



## Town of Ridgefield

### BOF Approved Meeting Minutes

Tuesday December 19, 2023

FINAL

#### I. Call to order

Mike Rettger called the BOF meeting to order at 7:00 PM on December 19, 2023 in the Town Hall Annex Conference Room. Board Members Mike Rettger, Joe Shapiro, Greg Kabasakalian and Andrew Okrongly present in person, Dave Ulmer participating via telephone due to illness.

Others Present: Kevin Redmond, Controller.

#### II. Comments from Public

None

#### III. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Shapiro moved to approve the minutes from November 14, 2023 Tri-board Meeting and the November 14, 2023 regular Board of Finance meeting as presented. Seconded by Mr. Kabasakalian. All in favor

#### IV. Board of Education Report

**Financial Report** - The members reviewed and discussed the Board of Education Budget Report as of November 30, which was provided to BOF members prior to the meeting\*\*.

Dr. Susie Da Silva, RPS Superintendent and Ms. Jill Browne, RPS Director of Finance, joined the meeting via telephone.

**BOE Additional Capital Appropriation Request** – Mr. Rettger summarized the background of the request, which was made by the BOE and has subsequently been approved by the BOS. The request is for an additional capital appropriation of \$42,194 for several new HVAC projects and for additional project costs on previously approved projects. The school district plans to submit these as well as a number of previously approved HVAC projects (amounting to a planned submission of \$841,076 in total) to a new state grant program that would reimburse approximately 24% of each project approved for the program. The new appropriation would be

bonded as capital projects. Dr. da Silva and Ms. Browne provided additional background and addressed members' questions.

Mr. Okrongly made a motion to waive the reading of the detailed motion to approve the capital appropriation and bonding thereof related to the HVAC capital request. Seconded by Mr. Shapiro. All in favor.

After further discussion, the following resolution and motions were offered by Mr. Shapiro and seconded by Mr. Okrongly. All in favor

Whereas, the Connecticut Department of Administrative Services ("DAS") has announced a program of competitive grants to encourage public school districts to install, replace, or upgrade their heating, ventilation, or air conditioning (HVAC) systems with the goals of improved ventilation and indoor air quality to support healthy learning environments in districts and schools; and

Whereas, projects submitted for grant funding can include both projects previously approved and completed as well as projects approved for completion in the future; and

Whereas, the Ridgefield Board of Education has communicated its plans to apply to the program for grants to reimburse approximately 23.6% of costs for various HVAC projects totaling approximately \$841,076, including \$122,565 of projects that were approved in prior budgets and have been completed; and

Whereas, \$676,316 for projects not yet completed were approved by the Board of Selectpersons and the Board of Finance in November, 2022 or by Town budget referendum in May, 2023, with such previously approved budget authorizations remaining in effect to accomplish the various projects approved and not as yet completed;

Whereas, the Board of Education has identified \$42,194 of additional HVAC projects and project costs that would be desirable to complete and eligible for grant submission, that were not in the amounts previously approved in 2022 or 2023,

Now, therefore be it resolved:

- a) That the Board of Finance concurs with the Board of Education's intentions to apply for and secure such grant funding;
- b) That the Board of Finance approves and recommends for adoption by the legal voters of the Town by Town Meeting vote the Board of Education's request for an additional capital appropriation in the amount of \$42,194 for the additional proposed HVAC project costs, as recommended by the Board of Selectpersons;
- c) That the Board of Finance approves and recommends for adoption by the legal voters of the Town by Town Meeting vote the attached resolution titled "Resolution Appropriating \$42,194

For The Costs Related To Air Quality Improvement Projects At Town Schools, And Authorizing The Issuance Of \$42,194 Bonds Of The Town To Meet Said Appropriation And Pending The Issuance Thereof The Making Of Temporary Borrowings For Such Purpose”.

Dr. Da Silva and Ms. Browne left the meeting following this item.

