

Woodstock Board of Finance Minutes

Tuesday, November 9, 2021
7:00 pm
Woodstock Town Hall Room 1
Regular Meeting

1. **Call to order:** Chairman Michael Dougherty called meeting to order at 7:00pm

2. **Roll Call**

- a. **Members Present:** Michael Dougherty (Chairman)
Michael Bernardi
Frederick Chmura
David Fortin
Jeffrey Kelleher
Charlene Perkins Cutler, Alternate
Michele Woz, Alternate
Julie Marcotte, Alternate
- b. **Others Present:** First Selectman Jay Swan, Finance Director Karen Fitzpatrick, BOE Chair Megan Bard-Morse, Woodstock Public Schools Business Manager Janice Thurlow, Superintendent of Schools Victor Toth, Woodstock Academy Head of School Christopher Sandford, Asa Scranton, Recording Secretary Amy Monahan and several members of the public.
- c. **Noted for the Record:** Quorum

3. **Seat Alternate if Necessary:** Board of Finance member Roy Bradrick Jr has stepped down from the board. Alternated Michelle Woz was seated.

4. **Approval of Minutes from September 14, 2021 Regular Meeting**

- a. Frederick Chmura made a ***Motion** to approve the Minutes from September 14, 2021 Regular Meeting as presented. ***Seconded** by Jeffry Kelleher.
 - i. Email was received from Dave Richardson referring to a correction in minutes to remove statement about CNR being specific and changed to his reading of statute 7-364; specifically section (1)
 - 1. Recording Secretary will review the recording and adjust public comment item 8.a
 - ii. Noted that the job title of Janice Thurlow was incorrect. It will be adjusted to show correct title of Woodstock Public Schools Business Manager.
- Michael Bernardi made a ***Motion** to adjust the minutes from the September 14, 2021 Regular Meeting according to the audio review. ***Seconded** by David Fortin. ***Motion with Amendments passes unanimously.**

5. **Public Comment**

- a. Asa Scranton publicly introduced himself as a newly elected Board of Finance Member and stated he is looking forward to participating on the Board of Finance.

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6. Old Business

- a. Update on State
 - i. Finance Director Karen Fitzpatrick mentioned that the first installment of the Education Cost Share Grant was received as anticipated.
 - ii. There are currently no noticeable changes in grant calculations from last year's numbers
- b. Update on Local Bridge Project
 - i. First Selectman Jay Swan gave an update on the current bridge projects in town- Peake Brooke, Hopkins and Butts Roads
 - 1. Pete Parent, Consulting Engineer/Project Manager, sent a recent email stating that funding is required to be secured for the Peake Brooke Bridge as design phase is currently 95% complete.
 - 2. Town Attorney is reviewing the easement for Peake Brooke property.
 - 3. Peake Brook Bridge will be the first project to complete and go out to bid over the winter with hopes to start construction in the spring.
 - ii. Director of Finance Karen Fitzpatrick recommended the town use a Direct Purchase Bond instead of a BAN (Bond Anticipation Note) finance option to save on fees for renewal/rollovers (currently \$30,000 per rollover). She also stated the importance of ensuring no pre pay penalties with any funding secured which allows early pay off with reimbursements from grants.
- c. Update on Woodstock Academy CNR Request
 - i. Woodstock Academy previously provided assessment documents for the board, but the paperwork presented did not give the information needed by the board to move forward. It was suggested appropriate representatives from WA be present at this meeting to answer questions. Head of School, Christopher Sandford is present to represent the Academy.
 - 1. Chairman Michael Dougherty summarized the questions of the BOF in order to release funds to the Board of Education to be: What is the timeframe of the project(s)? What hopes to be accomplished in the fiscal period in question? What is the dollar value assessed for the fiscal period in question?
 - 2. Chairman Michael Dougherty asked Head of School, Christopher Sandford the following: What is the project funds will be paying for? What is the timeline of the project? What are the specifics that will be accomplished in the project?
 - ii. Head of School, Christopher Sandford summarized that there are currently Capital Expense projects in total of \$6 Million over the last 3 years taking place at Woodstock Academy. Current projects include the Academy Building Repairs (funding in part through the Inspire 150 Campaign), the parking lot behind the Loos Center for the Arts, Tennis Courts on South Campus and Bathroom repairs on North Campus.
 - iii. The Board of Finance requested specific data from the projects at Woodstock Academy. Michael Dougherty referenced how previous CNR funds were allocated to Roof and Tank in the past when released for payment and David Fortin stated that in order to pay a bill for a current year, they need to know what funds are going toward in that year.
 - 1. Head of School, Christopher Sandford suggested using the tower project and the parking lot as the projects. He also commented that Woodstock Academy bills by the student not by how the funds are spent.
 - a. Finance Director Karen Fitzpatrick explained Woodstock Academy gave previous information to use funds for a capital project. The Board of Finance needs specific line items at Woodstock Academy that constitute capital projects

