



# Town of Madison, CT

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## Board of Finance

Draft

Minutes of a special meeting of the Board of Finance held on August 26, 2020, 1:00 p.m. via teleconference - Zoom

Present: Jean Fitzgerald, Fillmore McPherson, Ken Kaminsky, Justin Murphy;  
John Picard

Also present: Stacy Nobitz, Finance Director; John Ienacco, Director of Public Works; Jack Drumm, Chief of Police; Scott Cochran, Agency Director, Youth and Family Services; Samuel DeBurra, Fire Marshal; Peggy Lyons, First Selectwoman; Lauren Rhines, Town Services Coordinator/Risk Manager;

Ms. Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 1:00 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 – June 17, 2020, regular meeting and August 17, 2020, special meeting. On motion made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Mr. Murphy, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of June 17, 2020 as corrected.

Correction: Page 6, Item 14a, second paragraph should read, “Mr. McPherson noted that the Pension Committee is recommending that the earnings projections be lowered, perhaps in two stages, from 7% to 6 3/4%.”.

Mr. McPherson, Mr. Kaminsky and Mr. Murphy voted in favor of the motion and Ms. Fitzgerald and Mr. Picard abstained.

On motion made by Mr. Kaminsky, and seconded by Mr. Murphy, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the special meeting of August 17, 2020 as submitted.

3. Chairman’s comments. There were no Chairman’s comments.

4. Citizen and Finance member comments. Mr. McPherson commented that a number of years ago the Board of Finance had a practice in place where a special appropriation was brought to a Board of Finance meeting at one meeting for presentation and initial discussion and then this request was placed on the agenda for action at the following meeting. This process could be waived in the event of an emergency situation. He does not believe the Board has been following this policy lately and he suggested that the Board begin this process again.

Ms. Fitzgerald commented that she would not object to following the two meeting policy for special appropriations. In response to a question by Mr. Kaminsky, Ms. Nobitz agreed to research if there is a dollar amount that should be utilized to trigger this policy and the Board will discuss this item further at the next meeting.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

5. Discuss and take action to approve a Special Appropriation request from the Public Works Department in the amount of \$24,481.98 to replace a 2008 Ford Escape Hybrid SUV. A motion was made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Mr. Kaminsky to approve the request of the Director of Public Works for a special appropriation of \$24,482.00 from Contingency to purchase a new Ford Escape to replace the 2008 Ford Escape Hybrid SUV.

Mr. Ienacco noted that the 2008 vehicle recently had engine failure and the mechanic determined the engine would need to be replaced. Since this vehicle is 12 years old and has 145,000 miles on the odometer, it is not feasible to repair. They obtained a price for a new Ford Escape for \$24,481.98 from Gengras Ford.

In response to a question by Mr. Murphy, Mr. Ienacco noted that a new vehicle is not currently included in the CIP now since a recommendation was made to conduct an evaluation of the full fleet by an outside consultant. On the original list this vehicle was up for replacement next in line after the other vehicle which was recently replaced. Ms. Nobitz noted that the replacement plan has been paused for the completion of the Vehicle Study.

In response to a question by Ms. Fitzgerald, Mr. Ienacco noted that this vehicle is assigned to the Director of Health, who uses his vehicle on a daily basis, especially now with the issues related to the pandemic. He is authorized to commute from home to work in this vehicle. Other vehicles in the fleet are not assigned to a specific individual but are used as needed by staff during the work day. He does not believe there is any abuse by staff who utilize these vehicles. Ms. Fitzgerald requested that the policy regarding when a vehicle can be used for commuting purposes be clarified. Selectwoman Lyons noted that the mileage policy would be included in the general study to be conducted on Town policies.

In response to a question by Mr. Kaminsky, Mr. Ienacco noted that the 2008 vehicle was recently auctioned with other vehicles that were being replaced.

In response to a question by Mr. Murphy, Ms. Ienacco noted that, during the approximately 3 – 4 week period between now and when the 2008 vehicle broke down, the Director of Health has been sharing the pool cars with other staff members. First Selectwoman Lyons commented that the Director of Health is experiencing a significant increase in demand for his services right now, so she believes it is necessary for him to have access to an assigned vehicle.

After discussion, the Board voted unanimously to approve the motion made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Mr. Kaminsky to approve the request of the Director of Public Works for a special appropriation of \$24,482.00 from Contingency to purchase a new Ford Escape to replace their 2008 Ford Escape Hybrid SUV.

6. Discuss and take action to approve a donation from Neighbor-2-Neighbor in the amount of \$20,000 to be used for the Covid Relief Fund. A motion was made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Mr. Murphy, to approve receipt of a donation from Neighbor-2-Neighbor in the amount of \$20,000 to be used for the Covid Relief Fund.

