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*****FINAL*****
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, September 1, 2020
7:30 pm

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Finance was held virtually on Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. in Fairfield, Connecticut.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Brown-Chair, Lori Charlton, Christopher DeWitt-Vice Chair, Edward Bateson, Mary LeClerc-Secretary, Sheila Marmion, John Mitola, Jack Testani, James Walsh

ALSO PRESENT: Interim CFO Caitlin Bosse, Joseph Centofanti of PKF O'Connor Davies, LLC

1. Call to Order – Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Brown led the pledge of allegiance.

Mr. Brown reminded the public that there will be no live public comment. He said the public is encouraged to email comments including name and home address to bof@fairfieldct.org.

3. To Review and Discuss an Update on the Town of Fairfield, CT Public Works Department Review – Report on the Results of the Procedures Performed

Mr. Brown gave an update on the July meeting where BOF members reviewed recommendations and priorities in regards to the DPW report. He said the administration has put together a DPW Audit working group which has been meeting every Thursday; it has had six meetings. Mr. Brown said that the BOF, per the Town Charter, will vote on the final approval of that policy. He said that Ms. LeClerc had agreed to be liaison to this committee; Mr. DeWitt agreed to chair the BOF purchasing subcommittee and Ms. Charlton will work with Mr. DeWitt. Mr. Brown said these three members will all provide updates to the full board throughout the fall.

Ms. Marmion asked if the working group has posted minutes. Ms. LeClerc said she doesn't believe there are minutes because it's an internal town meeting. Ms. LeClerc asked Mr. Bremer if there is anything he can share in writing from the meeting or if there is just a verbal update. Mr. Bremer said it is an oral update. He said there are 15 people in the group and there is nothing in writing yet, but it seems to be working well. Ms. Marmion asked if the purchasing subcommittee has minutes. Mr. DeWitt said the subcommittee has not officially met. He said he thinks it is more of a review between himself and Ms. Charlton.

Mr. Mitola asked about the review process. Mr. Brown said the BOF will review the report and then vote on it. Mr. Brown said Mr. DeWitt and Ms. Charlton are being asked to be brought in sooner to the process rather than later. Mr. Mitola asked if there is a lawyer on the subcommittee. Mr. Brown said no and agreed it would be a good idea to have Town Attorney Baldwin help with the review.

Ms. Charlton reviewed the process that Mr. Centofanti took members through at the audit subcommittee meeting in July. Mr. Centofanti said he will be expanding the scope of the DPW audit to look at more items when he and his staff are doing their expenditure testing.

Mr. Bremer read the audit report and identified a number of issues that need to be addressed in the purchasing policy which he said needs an update. Mr. Bremer said he collected seven to eight other Town's purchasing policies and picked a few to meld together. He said these policies range from 1,215 pages to 50-60 pages and he said he thinks Fairfield will be in the middle of that number. Mr. Bremer said two parallel tracks are needed - a purchasing policy and then a response to all recommendations.

Mr. Bremer said the working group is comprised of staff from various departments. He said this group can get a draft purchasing policy for review by September 17, 2020. Mr. Bremer said he will send it to Mr. DeWitt, Ms. Charlton and the BOF for comments and will also open it up to other department heads to comment on. Mr. Bremer said the draft policy will be then be presented to the BOF by the end of September/early October to discuss and make any final changes. He said the BOF has the ultimate decision making on this policy.

Mr. Bremer said there are a number of recommendations that have nothing to do with the purchasing policy. He said the plan will have recommendation, action, suggested response and the Town's response. Mr. Bremer said he wants to be as specific as possible in responses and stated the BOF can review the draft page by page. He said the whole audit wasn't just focused on DPW, but also included finance and other departments and he said responses have to be broader. Mr. Bremer said there should be a schedule for different audits and follow up so the Town knows whether the new policies are working or not and it can make changes if necessary. He mentioned how flow charts can be helpful.

Ms. Marmion asked if the working group has priority ratings and if there is anything it sees that should be done now. Mr. Bremer replied that those critical items have already been put into place and all of the Finance Department's recommendations have been accomplished. Ms. Marmion requested through Chairman Brown to document in writing what has already been done. Mr. Bremer said he will put something together for the meeting on the 15th. Ms. LeClerc said she believes many of the recommendations have been implemented. She said Finance has trained DPW in the Munis reporting system. Mr. Bremer said high priority items have been addressed.

Mr. Walsh requested the three town purchasing policies for Greenwich, Westport and West Hartford be provided to the working group to help it understand how these were developed, what these communities chose and what they didn't include. Mr. Bremer said he will provide this information online. Mr. Walsh asked if any private sector policies were looked at. Mr. Bremer replied no, but said the working group had looked at the University of Arizona as recommended by Mr. Centofanti.

4. To hear, consider and approve the meeting minutes of July 7, 2020

Mr. DeWitt motioned to approve the July 7, 2020 meeting minutes. Mr. Testani seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 9-0.

5. To Hear, Consider and Act Upon Any Communications

Ms. Bosse discussed the financial close for the year. She said the Finance Department is spending time on possible FEMA reimbursement from the storm and will provide an update on the 15th.

Mr. Walsh asked where the Town stands with taxpayers who decided to defer. He also asked what the percentage comparisons are. Ms. Bosse responded that the Town is still in the collection phase and everyone chose deferment. She said many taxpayers have not paid because the due date isn't until October 1st. Ms. Bosse said she will present the numbers at the quarterly meeting in September.

Mr. Brown said FairTV has a recording conflict with the BOF September 29, 2020 meeting due to the RTM meeting so he suggested moving the BOF Capital Planning Workshop to Thursday, October 1, 2020. The Board unanimously agreed.

Mr. Brown requested a sense of the body about meeting in person. He said the room would be set up for members to socially distant and there is a 25 maximum capacity in the room.

Mr. Walsh said the Board should meet in person and it would allow the public to attend; he said students are going to school. He said he feels it's important for the public and taxpayers. Mr. Testani agreed. Mr. DeWitt said he also agreed especially since students are going back to school; he said it's time for the Board to show its presence to the taxpayers and constituents. He said he is in favor to do this asap. Mr. Bateson agreed saying it's time to meet in public. He said he misses the public presence and interaction that is a very important part of these meetings. Ms. Marmion said she supports meeting in person and agreed about the public input. Ms. Charlton said she agreed members should wear masks if they meet in person, but to wear one in a long meeting is not pleasant and to take it off spreads the virus. She said she is willing to go along with this, but noted members of the administration and FairTV will add to the number of people meeting in person and said there has to be someone to deal with the flow of all of these people.

Mr. Brown said there is also a way to call in to a meeting. Mr. Mitola said that's an option and wants, all board members to feel comfortable. Mr. Brown said he will follow up with Ms. Carpenter and the BOE to make sure the room at the BOE is set up properly. He said he has been talking with the Town Attorney and will also discuss meeting in person with FairTV. He said it's time to meet in public. and will get back to the Board by next week.

6. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Testani motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m. Ms. Charlton seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 9-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila Tesei
Recording Secretary