

**Preston Board of Finance
Special Meeting
Wednesday January 19, 2022
Cafeteria - Preston Plains Middle School**

Call to Order - Bob Congdon called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M.

1. Roll Call

Members

Robert Congdon - Acting Chairman
Stacey Becker - Clerk - excused
Denise Beale - absent
Andy Depta
Zachary Maurice
John Moulson

Alternates

Andrew Sawyer - seated
Kayla Thompson - seated

Also Present

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier - Selectwoman
Ken Zachem - Selectman
Jerry Grabarek - Selectman
Bill Merrill - Interim Finance Manager

2. Public Comment - There was none.

3. Correspondence

- December 15, 2021 - CCM Training - email: Information concerning a variety of Webinars being offered by CCM
- December 17, 2021 - Christopher Gilson, Salvation Army - email: informational flyer on upcoming podcasts
- December 20, 2021 - The Collins Center - email: overview of current work at The Collins Center
- December 28, 2021 - CCM Training - email: Webinars being offered to newly elected persons
- January 3, 2022 - CCM Training - email: 2022 Newly Elected Day virtual program offered on January 8, 2022
- January 12, 2022 - CCM Training - email: Fall 2021 - Spring 2022 CT Public Service Executive Leadership Collaborative Live Virtual Workshops offered on various dates
- January 12, 2022 - Nancy Musa - email: Boards and Commission - Covid 19 - Reminders
- January 14, 2022 - Christopher Gilson, Salvation Army - email: informational flyer on upcoming podcasts

4. Approval of Minutes

a. BoF Regular Meeting of December 15, 2021

Andy Depta motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of December 15, 2021. Andrew Sawyer seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

b. BoF Special Meeting Minutes of December 15, 2021

Andy Depta motion to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of December 15, 2021. Andrew Sawyer seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

5. Tax Collector - Suspense List

This was not provided in the meeting packet.

Andrew Sawyer motioned to table this until the next meeting. John Moulson seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

6. Election of Officers

The offices to be filled were reviewed: Chair, Vice Chair, and Clerk.

Andy Depta nominated John Moulson as Chair. Zach Maurice seconded the nomination. The nomination was accepted unanimously.

Andy Depta nominated Robert Congdon as Vice-Chair. Zach Maurice seconded the nomination. The nomination was accepted unanimously.

Andy Depta nominated Kayla Thompson as Clerk. Andrew Sawyer seconded the nomination. The nomination was accepted unanimously.

At this point John Moulson took over the duties as Chair.

7. Town Revenue and Status Report -

Bill Merrill stated that Tax Collections were doing well. The Town Clerk Fees and MERS look off because they have not posted all the receipts yet. The Educational Cost Sharing Grant hasn't been posted yet, the \$738,000 that has come in and will be posted in next month's report. It was stated that overall the budget is holding steady as expected.

There was a short discussion to explain to new Board members how the budget for Prior Year Taxes is determined.

8. Board of Education Report

Bill Merrill reported that as of January 5, 44% of the budget had been spent, \$5,403,463. Spending is on track with 42% of the year done. As of December 31, both teachers and administrators had been paid 50% of their contractual salaries. The salary account has 60% of its budget remaining.

Some highlights to note:

- An adjustment was made to the custodial account because one custodian was being expensed to the wrong building.
- There was a repair to the boiler in the amount of \$4,800 and 20 actuators were changed out at a cost of \$6,000.

- There was a large expense to Special Education services for a 1 to 1 paraprofessional for a student at Griswold.

It was asked where in the budget does it reflect the increase from \$85 a day to \$150 a day for substitute. There was a brief discussion that that change was necessary to stay competitive in the area. While the school has hired permanent subs there are days when more are needed. The per day cost isn't stated within the budget however the Line Item is watched carefully.

The newly negotiated Teacher's Contract was discussed. It was asked when it would be available for the public to see. It was stated that there is a 2% a year increase, there were no changes or freezes in steps, but there was an increase in health care contribution by the employees.

a. BoE Liaison Report

Zach Maurice stated the Board of Education stated that at the last meeting they were working primarily on their 5-year Capital Plan which included a lot of repairs and upgrades. It was also reported that the Superintendent was meeting with department heads to complete their individual budgets so that they can move forward with their budget process.

9. Board of Selectmen Financial Report

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier reported that the budget continues to track on target. All departments are functioning well within their budgets so far. She stated that 51% of the budget remains. That the Gasoline and Diesel Line needs to be updated; and that as soon as the school and fire department pay their fees the Line Item will show it's true balance. She reminded Board members that each person has a fob that is used when filling up and that it tracks who is using the fuel so the correct billing can be made to the correct departments.

She also reported that work continues to find DOT grants and available funds to cover Capital Projects. There are grants available to cover road work costs. There are a number of grants that are 80% DOT and 20% town contributions. There is a DOT grant to replace the Senior Van which is offered in the spring.

The USDA has several programs for rural towns. They have direct loans at 2.5% interest for facility use or construction; Emergency Rural Health Care for public safety use; and grants to cover equipment. Some of the cost could be funded by ARPA as well.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stressed that it's important to look at various avenues to reduce the cost of capital projects. When asked if the town has a designated person to deal with grants; she stated that whoever seems suited to deal with it writes it and that Kathy Warzecha has experience writing grants.

10. BoF Meeting Schedule

The Board reviewed the schedule that covers the rest of 2022 and the first meeting of 2023. The meetings will be held on the third Wednesday of each month, except for April when it will be held the fourth Wednesday. All meetings will convene at 7:30 P.M. in the Preston Plains School Cafeteria or if Covid restrictions allow the Preston Town Hall Conference Room.

Kayla Thompson motioned to approve the presented Meeting Schedule. Andrew Sawyer seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

11. FY 2022-2023 Budget Schedule

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier shared that all departments have been given a worksheet to identify needs and wants for their particular department. At this point the Town's budget is on track to be presented to the Board of Finance the first Tuesday in April, the 5th.

Bill Merrill stated that the Board of Education would also have theirs completed by then. Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated that she would have a list of the mandated deadlines for the February meeting so a Budget Schedule could be formed.

12. Old Business -

a. Plan of Action - Audit Findings

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated that work continues to have everything uploaded by February 4th. Sean O'Grady will come for a field date in February and he feels confident that he can complete the audit by March 31, 2022.

b. FY 2020-2021 Annual Report - Update

Stacey Becker shared a draft of the Annual Report in the Meeting Packet and asked via email for volunteers to review and double check the figures listed.

c. FY21, FY22 Budgets for posting on Preston, CT website

It was stated that help is needed to post both budgets in a reader friendly format.

Bob Congdon requested an update of the hiring of the new Town-School Financial Manager.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated that Cindy Varricchio is coming from East Haddam with 10 years of experience. She has a Bachelors in Business Management and a Master's in Business Administration. She holds her state certification as a School Business Official and is a member of the Government Finance Officers of Connecticut, the Connecticut Association of School Business Officials, and a graduate of Connecticut Council of Municipalities' Certified Connecticut Municipal Officer program. It is felt with her experience on the Portland Board of Selectmen, Board of Education, and a former appointed member of the Portland Economic Development Commission and High School Building Committee she will be an asset to Preston. Her start date is January 31, 2022.

13. Public Comment -

There was none.

14. Adjournment -

Bob Congdon motioned to adjourn at 8:22 P.M. Andrew Sawyer seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Lang

Recording Secretary