



# Town of Madison, CT

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## Board of Finance

Subject to Approval

Minutes of a regular meeting of the Board of Finance held on August 17, 2022, 8:30 a.m. via Zoom Online Platform

Present: John Picard, Filmore McPherson, Justin Murphy, and Katie Stein

Also present: First Selectwoman Peggy Lyons; Stacy Nobitz, Finance Director; Jaclyn Lehet, Executive Assistant; Sam DeBurra, Emergency Management Director; Scott Cochran, Agency Director, Youth and Family Services; John Iennaco, Director of Public Works; Yelena Pelletier, Milliman

Mr. Picard called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.

### REGULAR SESSION

1. Pledge of Allegiance. The Board of Finance stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Approval of minutes – Regular meeting of July 20, 2022.

On motion made by Mr. Murphy, and seconded by Mr. McPherson, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of July 20, 2022 as submitted.

3. Chairman's comments.

There were no Chairman's comments.

4. Finance member comments/liaison reports.

There were no Finance member comments/liaison report.

5. Report from First Selectman

First Selectwoman Lyons noted that next Monday, at the Board of Selectman's meeting, the Board will approve the call for the referendum for the Charter Revision.

First Selectwoman Lyons also advised that there is the potential for special appropriation requests to be brought before the Board for upcoming CIP projects. There could also be a request for a match for the STEAP grant for the final piece of the Downtown Project.

First Selectwoman Lyons also advised that the Town has hired a new Human Resources Director, Debra Ferrante, who came from the Town of Westport.

6. Citizen Comments

David Buller, 119 Opening Hill Road, noted that he is on the Youth & Family Services Board. He was present to advocate for the Board's support for Item #7 on the agenda to approve funding from ARP for a Family Services Parent Support Counselor. He believes that it is important for the community to provide mental health support for residents in need and this expansion of an existing position, which would provide intervention, and support to parents and families, would provide this service. This is important at this time of high volume of referrals for children, especially those under ten, for behavioral health needs, requiring more support for parents.

**NEW BUSINESS**

7. Discuss and take action to approve a recommendation from the Ad-Hoc ARP Funding Committee to fund Round 7 ARP Funding in an amount not to exceed \$97,411.

A motion was made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Mr. Murphy to approve a recommendation from the Ad-Hoc ARP Funding Committee to fund Round 7 of the American Rescue Plan Grant for an amount not to exceed \$97,411 for initiatives including the Rockland Preserve Native Pollinator Habitat and Youth & Family Services Parent Support Counselor.

In response to a question by Mr. McPherson Mr. Cochran noted that this is not a new position but an expansion of an existing position, which would be scheduled to expire after FY 23-34 at the end of ARPA funding. Before this funding expires, the MYFS would decide if they should pursue a continuance of the position as full time and if so, make the appropriate request as a part of the annual budget planning process. If the position is not requested or approved to remain full time, it would revert back to its previous part time status with an annual budget of 1508 hours. Candidates for this position would be informed of this information.

Mr. Murphy expressed concern that this position should be a budget item rather than funded from the ARPA temporary funds which generally focuses on one-time projects. He is concerned that once a position is funded with non-budgeted funds, it is hard to eliminate it when the funds dry up. First Selectwoman Lyons noted that the Board of Selectmen approved this position to go from part-time to full-time for the 2020-2021 budget but then it was pulled back in March, 2020 due to Covid. Mr. Cochran noted that two important positions were proposed for that year but when there was a need to limit new positions, the priority went to the other position. Now there is a great need for early

intervention, therefore, making this position full-time especially important. He requested that he be given the opportunity to come to a future Board of Finance meeting to provide an overview of their complete program.

Ms. Stein noted that she has read the report provided by Madison Youth & Family Services and she is in support of the position.

After discussion a vote was taken on the motion made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Mr. Murphy, to approve a recommendation from the Ad-Hoc ARP Funding Committee to fund Round 7 of the American Rescue Plan Grant for an amount not to exceed \$97,411 for initiatives including the Rockland Preserve Native Pollinator Habitat and Youth & Family Services Parent Support Counselor. The motion was unanimously approved.

8. Discuss and take action to approve proposed amendments to the Fireman's Pension plan.

A motion was made by Mr. McPherson and seconded by Ms. Stein to approve the proposed amendments to the Fireman's Pension Plan. In brief discussion, the Board members agreed there should be further information and discussion on this item before action is taken so Mr. McPherson and Ms. Stein agreed to withdraw their motion.

