

**NORFOLK BOARD OF FINANCE
MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 8, 2022 MEETING**

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

Alternate members present were: L. Battis, A. Bennett and K. Hester.

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

The January 11, 2022 minutes were approved on Motion of G. Allyn, second by S. Anderson and unanimously approved.

Under Correspondence, the tax collector's request for reimbursement was approved on Motion of M. Sconyers, second by N. Ritson and unanimously approved.

The First Selectman reported: There was an incident during one of the snowstorms last week with one of the trucks that hit a manhole cover on Westside. There was serious damage including bent plow, bent plow frame, broke motor mount on the engine block. A new engine is \$25,000. Torrington Diesel is repairing for \$8,500. The Town had a spare plow and plow frame they will patch to be able to use again. The First Selectman went to the Town's insurer CIRMA, which will pay for the damage to the truck which is really good news. The truck will be back in service shortly. The truck is a 2010 Freightliner that has approximately 50,000 miles on it. It is one of the older trucks. It functions. The First Selectman hopes to get another one to two years out of it.

The First Selectman received bids for the Mountain Road Bridge as well as River Place Bridge and is currently out seeking funding. Hopes to have funding information within the next few days. The River Street Bridge is estimated at \$3,028,082. The Town will receive 80% reimbursement, with a cost to the Town of \$605,616.40. The Mountain Road bridge is estimated at \$1,411,838.10; with a 50/50 split with the Town as it is a DOT bridge. Aquarion will replace a water line on Mountain Road, so that the Town will be refunded the expense of \$329,450, which is incorporated into the overall price. The Town's outlay would be \$376,469.05.

The First Selectman went to three different banks for rates/costs to handle the bridge loan and finance the balance of each bridge. The interest rates are from 2.25% for a 10-year loan including the bridge loan bundled into the cost of the financing of the bridge; the First Selectman was also given a 3% interest rate. Utilizing the 2.25% interest rate, the yearly payment for the River Place bridge is \$68,421.89. The Mountain Road bridge would be \$44,730.54. The total yearly outlay would be \$113,152.43 for both bridges.

The Selectmen had put funding in this year's current budget. The debt exposure would increase by \$43,000, which, according to the First Selectman, is pretty good considering the cost of these bridges.

There is a special Selectman's Meeting February 11th, with a Town Meeting next week to agree on the spending to give the Selectmen the go-ahead to spend the funds.

Regarding the American Rescue Plan funds, numerous other selectmen leave it up to their town's Board of Finance. There was discussion of paying for the generator for the sewer district, at an approximate cost of \$74,000. The cost of the generator is actually \$84,000. The Committee is also looking into repairing the slide at Botelle School and assisting the two daycare centers who were unable to be open. The Committee has not discussed earmarking those funds yet.

The Public Works Department has a trailer that is approx. a 2002 Hudson 20-ton trailer that is in poor condition at best. The brakes are in poor condition, it is rusted, and no longer safe to use. It was sold for \$2,000. M. Riiska would like the Board to consider moving \$6,000 from the Capital Reserve account so the Town can purchase a newer 20-ton trailer that is in good condition for \$8,000. One member asked how often the trailer is used. It is used to move heavier logs. It is a handy thing to have. It was on the road this summer to move granite slabs for work being done at Robertson Plaza.

One member asked what is the next step to move forward with the slide repair at Botelle School. The First Selectman answered if the agency would answer an email or call him back, he would be happy to move forward to get the slide fixed. The First Selectman will work on it.

The Treasurer reported that the Tax Collector is on top of it and that the Town is doing very well with its Budget and what is expensed to this point.

The Treasurer commended Richard Byrne for bringing in \$167,000 of FEMA funds. Mr. Byrne went out and worked hard to get that money for the Town. One member inquired: the FEMA money is a reimbursement for the Department of Emergency Services.

Budget Review – The First Selectman has a budget, plugged in many of the departments' budgets, but has nothing from Region 7 or the school yet. Meeting is March 2nd at the school. It is a first pass. The majority of the department budgets include wage increases of 2.5% similar to the school and Department of Public Works. There are a couple of items, capital spending that is needed, refurbishment of the tennis courts at Botelle School, also buying a new tanker truck for the fire department. Instead of trading in the tanker truck for \$40,000, the Town will convert the tanker truck to a plow truck, which is a good thing, it has low mileage and the undercarriage is in very good condition. Due to a lot of the recent storms, the pattern over the past couple of years has been ice. The larger trucks are difficult at best to hit spots that need attention because of the ice. The First Selectman is considering a Ford F-600, the Town currently utilizes a smaller plow truck. He has a quote for the base 2022 truck for \$57,000 not including the plow. Going through the budget with minor adjustments, adding 2.5% to Botelle and Region 7 resulted in a 1.75 mill increase. The Board of Finance will not be looking at the Selectmen's Budget before April.

Katie Hester was appointed as the new alternate member of the Board of Finance, on motion of M. Sconyers, second by S. Anderson and unanimously approved.

Under 2/3 vote, the Board moved to add three items to the 2/3 vote on motion by G. Mudge, second by J. Tarrant and unanimously approved.

1. The Bridge proposals were approved on motion of M. Sconyers, second by N. Ritson and unanimously approved.
2. The request to utilize \$74,000 from the American Rescue Plan towards the sewer district generator was approved on motion of M. Sconyers, second by S. Anderson and unanimously approved.
3. The request to move \$6,000 from Capital Reserve to buy a trailer was approved on motion of N. Ritson, second by J. Tarrant and unanimously approved.

Under Public Comment, Susan MacEachron inquired about the new firehouse and the Maple Ave. reconstruction. The First Selectman reported that the design of the firehouse kept getting bigger and bigger. Mr. Riiska explained that the cost is going up and up. The new firehouse is in the early design phase. The costs of construction are estimated at \$4.5 million dollars. One huge part will be finding any offsetting funds by the federal government or from the State of Connecticut. It is a big task. The First Selectman will keep pushing forward looking for funding. The existing firehouse is approximately 4500-5000 square feet with a one car garage. The proposal doubles the size. The savings realized by building an entirely new building, rather than adding onto the existing building could amount to \$300,000-\$400,000. The First Selectman continues to look into ways to keep the cost down while giving the firemen what they need and fitting it onto the site.

As far as Maple Avenue, the engineers have done quite a bit of work. The estimated cost is \$2.1 or \$2.2 million. There is not any infrastructure funding for this project. We are “shovel ready”, but need the funding to become available.

One member inquired if the Town is still on target to get school reimbursements that were anticipated for a new oil tank. The First Selectman discussed being in contact with a tank company; \$180,000 earmarked for an 8,000-gallon oil tank at Botelle School, with consideration to installing an above-ground tank, as it is less expensive and the insurer will not insure an in-ground tank. The other item is the need for a new roof at Botelle, at an estimated cost of \$1.2 million, though the First Selectman believes this price has most likely increased. The reimbursement rate is only 33% back from the State. The Selectmen are researching solar panels for the roof at the school as well. Johnson Controls proposes to install solar panels and equip the school with a heat pump system to heat and cool the school.

On motion of J. Tarrant, second by G. Mudge and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer M. Ryan, Secretary