

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

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

Member absent: None.

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 until he joined the meeting.

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

Minutes of the February 9, 2021 meeting and February 24, 2021 special meeting were approved on a motion by N. Ritson second by J. Tarrant and unanimously approved.

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

The Selectman reported the Town is doing quite well, with Spring finally here. The Town will save a little money in winter maintenance, although he reminded the Board of a number of repairs. The First Selectman sent preliminary information for budget review and invites anyone who has questions to please contact him and he will answer the questions.

M. Sconyers talked to M. Riiska earlier in the day, the Board will take up the Selectmen's Budget in April.

M. Sconyers reported that collection of taxes is spot on.

Treasurer's Report: M. Sconyers relayed that the report looks good.

Board of Education presented their budget as approved on February 16th. Mr. Deshazo stated that this time last year the BOE was in an unprecedented situation. Mr. Deshazo is happy to report Botelle has gone well beyond expectations as it has been safely open full-time, approximately 56% of CT schools are able to be open full-time, 6% are fully online. Being in person makes a huge difference for the students' well-being. The BOE expected to start the school year at between 68-72 students. However, 84 students started the school year at Botelle, currently down to 75, which still represents a significant increase. The BOE was able to accommodate a few students who wanted to learn online only, however all students are now in person.

The new math program has been adopted; and the math interventionist has made the transition smooth. The initial school closure left noticeable gaps in reading and math. Testing and assessments are difficult. However, testing such as the Star assessment showed excellent growth. The social-emotional growth program adopted by Region 7 has shown itself to work well for all students, helping students to become team players and effective communicators. Security cameras and associated upgrades in the current year's budget have been installed, and Botelle is now compliant with safety mandates.

The Superintendent's proposed budget represents an increase of .67 percent. Region 7's budget is up 1.85 percent; however, Norfolk's share is down 4.86 percent.

The BOE budget reflects major savings in staffing, less in legal fees because of no negotiations, savings in heating oil.

Lines 8, 9 and 20 reflect contractual increases of 3% in salaries, but due to class distribution, savings were still realized. Lines 22 and 23 include \$1,000 increase for licensing; and \$6,000 increase for reimbursement to teachers for courses the State recommends. Line 52 is an expense this year to replace 2 defibrillators. Line 85 shows a decrease of \$10,000 in legal fees as no contract negotiations are scheduled. Line 144 shows a decrease due to lower heating costs, partially due to locked-in prices. Line 153 shows an increase in transportation as part of the second year of a 5-year contract. Line 170 includes an increase to employee benefits of \$13,948. Lines 185-187 demonstrated savings of \$26,450 in utilizing Ed Advance for cafeteria, including the contract which will save \$5,000 in subsidies and \$6,000 in inspections/audits.

The Budget represents a total increase of \$16,256.

The total Budget is 2,456,256.

Mr. Deshazo relayed that Botelle is \$110,914 below what was budgeted, and that money remained in the Town's account.

N. Ritson relayed that the Botelle PTO is now a 501c3 and that donations can be made directly to the kids.

M. Sconyers inquired what happens if the BOE does not get the \$16,256 increase they are requesting. Mr. Deshazo replied it would be difficult, and that the only thing that could be reduced is hours of art and music, which provide direct contribution and enrichment for the students. Mr. Deshazo would hate to see those go, as he feels they are extremely worthwhile.

M. Sconyers asked M. Riiska when there will be concrete figures for the pension contribution. The meeting is March 24th; the close-out is March 15th.

Broadband discussion: Mr. Maxwell was asked about funding for new home builds down the road. Mr. Maxwell responded the way the trunk wiring works, there will be a jack installed at every current legal parcel, if one buys a piece of land, there is no disturbance to the wire on the pole. If a parcel turns into 2 or 3, then would have to fiddle around with wiring. He stated the wiring would be overbuilt, there will be plenty of extra strung, no new wiring would have to be strung, all that would be needed is to get in cable and jack. There would be no touching of trunk wire. Therefore, what it would cost to put in a new wire would be part of the house cost.

M. Sconyers mentioned he inquired of the tax assessor regarding the last time a number of houses were built, and that the notion of 23 houses built over the next 10 years is not likely as nothing like that has happened in the last 10 years.

M. Sconyers said we need to let the Selectmen finish working on their budget as there are still some intangibles, particularly with regard to Botelle. Further, at a meeting with Region 7, the point was raised last year inquiring why the budget keeps increasing when the population keeps going down.

The Selectmen will not have their final budget before the meeting in April; that would be a good time to put together a budget for a Town Meeting to present the budget.

M. Sconyers inquired about the logistics of a Town Meeting, M. Riiska replied there may be the possibility of holding the meeting outdoors, citing that people are anxious to get together but do not want to be inside.

M. Sconyers would like to have the standard budget hearing so townspeople can have the chance they could not do last year, to ask questions of Kim Maxwell and the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education.

A target date to begin to look at a final budget is April.

M. Riiska said on March 17th the Region 7 BOE will have their “roadshow” via Zoom.

There was nothing under 2/3 vote.

There was no Public Comment.

On Motion of J. Tarrant, second by G. Mudge and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer M. Ryan, Secretary

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March 8, 2021

Board of Finance
Norfolk, CT 06058

The following is a list of refunds.

The below refunds are for an overpayment on real estate taxes, which were paid.

2019-01-0000564	Torrington Savings	refund- \$370.84
2019-01-0000639	Mali Peter & Pingeon Kate	refund- \$214.29
2019-01-0000848	Rodorigo, Joseph	refund- \$1,454.36
2019-01-0000593	Levinson, William & Linda	refund- \$183.26
2019-01-0000735	Lawrence, Nelson	refund- \$127.82

Respectfully,



Sarah Brusco, CCMC
Tax Collector

Approved by Board of
Finance 3/9/2021



Michael Scoville
Chairman