Later in the meeting, in response to questions by Board members, Ms. Nobitz noted that the Fireman's Pension Plan was last updated in 1990 so there was agreement that it was an appropriate time to update the numbers. There have been negotiations between the Town and Fire Department to come up with the proposed agreement. The plan will first go to the Board of Selectmen for a vote next week. and then the Board of Finance will be asked to act before the plan goes to Town Meeting.

Yelena Pelletier reviewed the current flat annuity plan which is available at \$3,000 per year for participants 60 years old with 20 years of service and \$5,000 per year at age 65 with 20 years of service. The proposed updated plan would double these amounts to be phased in over a 10 years period with an election for participants with less than 20 years of service.

In response to a question by Mr. Murphy, Mr. McPherson reviewed the history of the Firemen's Pension Plan. He noted that the plan has been in effect for 30 years. The changes proposed at this time are an effort to catch up with inflation. Many towns have an issue with keeping their Fire Departments at a volunteer status and providing the pension is just one way to attract and keep volunteers. Mr. McPherson noted that Guilford as switched to a paid Fire Department. He believes that Madison receives a tremendous service from its volunteers for this benefit.

Ms. Nobitz noted that Ms. Pelletier had reached out to other towns that provide this benefit and the new amount being proposed is comparable. It is very common for volunteer firemen to have a pension benefit.

Mr. McPherson suggested that consideration be given to providing an infusion from Undesignated Fund Balance at a future date if this increase is approved. Ms. Nobitz noted that, to keep the budget stable, about \$1 million would need to be infused but this could be spread out over a number of years.

Mr. Picard noted that the Board will be asked to act on this item at the September meeting so he requested that members reach out to him or Ms. Nobitz with any questions before that meeting.

Mr. McPherson noted that he might be unavailable to attend the September meeting so he requested that any further funding requests be put off until the October meeting if possible.

9. Discuss and take action to approve a Special Appropriation request in an amount up to \$65,000 for the Eversource Electric Vehicle Charging Station grant rebate program.

The Board members agreed there was a need for additional information before they take action to approve a Special Appropriation request in an amount up to \$65,000 for the Eversource Electric Vehicle Charging Station grant rebate program so action was not taken.

10. Discuss and take action to approve a Special Appropriation request of \$56,000 for MACH Series Mobile Column Lifts.

A motion was made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Ms. Stein, to approve the request of the Public Works Department for a special appropriation of \$56,000 from undesignated fund balance to purchase a set of 4 Mach Series Mobile Column Lifts that have the capability to safely raise and hold vehicles up to 72,000 pounds.

Mr. Iennaco noted that the Public Works Department is requesting a special appropriation of \$56,000 to purchase a heavy-duty lift. This piece of equipment would allow the Department to perform maintenance and repairs on some of the larger vehicles like the senior buses. The MACH Series Mobile Column Lift is portable, heavy duty, would allow work on multiple vehicles and is safer. He noted that they had obtained three bids and \$56,000 was the low bid.

In response to a question by Mr. Murphy, Mr. Iennaco noted that a request for this equipment had not been included in the budget request. The Department did not become aware of the benefit of this equipment, especially in the area of safety, until a demonstration was provided.

Ms. Lyons noted that the Board of Selectmen had approved this request when they became aware of the safety benefit.

After discussion, a vote was taken on the motion made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Ms. Stein, to approve the request of the Public Works Department for a special appropriation of \$56,000 from undesignated fund balance to purchase a set of 4 Mach Series Mobile Column Lifts that have the capability to safely raise and hold vehicles up to 72,000 pounds. The motion was unanimously approved.

11. Donations from Neighbor to Neighbor totaling \$5,000 to provide Emergency funding to individuals and families in need of assistance.

On motion made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Mr. Murphy, the Board voted unanimously to approve donations totaling \$5,000 to provide emergency funding to individuals and families in need of assistance.

12. Discuss and take action to approve routine Line Item Transfers for FY 22-23 totaling \$19,132.50; \$4,132.50 pending Board of Selectmen approval.

On motion made by Ms. Stein, and seconded by Mr. McPherson, the Board voted unanimously to approve routine Line Item Transfers for FY 22-23 totaling \$19,132.50, noting that \$4,132.50 is pending Board of Selectmen approval.

13. Review of Financials.

Ms. Nobitz noted that she will send out a revised fund balance, however, noted that there was not much of a change since last month.

14. Citizen comments.

There were no citizen comments.

15. Adjourn.

On motion made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Mr. Murphy, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

Terry Holland-Buckley