

Preston Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, June 15, 2022
Preston Plains Middle School Cafeteria

Call to Order - John Moulson called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M.

1. Roll Call

Members

Alternates

John Moulson - Chairman

Andrew Sawyer - seated for Stacey Becker

Robert Congdon - Vice Chairman

Kayla Thompson - Clerk - seated for Denise Beale

Stacey Becker

Denise Beale

Zachary Maurice

Also Present

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier - Selectwoman

Jerry Grabarek - Selectman

Cindy Varricchio - Finance Director

Keith Wucik - Fire Chief

2. Public Comment

3. Correspondence

- May 31, 2022 - CCM: email - Virtual Session: Utilizing the Grant Finder Tool & Grant Trends To Come
- May 27, 2022 - CCM: email - May Newsletter
- May 23, 2022 - The Collins Center: Virtual Workshop Series they are offering May 25th to June 29th.
- May 27, 2022 - CCM: email - CT Town & City State Legislative Wrap Up Session
- June 3, 2022 - CCM: email - Enrollment to Become a Certified Ct Municipal Official
- June 13, 2022 - Kim DeRosa: email - Eversource regarding EV charging stations throughout CT.
- June 3, 2022 - CCM: email - The Municipal Voice
- May 29, 2022 - Jill Keith: email - regarding salary line clarification
- June 1, 2022 - Jill Keith: email - school data request FYI
- May 23, 2022 - CCM: email - Webinar: Civility Professional Development Workshop

- June 2, 2022 - CCM: email - Webinar Inclusive Procurement & Contracting that Leads to Community Economic Development

4. Approval of Minutes

a. Board of Finance Regular Meeting May 18, 2022

Andrew Sawyer motioned to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of May 18, 2022 as presented. Kayla Thompson seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

b. Board of Finance Special Meeting May 19, 2022

Andrew Sawyer motioned to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of May 19, 2022 as presented. Kayla Thompson seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

c. Board of Finance Public Hearing May 26, 2022

Kayla Thompson motioned to approve the Public Hearing Minutes of May 26, 2022 as presented. Bob Congdon seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

d. Board of Finance Special Meeting May 26, 2022

Kayla Thompson motioned to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of May 26, 2022 as presented. Andrew Sawyer seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

e. Board of Finance Regular Meeting Minutes April 27, 2022.

This was tabled until the July Regular Meeting.

5. Finance Reports

a. Board of Education Report

Cindy Varricchio stated that the Board of Education canceled their June meeting and that there was no report to share with the Board of Finance.

Bob Congdon questioned why their financial status couldn't be shared with the Board after all it's just a computer generated print out of where they are financially.

Ms. Varricchio shared that it has been her standard practice to not share a report of one Board with another Board without that Board previewing it first. She then stated that she would contact the Board of Education's Chair and discuss with him the Board of Finance's request that moving forward she be able to share financial reports with the Board of Finance even if the Board of Education has not had a chance to review it first.

1. Board of Education Liaison Report

Zach Maurice stated that the Board of Education canceled their June Meeting so there was nothing to report.

b. Town Revenue Report

Cindy Varricchio stated that Property Taxes for both present and prior years continue to show strong returns. The Educational Cost Sharing has been received. The LoCIP funds have been received and the amount received is higher than what was budgeted. Beverage Container Surcharge will be moved out of Revenues and placed in a separate account because of the stringent regulations by which the funds can be used. The \$70,000 listed as Other is the amount received each year from the Poquetanuck Fire Department; it will be received by the end of the month. The Transfer Station has more than doubled their budget. The Revenue Budget is 16.8 million, 16.6 million has been collected. Once Town Aid Road, Town Clerk fees, and the Pequot funds are received and entered, that will make up the missing funds to meet the budget for the year.

c. Town Expenditure Report

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated that the Town is still tracking well. There are several big items that need to be paid by the end of the month, such as the State Trooper bill. She also pointed out that the Fire & Ambulance line for Heating Oil is running over budget due to the increase in prices. Public Works is also seeing overages in some areas, but they are pulling from other line items to cover those overages.

She then pointed out that moving forward there will be two new line items, Planning & Zoning Fees and Building Department Fees; this will be done to track the fees collected on behalf of the state. They need to be shown as expense rather than revenue; while the Town collects those fees the Town does not keep them they are passed onto the State.

6. Old Business

a. Audit Updates

Cindy Varricchio stated that the audit is completed, and she has seen the draft. She stated that many of the recommendation issues have been remedied to make the next audit proceed more smoothly and efficiently. The auditors will attend the July meeting to present to the Board of Finance their findings and field any questions that they have.

