

**NORFOLK BOARD OF FINANCE
MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 9, 2021 MEETING**

Members present were: M. Sconyers, G. Allyn, G. Mudge, N. Ritson and J. Tarrant.

Member absent: David Torrey.

Alternate members present were: S. Anderson, L. Battis and A. Bennett.

Alternate member absent: None.

Amy Bennett was appointed to fill in for David Torrey. Leslie Battis was appointed to fill in for Graham Allyn until he joined the meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by M. Sconyers.

Minutes of the January 12, 2021 meeting were approved on a motion by J. Tarrant second by G. Mudge and unanimously approved.

Under correspondence, the Tax Collector's request to issue refunds was approved on a Motion by N. Ritson, second by L. Battis and unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report: The Town at the moment seems to be in good shape per M. Sconyers.

Selectman's Report: The Selectmen met with Chairman Sconyers and reviewed a preliminary budget. Early last year, the Town negotiated with Public Works agreeing to a 2.5% increase; the Town Hall employees should also get a 2.5% increase, which amounts to an increase of \$16,118 for non-contracted employees and \$10,340 for contracted Public Works employees.

A large portion of the budget where increases are noted is with the Public Works Department for employee salaries and increases, purchase services, tree removal, etc. which has cost \$20,000 so far this year, road materials increased, unimproved roads was kept the same.

The Selectmen increased equipment maintenance line by \$23,000 as there have been a number of issues, trucks were not maintained well in years past, there are not a lot of miles on them, trying to keep them on the roads and not have to buy new ones. Other large increase is with MIRA, which is the processor of municipal solid waste. The rates are \$92 per ton and are increasing to \$102 per ton. Other item to keep in mind is that MIRA might not exist four (4) years from now, which is a huge issue for all the towns in this area.

The First Selectman has requested and is awaiting rates from Paine's, which hauls waste and recycling.

There is work needed on the building at the transfer station, Public Works is able to make the necessary repairs. An increase is set forth in the budget in the amount of \$32,000.

There are road projects that need to be done. North Colebrook Road is in terrible condition. The First Selectmen is working out a plan with the Public Works department for tree trimming and grading. There is also an estimate of \$212,000 to pave from Benedict Pond to the Colebrook line. Last year the Town worked on Grantville Road, which is similar in length to North Colebrook Road.

The Selectmen made a plan two (2) years ago that going forward anything paved will be chip sealed within two (2) years to prevent rapid deterioration. The plan this year is to chip seal Grantville and Loon Meadow and Doolittle Road, as well as Ashpohtag Triangle to Green Road, lower Ashpohtag from Route 44 to Route 272, including the section where the rail trail goes across, which is pretty bumpy and needs more work.

There have been a lot of breakdowns of three (3) trucks within the past 1.5 weeks, including brakes, electrical, and water pump.

Norfolk will have fewer students going to Reg. 7 next year.

Under Tobey Pond, the First Selectmen is trying to get a handle on establishing shifts for lifeguards to promote fairness among staff and avoid having too much overlap.

If everything were to stay the same, which it will not, the Selectmen's budget results in a 27.51 mill rate, which represents a 6% increase.

There are three (3) projects that the Selectmen hope to get started on. One is in progress: River Street Bridge, had put aside \$280,000 and have gotten \$96,000 back so far; all of the engineering work will be completed by summer. The first phase will be \$770,000; the second will be \$848,000. The First Selectmen is also waiting for the go ahead from the DOT for the small bridge program for Mountain Road bridge, which had to be requoted as a year has passed. There was a price increase of 6%. Black & Warner is still eligible to do the work at \$658,000. The Town gets 50% back and would do the work this summer if the Town gets the go ahead.

Regarding the Botelle School oil tank, after a lot of calls and headaches with the Department of School Construction, the First Selectmen submitted everything and is waiting to hear back. The cost is \$160,000 and the Town only gets 33% back.

The First Selectmen spoke to National Iron Bank about short term borrowing, basically a line of credit while the Town does all this work, the Town would be responsible for paying interest.

Next year's budget allocates \$770,000 for the River Street bridge; \$660,000 for Mountain Road and \$160,000 for the Botelle oil tank.

