

MIDDLEFIELD BOARD OF FINANCE
405 Main Street
Middlefield, Connecticut 06455

Minutes of the December 9, 2021 Regular Meeting

Jim Irish called the regular meeting of the Board of Finance to order at 7:07 pm.

Attendance:

Members

Others

X	Boyle, Kevin		
X	Irish, Jim		
A	Kowal, Melissa		
X	Lowry, David		
X	Skelps, Michael		
X	Wolak, Mary	A	Rusilowicz, Al

A=Absent

X=Present

Bob Yamartino, Chief Tyc and his son were present at tonight's meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

A moment of silence was observed in honor of Ed Bailey, First Selectman.

Approval of the Agenda

Jim Irish explained that Al Rusilowicz is unable to join the meeting tonight, so item 6b will not be necessary.

Mary Wolak made a motion, seconded by Michael Skelps, to approve the agenda, as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

Bob Yamartino noted that the loss suffered by the town today will be a very challenging loss to fill and he wanted to assure the board that he will do everything in his power to be sure there is an orderly transition of authority. He also assured the board that he will be available to answer any questions they may have and thanked everyone for their service. Everyone offered Mr. Yamartino their support. Mr. Yamartino did

clarify that he has no aspirations to be the First Selectman, but he will carry out the duties until an appropriate person is appointed to the position.

Review and Approval of Minutes from the 11/18/21 BOF Special Meeting

Mary Wolak made a motion, seconded by Jim Irish, to approve the minutes of the 11/18/21 BOF Special meeting, as presented. Motion approved unanimously.

Old Business

A. Proclamation

Jim Irish read the following into the record: “Town of Middlefield, Connecticut, Proclamation. Be it known that the citizens of Middlefield and Rockfall hereby recognize and applaud Joel O. Nick for his service to the town; and whereas Joel O. Nick is recognized for his involvement on the Board of Finance for eight years; and whereas Joel O. Nick has been a source of valuable and significant knowledge; and whereas Joel O. Nick has analytical skills and common sense approach to numbers, providing beneficial insight; whereas Joel O. Nick has, in this town government position, provided the citizens of Middlefield and Rockfall the benefit of good governance and service to our community; and whereas Joel O. Nick’s leadership, passion and dedication is an outstanding example of citizenship to our community, our state and our country. And so now, therefore, in recognition of these contributions to our community by Joel Nick, Middlefield Board of Selectmen enact this proclamation December, 2021 and is hereby recorded in the official records of the Town of Middlefield.” Signed Edward Bailey.

B. Review recent Fire Department Building Committee progress - Kevin Boyle

Kevin Boyle explained that the committee hasn’t met since the last meeting. They are still waiting for the contract from Kaestle Boos so that it can then go to counsel for review. Mr. Boyle does believe the committee will meet next Wednesday, if the contract is in. Jim Irish noted that if the Fire Department Building Committee meets next Wednesday, the meeting to present Joel Nick with his recognition will need to be postponed.

Michael Skelps reported that he attended the Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association expo last week and Kaestle Boos had a booth there. He introduced himself and met one of the principals and expressed his concern about being cost effective, yet meeting the town’s needs for an extended period of time.

C. Review results of recent BOE meeting(s) - Jim Irish

Jim Irish reported that the district approved the MOU between the Board of Ed and Durham for the sale/transfer of Korn School. They also approved the Superintendent and Board chairman negotiating the remaining terms and conditions of the sale.

Last night, the Board of Education held their first meeting with the four newly-elected members from Durham. One of the returning members from Durham, Dr. Victor Friedrich, has offered his resignation and Durham will select another member. They held the election of officers last night which took an hour. Lucy Petrella has been elected as Chairman and will serve until May. Lindsay Dahlheimer was also a candidate for Chairman, but was elected Secretary and Jason Stone was elected Treasurer.

There will be another district meeting in a week to discuss their intention to propose a bond referendum in January for an amount of \$7.5 million to cover costs for emergent needs at Lyman School. They were presented with two options, with a prioritized list of emergent activities that totaled \$6.5 million and the other is a full renovation of Lyman at a total of \$13.5 million, but expected state reimbursement could bring that down to \$6.5 to \$7 million. However, state reimbursement is not straightforward due to significantly underutilized capacity in the district buildings. The \$7.5 million would cover either option. Interest costs on \$7.5 million would be about 1 percent of the total budget.

Mr. Irish reviewed that Middlefield voters did say they wanted to have Lyman continue to be open and they would then need to pay to have the school functioning.

The Board of Ed will have a budget retreat on January 22nd and they are trying to have the referendum on the 18th so that the results would be available before the retreat. They will discuss the budget as well as Dr. Schuch's initial draft of his "Reimagining Education" plan at the retreat.

Mr. Irish also reported that Peter Neidhardt has been elected at the most recent town meeting to be on the Board of Education's Finance committee in Mr. Irish's place. Kathy Lowry is still on that committee as well.

Dave Lowry left the meeting at 7:28 pm.

New Business

A. Discussion of Engine 2 Replacement Bids - Chief Peter Tyc

Chief Tyc reviewed that they opened the bids on November 30th, but they had only received two. Three companies declined to bid. One bid was from New England Fire Apparatus in North Haven and one from Gowans-Knight Fire Apparatus in Watertown. Gowans-Knight bid \$712,860, but that did not include the \$11,000 performance bond. New England Fire Apparatus bid \$738,733. Chief Tyc stated that both bids were higher than they anticipated.

