



Town of Madison, CT

Board of Finance

Draft

Minutes of a regular meeting of the Board of Finance held on November 17, 2021, 7:00 p.m. via Zoom Online Platform

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

Also present: Stacy Nobitz, Finance Director; Lauren Rhines, Town Services; Peggy Lyons, First Selectwoman; Austin Hall, Director Beach and Recreation Department; Scott Cochran, Director, Youth and Family Services; William Stableford, Academy Community Center Project Working Group

Mr. McPherson called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

1. Pledge of Allegiance. The Board of Finance and members of the audience stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Approval of minutes – October 20, 2021. Mr. McPherson made the following correction on the minutes of October 20, 2021:

Page 4, Item 10, first sentence should read, “Mr. McPherson noted that Ordinance 20-11 requires the Board of Selectmen to set-up a Committee to review the Ordinance after five years.”

There being no further comments on the minutes, Mr. McPherson advised the minutes of the regular meeting of October 20, 2021 to be approved as corrected.

3. Chairman’s comments. Mr. McPherson noted that Deb Milardo has resigned her position as Director of Human Resources, ADA Coordinator. He commented that he is sorry to see her leaving the Town of Madison and he wishes her well in her future endeavors.

Mr. McPherson commented on the special meeting scheduled for December 6th to take up the \$1.3 million special appropriation request to purchase the Jansen Property for the proposed new Jeffrey School contingent on Town Meeting Approval. He noted that he not in favor of this proposal since he believes the \$1.3 million should be included in a

total package for schools to be transparent. He is also concerned that the \$79 million bond issue does not include the funds that would be needed for the water main and bridge across the wetlands which are integral parts of the project.

4. Citizen and Finance member comments. Mr. Murphy commented that he agrees with Mr. McPherson's comments and believes that if this special appropriation is for a school project it should include the entire budget for the school.

Mr. Murphy announced that the Jaycee's Turkey Trot run will again be held this year in-person and he encouraged the community to sign-up and support this event.

Mr. Murphy noted that, since the Board will be voting this evening on a Board Chairman and Vice-Chairman, he wanted to take an opportunity to thank Jean Fitzgerald for her years of service as Chairman of the Board of Finance. During her tenure she has provided a great service to the Town, has demonstrated great leadership for the Board and has been a great asset to Madison

Mr. Picard thanked Ms. Fitzgerald and Mr. Kaminsky who, as very dedicated Board of Finance members, provided a great deal of time and effort on behalf of the Town during their tenure.

There were no citizen member comments.

NEW BUSINESS

5. Discuss and take action to approve naming a Chair and Vice Chair On motion made by Ms. Stein, and seconded by Mr. McPherson, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the nomination of John Picard as Chairman of the Board of Finance.

On motion made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Mr. Murphy, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the nomination of Jean Fitzgerald as Vice-Chairman of the Board of Finance.

6. Receive Academy School Community Center proposal presentation from First Selectwoman Peggy Lyons. First Selectwoman Lyons reviewed the Academy Community Center Proposal document dated November 17, 2021. She believes that this presentation demonstrates that the Community Center project is a great opportunity for Madison.

First Selectwoman Lyons reviewed the history of the project which consists of 17 years of proposals, Committees but no action. One of the latest pieces of the project included a public poll in 2018 which indicated that there is substantial community support for this project. In 2019 a Committee was put together to study the project and develop a proposal which was presented to the Board of Selectmen in July, 2019. The project was

included in the Capital Improvement Program for the 2020 bonding referendum but then was delayed due concerns about large capital projects because of the pandemic. During this same period a consultant was engaged to complete a facilities audit. In July, 2021 the First Selectwoman identified the next steps necessary to prepare the Academy School Community Center project for referendum. A working group was established to identify space needed for Town Departments including space for Beach and Recreation, Youth and Family Services and community uses including a gymnasium and theatre. In addition to updating the space needs, the group also updated the budget analysis to include additional costs for construction and proposed municipal uses.

First Selectwoman Lyons reviewed the proposed building floor plan and site design.

Mr. Hall reviewed the proposed uses for Beach and Recreation including additional space for programming, a full-size basketball court, a 130-seat theatre, meeting spaces, a commercial kitchen for use by local vendors and for cooking classes and spaces for youth. The Beach and Recreation Department is conducting a survey regarding programming to obtain additional public input.

Mr. Cochran reviewed the proposed uses for Youth and Family Services including space for social services, space for youth development and prevention programs and office space. Being in close proximity with Beach and Recreation would allow them to collaborate programming with this Department. It would also be beneficial for their programs to be centralized in one building in the downtown area. Mr. Cochran also noted that moving programs to Academy School would free up their current space for other municipal uses.

First Selectwoman Lyons identified the next steps which include:

- Extensive interviews with community organizations to identify needs
- Finalization of identifying Beach and Recreation and Youth and Family Services needs
- Development of room use policy and pricing system
- Determine future uses for current Youth and Family Services space
- Development of a permanent Facilities Committee to make recommendations
- Review and develop revenue and operation costs including additional staffing needs
- Look into use of more energy efficient mechanicals and possible grants available for funding

First Selectwoman reviewed the proposed impact on homeowners for a \$15 million project noting that the average impact would be \$27.00 per \$100,000 of value over a period of 22 years. The timeline for a referendum is February, 2022.