Mr. Cochran noted that, with this second installment of \$20,000, Neighbor-2-Neighbor will have provided a total of \$50,000 to be able to distribute up to \$500 in cash payments for individuals and families in need. A total of \$37,100 has been distributed to date. Guidelines have been developed to go with the application for the applicant to provide information on how the pandemic has impacted them and how they intend to use the funds to be provided. Most people need the funds for food or clothing for children. To date they have provided funds for 87 applications from 51 different households. Individuals and families can re-apply for assistance after 30 days. Neighbor-2-Neighbor has been very instrumental and generous in providing the funds needed to keep this program going.

After discussion a vote was taken on the motion made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Mr. Murphy, to approve receipt of a donation from Neighbor-2-Neighbor in the amount of \$20,000 to be used for the Covid Relief Fund. The motion was unanimously approved.

7. Discuss and take action to approve Line Item Transfers totaling \$22,836.00. On motion made by Mr. Murphy, and seconded by Mr. McPherson, the Board voted unanimously to approve Line Item Transfers totaling \$22,836.00.

Ms. Nobitz noted that these transfers focused on balancing FY 2019-20.

8. Review CIP Committee process for FY 2021-2022. Ms. Nobitz noted that they have been receiving information from the Departments and once all of the requests are received they will need a week for the Finance Department to put the list together. This information will then be shared with the Board of Selectmen followed by the CIP.

9. Review Financials. Mr. McPherson noted that the reports show that Tax Collections are behind last year primarily due to the State allowing a three month delay for paying local property taxes. Ms. Nobitz noted that, while the collections are behind last year, they are better than anticipated they would be because of the extension, and she does not see a concern. Ms. Fitzgerald requested that follow-up on tax collections be included as an agenda item for future meetings so this item can be monitored.

10. Liaison Reports and Report from First Selectman. Mr. Murphy noted that Senior Services staff has been working hard to help seniors with their needs. The community should be proud of the spirit of collaboration of all Town staff during this difficult time.

Mr. Kaminsky noted that the Police Chief and his Department have been working very hard to make sure that important services are available while remaining within the budget. .

First Selectwoman Lyons noted that she plans to provide a quarterly report on the budget as efforts are made to re-open so we can stay ahead of any financial issues that could develop. They are hopeful that some relief funding will be forthcoming. She also noted that they expect to be requesting a special appropriation to cover additional costs related to the recent storm and will also be applying for relief funds for this natural disaster. The Finance Office is staying on top of tracking costs related to the pandemic and storm.

First Selectwoman Lyons noted that several studies will be starting soon including the review of Youth and Family Services Programs and the Vehicle Study. They are planning on holding back on the full Public Safety Review which included the Fire Department, Police Department and Ambulance Service since the full study is now seen as problematic. The focus will instead be on an Ambulance Study that will be less complex and allow for quicker action on this item with the full Public Safety Review Study to move forward at a later date.

Mr. Kaminsky commented that he prefers the broader approach with a more market based study. This approach has been used in other towns and has provided valuable data to use for comparison, for education, and to look at shared resources to reduce costs without impacting the level of service for the community. Mr. Kaminsky noted that a recommendation has already been made to the Board of Selectmen so it is unfortunate to now change this recommendation after the fact.

Ms. Fitzgerald noted that the Ambulance Service cannot service without the Town's financial support and a study is needed to provide the number needed for the budget. An accurate number would be ne available in time if we have to wait for the broader full Public Safety Review Study. She believes that the continuation of a Madison Ambulance Service will provided the best quality service for our residents.

First Selectwoman Lyons noted that budget information for the Ambulance Service needs to be known for the budget process and this part of the study will need to be separate to have this number in time. It is difficult to find a company to do the broader study. She suggested that they consider a phased-in approach with the Ambulance portion completed first and in time for the budget.

Mr. DeBurra commented that this study will impact multiple agencies so they should all participate in the process. First Selectwoman Lyons agreed the affected agencies should be involved in the process including the RFP process. She also recommended that a member of the Board of Finance be involved in the Committee also.

In response to a question by Ms. Fitzgerald regarding Board of Education costs related to the pandemic, Ms. Nobitz noted that they have identified a total of \$723,000 in pandemic related costs. A total of \$77,000 in reimbursement has been received so far and notification has been received of an additional \$646,000 coming in reimbursement.

11. Citizen comments. There were no citizen comments

12. Adjourn. On motion made by Mr. Murphy, and seconded by Mr. McPherson, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 1:55 p.m.

Terry Holland-Buckley  
Clerk