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including total cost of portion of project paid with Woodstock funds and completion dates. It was clarified that the capital funds have to go toward a project, not a continuing project and that is why specific accomplishments of the project must be listed.

2. Meghan Bard Morse and Chairman Michael Dougherty discussed specifics until it was clarified that the Board of Finance needs exactly the following:
 - a. What would be completed with the Woodstock funds during this fiscal year
 - b. The timeframe in which work would be completed
 - c. Total share of project cost that the Town of Woodstock would pay
 - i. Finance Director Karen Fitzpatrick also requested the total cost of project with the Woodstock share contributed to project
- iv. In a discussion of the next steps in funding process after approval from the Board of Finance, the following was determined:
 1. Once the required documentation is received, the Board of Finance will move the item to the Board of Selectmen for approval and schedule of Referendum
 - a. Finance Director Karen Fitzpatrick noted the following concerns with that process-
 - i. There is no extra in this fiscal year budget as all money was allocated up to \$15.00
 - ii. None of the previous surplus was allocated to CNR
 - iii. There is not enough funds in the undesignated account (current amount of \$155,000) to cover the costs being discussed
 - b. There cannot be a Referendum without a transfer of funds to the CNR and that should have been requested in September for this fiscal year.
 - i. Funds from the General Government Surplus can be transferred to CNR by the Board of Finance
 1. Would have to approved at a Referendum
 - c. There would have to be 2 Referendums before funds from CNR are available to Board of Education
 - i. Finance Director Karen Fitzpatrick will check with Town Attorney to see if there can be one Referendum with both questions of transfer from General Fund to CNR and approval of CNR
 2. Woodstock Public Schools Business Manager Janice Thurlow asked if other items on Capital Plan needed to be discussed now and Michael Dougherty stated they should make the requests for additional items at this time. The requests would allow the Board of Finance to see what is available for funds in the current surplus.
 - a. In order to address other capital projects, the transfer in question would need to be larger than just the Woodstock Academy CNR request
 3. Dave Fortin brought up the question of how to best fast track the funding process
 - a. Finance Director Karen Fitzpatrick recommended a transfer from the general fund to the undesignated CNR and then have the Board of Selectman warn of a Town Meeting and have the Woodstock Academy CNR go to Referendum.
 4. Discussion on the amount to transfer resulted in agreeing to transfer the \$222,343 for the Woodstock Academy and \$110,000 for the new Generator in the Capital Plan in one amount to reduce the number of transfers and referendums required
 - a. Woodstock Public Schools Business Manager Janice Thurlow will have to submit request for generator funds in writing

