdal) and one no vote (Barickman).**

**Motion:**

**Mr. Barickman made a motion to nominate Karen Gifford as Vice Chair of the BOF. Ms. Wyss seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.**

**4. Treasurer's Report.**

Wes Higgins presented the Treasurer's Report to the BOF.

The Town of Redding's operating cash balance as of 10/31/2023 was \$29,473,835.

The Town of Redding's interest received in October 2023 was \$122,908. The FY 2023-2024 interest received totals \$415,233.

**5. Finance Director's Report.**

Jim Sanders presented the Finance Director's Report to the BOF.

**FY23 Audit Status**

I arranged a status call with Leslie Zoll (CLA audit principal), Sara Scrofani, myself, and our teams on November 21<sup>st</sup>. Below are the key points from this discussion:

- Leslie has received approval from CLA to request copies of selected PKF O'Connor Davies prior year workpapers as offered by Joe Centofanti rather than formally reviewing in person. She will provide Joe with the list of workpapers by November 30<sup>th</sup>. She does not anticipate this alternate process to further impede audit progress.
- Documents related to the BOE's Medical Insurance Fund have not yet been provided to CLA. A review of the documents with Sara and Leslie has been formally scheduled for December 1<sup>st</sup>.
- As a first-year client, CLA's national IT practice is currently performing a virtual review of both the Town and BOE. The review will generate a separate report and does not impact the financial audit.
- The CLA audit team will be back on-site at both the Town and BOE the week of December 18<sup>th</sup> to finish their field work.
- Based on all of the above, Leslie anticipates issuing the Town of Redding Annual Consolidated Financial Report in January.
- When the Office of Policy & Management's Fiscal Health Monitoring System opens on November 30<sup>th</sup>, I will initiate a one-month filing extension request.

Discussion followed concerning the CLA IT review and possible recommendations that may arise from it.

Vice Chair Gifford asked Mr. Sanders about the working papers issue. Mr. Sanders stated that the amount of work done by CLA with the Town and Schools has provided a concrete opening balance.

Ms. Wyss asked Mr. Sanders if any major concerns had been raised by CLA during this audit. Mr. Sanders said there have been no major adjusting entries or concerns raised.

#### **Update – Highway Department Emergency Repair**

At the October meeting, the Board of Finance approved the FY24 budget transfer of \$54,000 from the contingency line to the Highway Department Equipment Maintenance Repair line to cover an unanticipated payloader transmission replacement. In accordance with Conn. General Statute 7-348, the transfer request (over \$20,000) was unanimously approved at Town Meeting on November 20<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Heritage Center Wheelchair Van Purchase**

At the November 20<sup>th</sup> Board of Selectmen meeting, the Board voted unanimously to purchase the wheelchair van that the Heritage Center is currently renting. Below are the key points from the discussion:

- On November 30, 2021, the Town was approved for a vehicle grant covering 100% of the cost of a wheelchair accessible vehicle under the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Program. The Town is required to use the Program’s vendor.
- On February 16, 2022, the Town finalized the associated purchase agreement with Matthews Buses for \$68,344.
- On March 29, 2023, Matthews Buses informed the Town that Ford was unwilling to commit to building any chassis due to the computer chip shortage.
- On July 13, 2023, due to the length of time lapsed, the State Department of Transportation was required to bid a new contract. The cost of the same bus increased to \$119,169. The cost would continue to be fully funded through grant proceeds.
- Ford accepted the Town’s new order on October 27, 2023. Earliest delivery would be mid-2024.
- Based on the Highway Department’s on-going evaluation, the Town-owned wheelchair van was removed from service and replaced with a “temporary” rental van in January 2023.
- The Town pays \$65/day in summer and \$55/day off-season – \$1,705 to \$2,015 a month. This unanticipated expense is primarily paid from a Social Services Trust & Agency Fund.
- The rental agency has proposed selling the 2019 Dodge Grand Caravan wheelchair van with 38,000 miles to the Town for \$35,500.
- With strong support from the Commission on aging, the Board of Selectmen voted to purchase the wheelchair van using primarily a \$23,700 ARPA grant from the CT Department of Aging and Disability Services and savings from the Heritage Center FY24 operating budget.

