

Minutes of the Board of Finance
Oct. 14, 2008 – Police Station Conference Room – 7 p.m.

Members present: Justin Donnelly, Joseph Sangiovanni, David Tagliavini, Dennis Kreps,
Sam Fuller, alt. Tom Frenaye Absent: J. Sullivan, J. Lennon
Also present: First Selectman, Treasurer, and Director of Finance

Chairman Justin Donnelly called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. He announced with regret, the resignation of Joanne Sullivan, a valued board member, to be effective as of Oct. 14. Her absence will be a loss both to the Board of Finance and to the Town.

Citizen Comment: None

Correspondence: In response to the letter from the State of Connecticut, regarding the Sheff v O'Neill stipulation funding, Chairman Donnelly stated he would contact the State Treasurer and seek full payment of the PILOT grant to Suffield, and then consider such a request. Chairman Donnelly noted that the Board of Finance members had received emails from Sami Mehmed Jr, and from Larry Edwards. Mr. Fuller responded to Mr. Mehmed.

Minutes: Mr. Kreps moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting, Sept. 8, and of Special Meetings, Sept. 15 and Sept. 23, 2008 as amended by the corrected spelling of Eric Harrington, Sept. 15; and by the corrected spelling of Sue Porcello, in the third paragraph, the deletion of "its," 6th line, and the deletion "of the Town's responsibility", 7th line, page 2, and the change of CREC to State, paragraph 10, page 3, Sept. 23. The minutes were approved as amended.

☛ Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer Christine Davidson noted that she had included in the BOF's board packet, a report, General Fund Investment Analysis 7/1/07 – 6/30/08, and a report, General Fund Investment Income Analysis 7/1/08, noting investment income for the months of July, August, and September. The total investment income is \$76,752.11. Due to the poor economic situation, she noted that the Town will probably not meet its projected investment income goal. She will keep the BOF up to date with this report.

☛ Acquisition of Sheldon St. Property –

Superintendent of Schools John Reynolds and Mr. Ed Basile were present. Dr. Reynolds reviewed his memo to the BOF dated Oct. 8. The Board received copies of emails between Ed Basile and Paige Farnham which verified the fact that the original grant application did include site acquisition and costs for the site and a plot plan of the property. Dr. Reynolds corrected a mistake in the memo; the figure of \$78,000 was corrected to read \$278,000. The Town has a signed Purchase and Sale agreement with Richard and Louise Cannon for 10+ acres of land on Sheldon Street for \$325,000. A grant from the State Department of Education will pay \$295,000 of the purchase price and the remaining money is being requested from other Town sources.

The Boards of Selectmen and Education have approved of the purchase. The Grant will reimburse Suffield 100% of the purchase price up to the amount of the higher of two independent appraisals. The purchase price of \$325,000 is \$30,000 above the highest of the appraisals, thus requiring additional funds (\$30,000) to purchase the land. The First Selectman noted that the BOS had approved of the acquisition,

and that the BOS also approved the use of \$30,000 from the Town's Open Space Fund i.e. Farmland Preservation Funds. Mr. Lingenfelter stated that he had not consulted the Open Space Subcommittee before the Selectman's meeting. He has since met with the Open Space Subcommittee and that while the Open Space Subcommittee approved of the purchase of the property, they did not support the use of the Open Space Fund, for the remaining \$30,000. Mr. Ray Wilcox, of the Open Space Subcommittee, stated that the subcommittee supported the proposed purchase, they did not approve the use of the Open Space funding, as the Town would be paying more than the fair market value. It was suggested that the \$30,000 come from the Town Contingency Fund.

After a discussion, Mr. Kreps moved that the Board of Finance approve the acquisition of the Cannon Property, to be utilized as part of the Regional Agri-Science Program, subject to Town meeting approval, and that the Board of Finance approve the additional funding of \$30,000, from the Open Space Fund for the purchase of said property. Mr. Tagliavini seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote. The BOF will revisit this funding issue in June and see if Contingency funds are available to replace the \$30,000 to the Open Space Fund.

📌 Grant Request: Historic Preservation Grant, \$7,000

Town Clerk Elaine O'Brien was present to request approval of a grant application and to request authorization to expend the grant funds if awarded. Chairman Justin Donnelly recused himself. Ms. O'Brien asked the BOF to approve her application for a \$7,000 Historic Preservation Grant. If awarded, the grant would allow the scanning of land record documents and have the images attached to the indexing system. It was noted that the Board of Selectmen had approved her grant application. After a brief discussion, Mr. Tagliavini moved to approve the Town Clerk's grant application (Historic Preservation Grant) and to authorize the expenditure of the \$7,000 grant if awarded. Mr. Sangiovanni seconded. Vice Chairman Sangiovanni called for a vote: The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

📌 Transfers/Funding Requests

Director of Finance Deborah Cerrato briefly explained the report, Year End Budget Line Item Transfers, FY 2007 – 08. She noted that this report reflected corrected line items and some reclassifications. Mr. Kreps moved to approve the report as documented by the Director of Finance; Mr. Sangiovanni seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

📌 Director of Finance

Heating Oil, Diesel and Gasoline update – Ms. Cerrato reported the Status of Diesel, #2 Heating Oil, and Gasoline use and costs for the past three months. The Town has not yet locked in a price through CRCOG. Ms. Cerrato is carefully monitoring the prices daily, and will lock in prices when the time is right. She will keep the Board of Finance informed. There is a deficit now of \$12,967.39 through September for Town departments.

Ms. Cerrato noted that the Board packet included the Town General Fund, YTD quarterly budget report, and the WPCA quarterly report was distributed at the meeting. The Board of Education will send their quarterly report to be included in the November BOF packet.

📌 First Selectman's Report:

Mr. Lingenfelter reported that the Town did receive the Small Cities grant of \$750,000 for the purchase of the Calvary Church to be used as the new Senior Center. He noted that the Small Towns Economic

Assistance Grant (STEAP) SVAA grant of \$500,000 has been re-allocated to the Calvary Church project and also program income from the Industrial Park. He also reported that the Bridge Street School Study Committee requested that the heat be turned on in the Bridge Street School. The Board of Selectmen approved the request. The cost would probably be around \$13,000.

The Board of Finance discussed possible budget goals. Since the economic turndown, should the Town consider perhaps a hiring freeze, devise ways to save money, not fill all personnel openings should they arise, and to understand that in the economic reality of today, that now is not the time to ask for new staff or new programs for the next fiscal year. Mr. Tagliavini asked for an inventory of grants; grants received and grants applied for. After a discussion, the Board agreed that the Chairman of the Board of Finance would write a letter to the Board of Education, Board of Selectmen, Water Pollution Control Authority, and to all departments, boards and commissions. He will send a draft to BOF members for their comments.

Mr. Sangiovanni volunteered to attend the Board of Education budget committee meetings if they were scheduled for the evenings. Ms. Cerrato will send him a schedule of BOE budget meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Bobbie C. Kling, Secretary to the Board of Finance
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