#### **V. Treasurer’s Report**

The members reviewed the Treasurer’s Report as of November 30, which was provided to BOF members prior to the meeting\*\*. Members discussed the potential impacts on yields over remainder of the fiscal year arising from the Federal Reserve’s recent actions on interest rates.

#### **VI. Tax Collector’s Report**

There was no report available for November 30 due to a family health situation in the tax collector’s office.

#### **VII. ARPA Fund Request from BOS**

The members reviewed a recommendation from the Board of Selectpersons to approve the use of up to \$23,000 of ARPA funds to purchase two Zodiac rescue boats powered with electric motors for use by the town’s emergency service units. Having this equipment avoids a conflict with the town ordinance that prohibits use of gas-powered boats on the town’s three large lakes. Mr. Rettger provided some historical background on the situation and Mr. Kabasakalian reported on the discussion in the BOS meeting at which the funding proposal arose. It was noted that this request would use up most of the remaining balance of ARPA funds.

After discussion, a motion to approve the BOS recommendation was made by Mr. Kabasakalian, seconded by Mr. Okrongly. Approved by a vote of 4 to 0, with Mr. Rettger abstaining. Mr. Rettger noted that he was abstaining from the vote as he is a member of the board of Great Pond Club, which had publicly expressed support for the proposal.

#### **VIII. Controller’s Report**

Mr. Redmond reviewed the Controller’s report, which was provided to BOF members prior to the meeting\*\*. The Rec Center is forecasting an increase from budgeted revenues. While Golf had previously reported an impact on revenues from the wet fall weekend weather, usage has improved in the past two months so they are no longer projecting a reduction from budgeted revenues. Most other revenue areas are currently forecasting to be in line with budget.

Mr. Redmond reported that while the YTD comparison report for the Town was showing a YTD result noticeably higher than last year, much of this was due to timing effects (road paving, an additional payroll vs last year at this time), so that on an adjusted basis, the YTD result is in line with the prior year. Mr. Redmond highlighted several areas that were running high relative to budget, including IT and police cruisers.

#### **IX. Old Business**

Reserve Policy Discussion – Mr. Ulmer reported while he thought he had done so, he could not confirm that he had notified the Board of Selectpersons and Board of Education of the proposed policy change, as was discussed at the prior meeting. The members felt that having broad input was important to the consideration, and so agreed to continue the discussion of this matter

forward to the January and possibly February meetings. Mr. Ulmer will provide notification of the proposed policy change to BOS and BOE in case that wasn't done. The members also discussed ideas for also publicizing the proposed change to the residents using the Town's notification process. Mr. Ulmer and Mr. Rettger will discuss those ideas with the First Selectperson.

#### **X. New Business**

Mr. Rettger discussed the need for a special meeting next week for purposes of approving the minutes of this evening's meeting, so that the documentation could be provided to the school district for its planned HVAC grant submission, which has a deadline of December 31. Mr. Rettger made a motion to schedule a special meeting of the BOF for Wednesday, December 27, at 4pm, to review and approve the minutes from 12/19. The meeting will be held remotely via Zoom or by teleconference. Seconded by Okrongly. All in favor.

Mr. Rettger also discussed a request to move the date of the January 16, 2024 to January 17, to accommodate the schedules of the BOE attendees and of the auditor representatives, who will be attending to present the 2023 audit report and findings. The meeting will need to be held at the town hall annex due to a conflict with the BOS meeting that night. Mr. Ulmer noted that the BOS meeting conflict could prevent members of the public who might want to comment on the proposed reserve policy from attending, so the members agreed that this item will appear on the agenda as discussion but not for possible vote in January. Mr. Rettger made a motion to re-schedule the January BOF meeting from January 16 to January 17, beginning at 7pm in the town hall annex conference room. Seconded by Mr. Kabasakalian. All in favor.

#### **XI. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn at 8:15 p.m. by Mr. Shapiro, seconded by Mr. Okrongly. All in favor. Next meeting January 17, 2024.

Respectfully Submitted by  
Mia Belanger

\*\* Materials that were distributed in advance of the meeting in the BOF members' packets are maintained on file in the Controller's office.