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5. Finance Director Karen Fitzpatrick clarified that the plan is to transfer one time amount including both WA CNR and Generator funding from the General Fund into Undesignated CNR (leaving the \$155,000 in undesignated) and then having one referendum with the following three questions: 1) approval of transfer from general to CNR undesignated 2) allocation of funds to Woodstock Academy CNR 3) allocation of funds to Generator Capital Project
6. David Fortin made a ***Motion** to make a transfer from the undesignated general fund to the undesignated CNR in the amount of \$300,000. ***Seconded** by Frederick Chmura. ***The motion passed unanimously.**
7. Superintendent of Schools Victor Toth clarified that the Board of Education will get all required documentation to Karen Fitzpatrick and thanked the Board of Finance for the process created to resolve the funding concerns at hand.
- v. David Fortin made a ***Motion** to designate \$222,343 from the undesignated CNR account to pay Woodstock Academy capital assessment fee for this year provided the Town of Woodstock receive the information requested from the Board of Education. ***Seconded** by Michael Bernardi. ***The motion passed unanimously.**
- d. Update on American Rescue Plan Act
 - i. Finance Director Karen Fitzpatrick shared that there have been some additions to the community input list of ARPA fund ideas including tennis courts as WMS and (1) specific business has requested assistance. Any additional information will be available at the Board of Selectmen Meeting on Thursday, November 18, 2021 at 7 pm.
 - ii. Finance Director Karen Fitzpatrick also shared that the revenue loss recovery based on a 4.1% growth rate is currently at \$1/7 Million. This amount is classified differently than the rest of the ARPA funds and allows for more flexibility in how to be spent.
 - iii. The Board of Selectman plan on spending of ARPA funds will have to be approved by the Board of Finance and NECOG is consultant for reporting purposes.
- e. FY 22 General Government Budget Update
 - i. First Selectman Jay Swan informed of the personnel changes that have taken place in the Town Hall in order to meet the needs of the town and how they may impact the budget as Woodstock needs full time employees and expertise available for residents.
 1. Ashley Stephens was hired on July 16th as Land Use and Wetland Agent and as Zoning Enforcement Officer
 2. Erin Lucas was hired on October 27th as the new Recreation Director
 3. Rachel Ferreira was hired on October 13th as the Assistant Assessor
 4. Kiona Carpenter was hired on September 15th as the new Executive Assistant

7. New Business

- a. Quarterly Reports ending 09/30/21
 - i. Finance Director Karen Fitzpatrick reviewed reports presented to the Board. Her only general concern was the very low interest rates. She also commented on the tax collection rate being very good and building permit funds being really strong this year.
 1. David Fortin questioned the Land Use Contractual line
 - a. Amount represented employee change from Tina Lajoie to Ashley Stephens
 2. David Fortin questioned the Town Beach having no budget on page 8- whether that was all in Recreation

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- a. The Town Beach is in Recreation but still shows because you cannot take zero accounts out of this system
 - ii. After review of the reports by Karen Fitzpatrick, Michael Bernardi made a ***Motion** to approve the quarterly reports ending 06/31/21 as presented. ***Seconded** by David Fortin. There was no further discussion. ***Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- b. Approve BOF 2022 Meeting Calendar
 - i. Discussion of 3 Board Meetings wanted on the calendar and whether to schedule additional meetings now or later as special meetings.
 - ii. Jeffrey Kelleher made a ***Motion** to approve the Board of Finance 2022 meeting calendar as presented. ***Seconded** by Michelle Woz. There was no further discussion. ***The Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- c. Fill Vacancy for Full Board Member
 - i. Michael Bernardi made a ***Motion** to fill Republican Seat with Michelle Woz as Full Board Member. ***Seconded** by Michael Dougherty. ***Motion passes** with Michelle Woz abstaining.
 - ii. Michelle Woz accepted the position of Full Board Member

8. Public Comments

- a. Dotti Durst asked if the Board of Finance would consider going back to Zoom meetings on a hybrid level and if this has been discussed by the BOF.
- b. Charlene Cutler also supports Zoom because it allows the option to view at a future time and is easier for some to attend for many different reasons.
- c. First Selectmen Jay Swan commented on progress being made to allow for this to happen such as planning to update the meeting room to allow for better acoustics for recording.

9. Other From Board

- a. Michelle Woz asked if the audit was on schedule for this year
 - i. Finance Director Karen Fitzpatrick stated it will be on time with no need to file for an extension
 - ii. First Selectman Jay Swan commented on the delay being caused from many agencies working from home
- b. Michael Dougherty gave the following congratulations
 - i. Congratulations to Jay Swan on your Re-Election as First Selectman
 - ii. Congratulations to Charlene Cutler on your election to Board of Selectmen
 - iii. Congratulations to Jeff Kelleher, Julie Marcotte and Asa Scranton on your elections to the Board of Finance

10. Correspondence & Announcements

- a. The next Board of Finance Meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 14, 2021 at 7:00 pm.
- b. There is a meeting with Tom Hennick from the FOI on December 7th for those interested in attending.

11. Adjournment

- a. Michelle Woz made a ***Motion to Adjourn**. ***Seconded** by Michael Bernardi. ***The Motion Passed Unanimously.** Meeting Adjourned at 8:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Amy Monahan, Recording Secretary. DISCLAIMER: These minutes have not yet been approved by the Board of Finance. Please refer to next month's meeting for approval/amendments.