In July, the preliminary work will commence for the 2022 Audit. There are already appointments to begin that audit so it is completed in a timely manner.

The 2020 Annual Report has been published and posted on the Town's website. As soon as the 2021 Audit is presented at the July meeting, that will be added to the mandated information and the 2021 Annual Report will be posted online. Then a list of information and a format will be developed and shared with the Board of Finance so the collecting of data from

the various Boards and Commissions can be done for the 2022 Annual Report. The hope is that the Annual Report can be completed in a timely manner.

b. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Spending Plan

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier shared that the original guidelines have broadened since the allocations have been determined. The new guidelines still have parameters that need to be followed such as all the ARPA funds need to be allocated to specific spendings by 2024 and spent by 2026; but they allow the smaller municipalities to spend on items that fall within the safety and infrastructure of the town. She then explained that the Board of Selectmen looked at items that were on the Capital Improvement Plan and prioritized items that were one-time expenses that could be covered by the ARPA funds.

Then she reviewed the ARPA Plan draft for the Board. It was explained that the \$160,000 for the pumper truck would be additional funds added to the planned \$550,000 expenditure from the 2018 Capital Improvement Bond. There is an urgency with that expenditure because the cost is being held until July 16, 2022 after which the cost will increase by 10%. It was stated that since the Draft was drawn up two changes have occurred. It has been decided that the Fire Department would like to hold off on the dry hydrant repairs and the vehicle exhaust system and use those funds to replace the Chief's vehicle which is a 2016 with over 100,000 miles on it.

The other adjustment would be the replacement of guardrails for the Parks and Rec for \$30,000 would be returned to the Capital Plan. And that \$15,000 would be spent on installing security cameras to make the park a safer place for people to gather.

It was also pointed out that the HR Study would be done in conjunction with the town of Brooklyn which will reduce the cost for Preston and allow for the sharing of additional beneficial information.

Ms. Allyn-Gauthier pointed out that although there are no dollar amounts attached to them funds will be used to develop a Strategic Plan, which is needed for all federal grants; and funds will be set aside for Matching Grant programs that may come along in the the time allotted.

Finally, charitable contributions were reviewed. It was stated that the Town's traditional contributions to the various agencies and nonprofits were part of the budget. The amounts listed would be additional contributions made to the various nonprofits that service the Town. Sandra Allyn-Gauthier explained that many requested a percentage of the Town's ARPA funds. The review was concluded by pointing out that the plan spends \$1,227,226 and that \$141,545 still remains to be allocated. The remaining funds may be needed for various unforeseen increases or set aside for the items that have yet to be determined costs, like the Strategic Plan.

When the cost of the full-time firefighter was questioned, Chief Wucik explained that with an additional full-time firefighter more of the unfilled shifts would be covered filling the gaps in the schedule and the fire department would be able to service the Town better.

There was a brief discussion regarding possibly spending some of the remaining funds on items that directly affect the people in town. It was suggested that food bank support and heating fuel assistance would be one way to help. Asking TVCCA to use the Preston funds to directly assist Preston residents. Then the discussion turned to the actual steps needed to implement the plan and at what point spending would need to go to a Town Meeting and what expenditures would just need to come before the Board of Finance.

Bob Congdon motioned to approve the ARPA Spending Plan, with the following changes: eliminate Fire Department dry hydrant repairs and Poquetancket vehicle exhaust system in order to purchase a Chief vehicle; also eliminate the Park and Rec's guardrails in order to purchase security cameras. Kayla Thompson seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

7. New Business

a. King, King & Associates, CPAs Audit Invoice

Bob Congdon moved to approve the invoice payment of \$14,500 to King, King & Associates, CPAs. Andrew Sawyer seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Cindy Varricchio stated that she will email the audit to the Board members next week giving them a month to review it before the July meeting.

- b.** Another new business was the resignation of Andy Depta. There was a brief discussion as to the process the Board needed to follow in order to fill the vacancy. Both alternates expressed interest in filling the vacancy.
- c.** The referendum was also discussed regarding the time to meet in order that final tabulation of the votes could be made.

Bob Congdon motioned to hold a Special Meeting Wednesday June 22, 2022 at 8:15 P.M. to discuss and act on the results of the Referendum and to fill the vacancy on the Board. Andrew Sawyer seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

8. Public Comment

Chief Wucik thanked the Board for acting so quickly on the ARPA plan, he added with the increase in the cost of items and extended wait times it's important to act quickly to ensure the Fire Department has what it needs to do their job.

9. Adjournment

Bob Congdon motioned to adjourn at 8:25 P.M. Andrew Sawyer seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Lang

Recording Secretary