



Town of Ridgefield

Approved Board of Finance Meeting Minutes

Tuesday August 20, 2024

I. Call to order

Dave Ulmer called the Board of Finance meeting to order at 7:00 PM on Tuesday August 20, 2024 in the Town Hall large conference room. Board members Dave Ulmer, Mike Rettger, Joe Shapiro, Greg Kabasakalian, Andrew Okrongly present.

Others Participating: Kevin Redmond; Controller, Jane Berendsen Hill; Tax Collector, Molly McGeehin; Treasurer.

II. Comments from Public

Kirk Carr, 62 Prospect Ridge, Ridgefield, CT commented on his concerns that certain information provided at the town meeting regarding the ACT Theater roof repair was not accurate and that use of state LOCIP money to pay for the repairs was not authorized under the program. He has documented his concerns in materials that he has sent to the members of the BOF.

III. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve minutes for the June 18, 2024 meeting and for the Special meeting July 18, 2024, with amendment.

Motion by Mr. Okrongly

Seconded by Mr. Kabasakalian

Vote: All in favor

IV. Treasurer's Report

BOF members reviewed the Treasurer's report for July 31, 2024 which was distributed prior to the meeting.** Ms. McGeehin also commented on the June 30 report showing results for the full 2024 FY. Ms. McGeehin noted that the town will be going to bond within the next month for an estimated issue amount of \$18-19 million, which will benefit the current year's investment income results. Mr. Rettger requested that at the next meeting, there be a presentation on how funds from new bond issuances are recorded and tracked over time relative to capital budget outlays.

Minutes of the August 20, 2024 Board of Finance Meeting, Final

V. Tax Collector's Report

BOF members reviewed the Tax Collector's report for July 31, which was distributed prior to the meeting.** Ms. Berendsen Hill also reviewed the June 30 report with the results for the prior year, noting that overall collections were better than budget, offset slightly by lower interest income, which was tied to the 2023 FY tax sale that was conducted.

VI. Controller's Report

BOF members reviewed and discussed the Controller's report for July 31, which was provided prior to BOF meeting.** Mr. Redmond reported that several areas looked high for one month of activity but this was due either to encumbrances or to once-a-year payments, like software licenses. He does expect the Registrars will be over budget due to early voting expenses.

Mr. Redmond reviewed preliminary versions of the RSI1 and RSI2 Reports. In this first draft, he is showing BOE as \$500,000 favorable on expenses but expects this to increase as they close their books. There is still more to do, so there will be further changes when the next draft version is available.

VII. Long Term Debt Forecast Model

Mr. Okrongly gave a presentation on a tool he has developed which can be used to project the Town's future debt outstanding and debt service. This can be a useful tool to consider when evaluating the budget effects of large future capital projects. The tool is based on multiple user inputs/assumptions which include future capital budget growth, interest rates, and growth of operating budget ex-debt service (town+schools).

The tool includes historical debt/debt service/budget data going back to 1999 (pre-"Bundle"). The model is built with specific estimates for debt service costs that might be associated with a new PD/FD building if approved, and can be run with and without that cost built into the forecast, to see the impact. It also has options for including additional large capital projects that might be foreseen, like major school roof repairs.

BOF members thanked Mr. Okrongly for this work and commented on its usefulness for BOF planning needs.

VIII. Old Business

Mr. Ulmer reported on his discussions with Mr. Redmond regarding the proposed lease by the town of space at 66 Grove Street for use by the school district's Alternative High School and 18-22 Special Ed programs. It appears that if the lease is finalized, the costs of leasehold improvements to the space by the town would qualify to be capitalized under accounting rules and thus be eligible for inclusion in the town's capital budget.

BOF members asked to hear more details on how this lease would be expected to impact the BOE budgets going forward at the September BOF meeting, when the BOE representatives will be in

attendance. They also requested a discussion of the BOE bank account report that was distributed in July.

IX. New Business

BOF members discussed whether there is a need for more formal standards for items to be submitted as part of the annual capital budget. Mr. Rettger reviewed an analysis that he had done of the capital budgets for 2024 and 2018. He also presented some tables of project cost by expected life span of projects, as well as an exhibit showing the payoff pattern for town borrowing under the current model for multi-year debt issuance.

Mr. Rettger stated he felt this information indicated that the BOF should look at clarifying the guidelines for capital budget items, particularly increasing the cost threshold to qualify for inclusion and also establishing minimum expected lifespan requirements. He stated that given the current practice, if changes are made, they will probably need to be phased in over several years to give everyone time to transition.

Members agreed that this was a topic needing further discussion and that any new policy will take several meetings to consider changes, as was done with the reserve policy last year. It was suggested that agreeing on any changes by October would be useful, in order to communicate the plan at the November Tri-Board meeting.

Communications & Correspondence

It was noted that several emails with information regarding the ACT Theater lease and roof repairs had been received from resident Kirk Carr.

X. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:45 by Mr. Rettger, seconded by Mr. Kabasakalian. All in favor.

Next meeting September 17, 2024.

Respectfully Submitted by
Mia Belanger

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