If the Town paid interest, it might work to the Town's favor. There is currently long-term debt for windows and doors goes out to the 2026-2027 budget; next year will be \$150,000, then down to \$137,000. The Town has three (3) more years to pay on a fire truck and two (2) Town trucks. Next year will be the last payment on the excavator that was purchased.

Going forward, by the time all of these things are bundled together and bonded, the Town would be at \$105,000 that it does not have to pay, which would free up some money that way.

Some good news: the pension committee has offered 26 defined benefit participants a lump sum payout. About 10 out of 12 who have responded are taking the lump sum payout. The participants have until the middle of March to decide if they will stay in the plan or take the lump sum payout or continue with their monthly allotment. There is enough money in that plan right now. The Selectmen are meeting with the Pension Committee on March 24th and will have a good idea of what the Town will have to put in as a Town, currently the Town puts in \$97,000, and anticipates it will be much less.

M. Sconyers asked the First Selectmen for a list of what is coming down the pike:

The bridge on the other end of Mountain Road will probably cost another \$600,000. Another big item is construction of a new firehouse. The First Selectman has requested a list of qualifications to discuss plans with an architect to get preliminary designs and budgetary numbers. Also, redoing Maple Ave, the First Selectman has spoken to a couple of engineering companies. The project was started in 2008 and just got shelved; did some preliminary engineering work, enough to give an idea of what it will cost, which is \$50,000 to finish the engineering work. The total package to do over Maple Avenue with drainage, resurfacing, etc. is two million, it is a project for down the road, hopeful to use some engineering funds to get that out to quote. The Selectmen are working on getting quotes for a plow truck. The First Selectman is not enamored with Freightliner and believes possibly a smaller truck would be the way to go. He is in the preliminary stages of getting a quote. The roof at Botelle School is estimated at \$1.2 million, an engineer was up on the roof to review. Garland Engineering firm would do the engineering work and would work with the town to go out and get quotes. Another item the Town would like to purchase is a roller, had planned to last year with the proceeds of selling the grader, but there was an issue with the body on one of the trucks. The Town desperately needs a roller. The Town has a lot of material from milling and crushing of asphalt from Route 44; a 36-inch roller that is 3 tons is estimated at \$30,000.

The Selectmen want to use some of the Locip funds for some of the engineering work and possibly for the roller and also to do the lighting over around the Town Hall. The First Selectman is working with a lighting consultant who is also working on plans for the library, to have a coordinated lighting system using the same lights at the library, down the path, and is hoping Norfolk Foundation will work on the path to provide lighting.

The BOE expects to send a draft budget within a week.

The First Selectman stated two big items will be when he hears from the State about the Mountain Road bridge and the status of the Town's application regarding the oil tank at Botelle School.

Members of the Board of Finance questioned the First Selectmen regarding obtaining reimbursement through the State for the roof replacement at Botelle School. The First Selectmen expressed concern that seeking such reimbursement could ultimately cost the Town a significant amount of additional money due to conditions imposed by the State.

There was nothing under 2/3 vote.

There was nothing under Public Comment.

The Board received the broadband study report from N. Ritson. M Sconyers does not intend to take up the report during tonight's meeting, the board is just receiving the report. M. Sconyers wants to check in within the week to have a meeting related solely to broadband and asks that everyone read the report and put together questions. A. Bennett asked if there would be room for Public Comment at the Special Meeting; M. Sconyers replied there is no requirement that there be Public Comment. M. Sconyers believes it will go much beyond one more meeting and is hoping to get specific questions addressed that the board has; he is sure there will be another time to have a broader meeting. It is a step in the process. M. Sconyers wants to give the broadband study report the attention it deserves.

On Motion of J. Torrant, second by G. Allyn and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer M. Ryan, Secretary

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February 8, 2021

Board of Finance
Norfolk, CT 06058

The following is a list of refunds.

The below refunds are for an adjustment on motor vehicle taxes, which were paid.

2019-03-0051291	MOY, Edward	refund- \$438.80
2019-03-0051113	LUCIANO, Kim	refund- \$78.38
2019-03-0050517	Daimler Trust	refund- \$515.49

Respectfully,



Sarah Bruso, CCMC
Tax Collector

Approved by the
Board of Finance on
Feb 9, 2021.
James Scott