First Selectwoman Lyons reviewed the benefits of the proposed project including:

- Access to additional space
- A 130-seat theatre
- A gymnasium
- Establishment of a cultural corridor from the Library to the Academy Community Center
- Development of a downtown hub
- Benefits all age groups, the public sector and the private sector
- Economic development benefits

In response to a question by Mr. McPherson, Mr. Cochran noted that, even though the Youth and Family Services space would be on two different floors, it would be beneficial to have all of the services under the same building.

In response to a question by Mr. Murphy, Mr. Cochran noted that the design will allow for privacy for individuals and because there will be multiple programs and activities, it will not be obvious if someone is coming to the offices for counseling.

Ms. Stein commented that she likes the idea of Beach and Recreation and Youth and Family Services being located in the same building. She questioned if this project could be funded with a portion of the Federal Infrastructure money coming to Madison? First Selectwoman Lyons noted that it might be possible for pieces of the project like the newer technology mechanical equipment to be eligible for this funding. They will be looking at other funding options and opportunities.

In response to a question by Mr. Murphy, First Selectwoman Lyons noted that there will be two more public information sessions in December and one in January.

Mr. Picard commented that he supports the idea of a permanent Building Committee and believes it would be immensely helpful for this and other future building projects.

7. Discuss review process of Ordinance 20-11 – Senior Tax Freeze. Mr. McPherson noted that a meeting with the Tax Assessor, Tax Collector, Ms. Nobitz and Mr. Hall was held last week to begin discussions on the Senior Tax Freeze program. The Ordinance specifies that there should be 5 people on the Review Committee and he is recommending that he and Mr. Picard be members representing the Board of Finance, that Mr. Hall be appointed and that two additional representatives from the Town be appointed. There is agreement that the ordinance as written is complicated and involves substantial paperwork. The Committee will review the process but it is unlikely they will have a

recommendation in place in time for the February deadline for next year's application but there should be changes in place for the following year.

8. Review the 2022-2023 Budget Workshop Calendar. It was noted that a meeting was scheduled for February 21st and this is a holiday so this date should be changed.
9. Review the 2022 Meeting Schedule. Members were provided with the draft 2022 Meeting Schedule for review and action at the December meeting.
10. Review the 2021-2023 Board Liaison assignments. Mr. Picard requested that members contact him to indicate their interest in serving as liaison on the various Boards and Commissions. First Selectwoman Lyons requested that members also indicate interest in serving on the American Rescue Fund Committee. She noted that they hoped to appoint members to this Committee as soon as possible. Members agreed to act on the appointment to this Committee at the regular meeting scheduled for December 15th but will hold a special meeting on December 6th if the appointment needs to be done sooner.
11. Discuss and take action to appoint two Board members to the CIP Committee. . On motion made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Ms. Breckheimer, the Board voted unanimously to appoint Justin Murphy and Katie Stein as the Board of Finance representatives to the CIP Committee.
12. Discuss and take action to appoint one public member to the CIP Committee. Members agreed to reach out to find an appropriate individual to appoint as a public member to the CIP Committee.
13. Review of Financials. Ms. Nobitz noted that there was nothing of special note on the revenue and expenses reports. She noted that there will be a salary transfer request at the next meeting.
14. Liaison Reports and Report from First Selectman. First Selectwoman Lyons noted that the Board of Selectmen will be voting on the \$1.3 million special appropriation for the acquisition of the Jansen property on Monday. She believes that the process is transparent and is appropriate. She noted that the Town has a robust undesignated fund balance which is approximately \$8 million over what is required so it would be more appropriate to use this as a cash purchase rather than bond additional funds. This purchase will go to Town Meeting for a public vote at the end of December.

First Selectwoman Lyons noted that the Board of Selectmen will be starting the budget process soon. She also advised that a number of projects have been pulled out of the CIP

list to consider for funding with American Rescue Funds. She also noted that they are considering a referendum on the sale of the Island Avenue School with the proceeds to go back into schools.

Mr. McPherson noted that the Library held a mini-golf event and raised approximately \$8,000. They will also be holding a “Toast To The Town” event.

Mr. McPherson noted that the Pension Board met this morning and the Pension accounts are in good condition. They have not received the actuary report for last year so do not yet have funding information for the upcoming year.

Mr. McPherson advised that the Fire Department will be requesting an update on their pension, which was last updated in 1990. They will be bringing a couple different options to the Board of Finance for consideration but both will have a cost associated with them.

15. Citizen comments. Gus Horvath congratulated Katie Stein and Cindy Breckheimer on their election to the Board of Finance.

Mr. Horvath suggested that the Town consider the demographics when considering the Academy School Community Center project. He noted that the Town has lost population between 2010 and 2020 and there is now a larger older population. He suggested that programs and activities, like those that could be provided in the Community Center, might be helpful in attracting younger people to live in Madison. Mr. Horvath also volunteered to serve as the Board of Finance public member to the CIP.

16. Adjourn. Mr. Picard noted that he is looking forward to serving the Town as Chairman of the Board of Finance.

On motion made by Ms. Stein, and seconded by Mr. McPherson, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Terry Holland-Buckley
Clerk