Chief Tyc spoke with other fire departments who were shopping for fire trucks (Killingworth, Deep River, Colchester, Simsbury and Stratford) and found similar results. Companies are now charging more, including surcharges which vary month to month. Spartan Chassis builds the chassis of the truck and their price went up 7 percent in November, with an additional 8 percent increase on December 15th. The current bids are good for 30 days and will avoid the December increase. International will also increase their price for trucks 31.3 percent on December 15th. The valve company has also implemented a surcharge of 9 percent. Many other items on the trucks have gone up as well.

Chief Tyc reviewed that the committee has spent over 200 hours working on this truck, evaluating what was needed and what wasn't. They hope to be able to keep this new truck for at least 20 years. The committee was made up of mostly younger members. Chief Tyc noted that the standard body comes with aluminum rims, but the committee chose steel rims. They also chose to eliminate most decorative items, but have included several "needed" options, including safety cameras on each side, scene lights, shelves and wall mounts. Upgrade items for longevity include a stainless steel body and disc brakes,

The performance bond is put up at the time of construction so that the company guarantees to deliver the truck on time and at the price quoted. If they do not meet the time line, the town can call the bond based on

lack of performance. Chief Tyc does have confidence in the company and wouldn't personally use a performance bond. He added that they can also pay in partial payments, for instance pay for the chassis when the chassis arrives (\$375,000). Once that is paid, the town owns the chassis and insures it. There is also a progress payment which would happen when the body is mounted and ready to be painted (\$156,000). Because of these partial payments, Chief Tyc sees no reason for a 100 percent performance bond.

Kevin Boyle asked who issues the contract for the truck and Chief Tyc stated it would be the company's contract. It is not normally reviewed by the town's counsel as it is a standard contract. Mr. Boyle felt that a performance bond would not be necessary if safeguards are included for the town. Chief Tyc felt that those safeguards are in place and has provided copies for the board members.

Jim Irish reviewed that Chief Tyc would like to ask for the performance bond on the items post-chassis delivery, with the amount at risk of roughly half the total. Mr. Irish asked what the risk would be if they were to ask for a performance bond for only post-chassis items and Chief Tyc felt there would be none other than a delay in time with any price increase. Kevin Boyle felt it was better to take the full performance bond and not take any chances. Chief Tyc explained that the performance bond would be issued by an insurance company. Mr. Boyle and Mary Wolak both felt that the contract and bond should be reviewed by counsel and Chief Tyc noted that Al Rusilowicz had looked at it and felt it was acceptable.

Jim Irish had spoken with Al Rusilowicz earlier today and explained that there was a balance going into the current budget year of \$547,000 and they added \$97,000 this year, bringing it to a current balance of \$644,000. They will most likely add the remaining balance needed in the next budget cycle.

Chief Tyc felt that it would take around 400 days to get the truck built, but he will try to shorten that time frame. He then summarized that the general sense is to go with the full performance bond. Kevin Boyle felt that a 1.5 percent performance bond is a very competitive number as they range from 1 to 3 percent. Chief Tyc also asked if everyone felt they should go with a 1/8" stainless steel body which will help with longevity, corrosion and have a 20-year warranty rather than a 10-year warranty. Chief Tyc also hoped to get \$78,000 for the old truck which Mary Wolak felt would make up for any difference. He has had several people already interested in the truck. Everyone agreed to go with the stainless steel body.

Kevin Boyle would like to see the details of the performance and payment bond as well as the payment schedule and Chief Tyc stated that that would be available once they sign the contract.

The board agreed to authorize Chief Tyc to move forward. Chief Tyc also noted that the company has committed to spend almost \$15,000 for new equipment from their fund-raisers.

Chief Tyc also reported that they have received a grant from the Leary Foundation for training supplies of \$8,700. He submitted the grant for the brush truck to FEMA yesterday. The grant reviewer felt that they have a good chance of getting that grant.

Jim Irish made a motion, seconded by Mary Wolak, to endorse the purchase of the Gowans-Knight pumper proposal with performance bond premium. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Discuss acquisition of "Opt-In Feature" that monitors and sends alerts of filings on town taxpayer(s) property

Jim Irish reviewed that they had discussed the opt-in feature about activity on property deeds at the last meeting. The cost of the product is a one-time set-up fee of \$3,300 and \$50/month. Everyone felt it was a great program.

Mary Wolak made a motion, seconded by Michael Skelps, to authorize the acquisition of the license of the Property Alert Software from New Vision Systems Corp. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Other

Jim Irish reported that he asked Al Rusilowicz where they were on the road survey and Nathan Jacobson has completed the culvert portion of the survey and have promised a status update on the roads. Mr. Irish stated that he will convey to them that they would like to have phase 1 incorporated into next year's budget. Mary Wolak added that there are some roads that may be eligible for federal reimbursement.

Jim Irish also reported that three candidates have filed paperwork for the Director of Finance position. One of them will not be interviewed because of the amount of jobs she has had over the last few years. The other two candidates are local. The deadline will be extended until at least December 17th and the opportunity will be posted in a few new locations. Mr. Irish will be on the interview team with Bob Yamartino, Carol Bufithis and Al Rusilowicz.

Adjournment

Mary Wolak made a motion, seconded by Michael Skelps, to adjourn the joint meeting. Motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First