**FY25 Budget Calendar – as of Nov 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Dec 5-7	Tues-Thurs	Department Head Expense/Revenue review meetings
Dec 14	Thurs	Finalized Dept Exp/Rev budget worksheets due to Finance Dept
Dec 20	Wed (7:30pm)	Board of Finance Long-Range Budget and Capital Planning Meeting
Jan 9	Tues	Superintendent’s Initial Budget Discussion with Redding BOE
Jan 12	Fri (8:30am)	Selectmen’s Budget Workshop
Jan 13	Sat (8:30am)	Budget Workshop SNOW DATE
Feb 26	Mon	2022 Grand List and adjustments reviewed with BOF
Feb 29	Thurs	BOS and BOE proposed budgets due for distribution to the BOF Legal notice for Board of Finance Public Hearing sent for publication
Mar 7	Thurs	Legal notice published
Mar 20	Wed (7:30pm)	Board of Finance Public Hearing on budget requests (Community Center)
Mar 21	Thurs	Public Hearing SNOW DATE
Apr 2	Tues	Release Board of Finance recommended budget & estimated revenues Copy to press
Apr 4	Thurs	Press Publication of Budget
Apr 16	Tues (3:00pm)	Annual Budget Meeting to set Referendum Date
May 7	Tues (8:15pm)	Board of Finance Meeting to approve Mill Rate or revise the budget if required (Community Center)

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Chair Mazzucco stated that if the Board of Selectman (BOS) wanted to use the contingency line item, they could have done so with BOF approval. By utilizing the transfer from the Contingency line item to the Highway Vehicle Maintenance line item, this necessitated Town Meeting approval. Mr. Sanders clarified that transfers from the Contingency line item to other General Fund line items require Town Meeting approval, but spending directly from Contingency only requires BOF approval.

**6. Discussion & Possible Action: Board of Finance 2024 Meeting Calendar.**

Ms. Wyss stated that the Monday, 6/24/2024 & the Monday, 9/23/2024 meetings do not work for her. Discussion followed concerning replacement dates.

**Board of Finance 2024 Approved Calendar of Regular Meetings**

- **Monday, 1/22/2024**
- **Monday, 2/26/2024**
- **Wednesday, 3/20/2024 (Public Hearing – Community Center)**
- **Monday, 3/25/2024**
- **Monday, 4/1/2024 (Budget – if needed)**
- **Monday, 4/8/2024 (Budget – if needed)**
- **Monday, 4/22/2024**
- **Tuesday, 5/7/2024 (to set Tax Rate – Community Center)**

- **Tuesday, 5/28/2024**
- **Thursday, 6/20/2024 at 6:00PM**
- **Monday, 7/22/2024**
- **Monday, 8/26/2024**
- **Monday, 9/30/2024**
- **Monday, 10/28/2024**
- **Monday, 11/25/2024**
- **Monday, 12/23/2024**

**All meetings at 7:30PM Virtual or at the Town Hall Hearing Room (TBD), unless otherwise noted above.**

**7. Discussion: Wednesday, 12/20/2023 Long-Range Budget and Capital Planning Meeting.**

Mr. Sanders presented topics to be discussed at the Wednesday, 12/20/2023 Long-Range Budget and Capital Planning Meeting.

**December 20<sup>th</sup> BOF Long-Range Budget and Capital Planning Meeting**

Board of Finance members have submitted the following topics for discussion at the Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> meeting:

- Uses of excess unassigned fund balance
- Proper level of reserve for claims without falling below minimum unassigned fund balance
- Road reconstruction bonding vs. pay-as-you-go
- Long-term capital projects and Highway Department vehicles and equipment funding sources
- Borrowing strategy in light of apparent high-interest rate environment
- Wire Mill building stabilization costs
- How we ensure Wire Mill property, once improved, remains in Town hands
- Mill rate expectations – comparison with similar towns

Vice Chair Gifford asked Mr. Sanders if anything can be added to this list between today and Wednesday, 12/20/2023. Mr. Sanders said that this list is flexible.

Chair Mazzucco asked the BOF if the Wednesday, 12/20/2023 could be in-person. The BOF agreed to an in-person meeting with a Zoom alternative ready if inclement weather arises. Discussion followed concerning hybrid meetings and Zoom Webinars.

**8. Other Business**

There was no other business discussed.

**9. Public Comment.**

Chair Mazzucco opened the floor to Public Comment.

Peg O'Donnell, Selectwoman, thanked the BOF for their hard work.

**Motion:**

**Vice Chair Gifford made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Van Ausdal seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at **8:17PM.**

*Submitted by,  
Zachary Smith*