

# BOARD OF FINANCE

TOWN OF BRANFORD

1019 MAIN STREET, P.O. BOX 150, BRANFORD, CONNECTICUT 06405

JOSEPH W. MOONEY, CHAIRMAN  
VICTOR CASSELLA  
HARRY DIADAMO, JR.  
PAMELA DeLISE  
CHARLES F. SHELTON, JR.  
JEFFREY E. VAILETTE



EX-OFFICIO  
JAMES COSGROVE, First Selectman

CLERK  
LISA E. ARPIN, Town Clerk

## BOARD OF FINANCE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES October 30, 2023 at 7:30 p.m.

RECEIVED  
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BRANFORD TOWN CLERK

A regular meeting of the Board of Finance was held on October 30, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. at Fire Headquarters, 45 North Main Street, Branford, CT. The meeting was also available for remote public viewing via BCTV and Facebook Live.

Board members seated were: Chairman Joseph Mooney, Harry DiAdamo, Pamela DeLise (via telephone,) Charles Shelton, Jeffrey Vailette and Victor Cassella. Also present were First Selectman James Cosgrove, Finance Director Jim Finch, Town Clerk Lisa Arpin, Deborah Conklin Town Treasurer, Robert Imperato, Margaret Luberd, Debi Mirto, Harry Smith, Evan Breining. RTM reps in attendance were Don Conklin, Ray Ingraham, Carolyn Sires and Frank Twohill.

1. The Board unanimously approved the minutes of the August 28, 2023 meeting by motion from Mr. Shelton, seconded by Mr. Vailette.
2. Citizen's Communication--None.
3. To hear an update from the Finance Director on changes related to pension and investment advisors.

Chairman Mooney noted that in consult with the Finance Director and First Selectman, we were advised that there has been a change in personnel at the Andriole/Hightower Group and after deliberating, decided to continue to use GYL Financial Synergies who has been a co-advisor to the Group. Jim Finch, Finance Director, gave history on the relationships and the evolution of investment managers vs. the model of independent investment advisors to evaluate the managers. Moving forward, rather than being assigned new people, it was decided to continue with GYL only. With the two groups, there was 25 basis points (12.5 for each group) in fees. Under this new arrangement with GYL only, their fee will be 15 basis points, so the Town will be saving 10 basis points in fees, and we will continue to be in good hands. Chairman Mooney thanked Charlie Andriole and Rob DeLucca for their years of service to the Board.

- Chairman Mooney introduced Michael Lepore from GYL Financial Synergies who presented the market environment and the performance of the Town of Branford **Police Pension** Plan for the quarters ended June 30, 2023 and September 30, 2023. Mr. Lepore thanked the Board for their continued confidence in working with GYL and the ability to provide some cost suppression. Mr. Lepore noted Gerald Goldberg or Matt Granadis will take the seat next to him at future meetings.

At inception on 4/1/03, the beginning balance of the Police Pension Plan was \$8,311,293. The ending market value at 9/30/2023 was \$27,690,377. There was no rebalancing recommendation at this time, however, with bond yields more than twice what they were 18 to 24 months ago, we will look at potentially lengthening the duration of the bond portfolio to more closely match the liabilities.

- Mr. Lepore of GYL Financial Synergies also presented the performance of the Town of Branford **Volunteer Fire** Incentive Plan for the quarters ended June 30, 2023 and September 30, 2023. At inception on 12/1/2015, the beginning balance was \$55,973. The ending market value at the end of September was \$1,550,478. There was no recommendation for rebalancing.
- The Board also heard from Mr. Lepore from GYL Financial Synergies on the performance of the Town of Branford **Other Post-Employment Benefits** Trust (OPEB) for the quarter ended June 30, 2023 and September 30, 2023. At inception on 7/1/11 the beginning balance was \$4,030,671. Since that time, there are net inflows of \$24.8 million, and the market has earned about \$8.2 million, bringing the market value to \$37,027,469 at the end of September. There was no recommendation for rebalancing, however, will go through the same exercise as with the Police Pension to look at the lengthening of the bond portfolio duration.
- Mr. Lepore of GYL Financial Synergies presented the performance of the Town of Branford **Coastal Resiliency Fund** for the quarter ended June 30, 2023 and September 30, 2023. The fund began on 9/30/2021 with an initial contribution of \$1,925,000. Net inflows are \$528,595 and the market losses of -\$102,858 bringing the market value on 9/30/23 as \$2,350,736. There is no rebalancing recommendation, but much like Police and OPEB, there are separately managed bond account investments, and discussions of opportunities to reduce risk will take place in the near future with the Finance Director and Chairman.
- Harry Smith, Town Planner and Evan Breining, Assistant Town Planner presented the following transfer for Planning & Zoning for FY2023:

From:		
10141130-518000	Overtime	(\$ 1,275)
To:		
10141130-555400	Advertising, Printing, Binding	1,275

Motion to approve made by Mr. DiAdamo, seconded by Mr. Cassella, vote was unanimous.  
**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Finance recommends to the RTM the approval of a \$1,275 transfer in the Planning & Zoning budget for FY2023.

9. The Board heard a transfer request from Robert Imperato, Tax Collector for FY2023. Finance Director Jim Finch reported the FY2023 Contingency balance of \$307,439 should this meeting's agenda items be approved.

From:		
10141070-517000	Regular Wages & Salaries	(\$439)
10141070-544300	Purchase Services-R & M	( 300)
10141070-555305	Online Services	( 780)
10141070-555400	Advertising, Printing, Binding	(2,513)
10141070-588110	State Fees & Testing	( 350)
10141070-588200	Memberships, Conferences & Meetings	( 279)
10149040-588802	Contingency	<u>( 962)</u>
	Total	(\$5,623)
To:		
10141070-533285	Tax Bill Processing	\$4,142
10141070-555320	Postage	1,068
10141070-566100	Office Supplies	<u>413</u>
	Total	\$5,623

Motion to approve by Mr. Valette, seconded by Mr. Cassella, vote was unanimous.  
**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Finance recommends to the RTM the approval of a \$5,623 transfer in the FY2023 Tax Collector budget.

10. Director of Human Resources, Margaret Luberda, presented the transfer request for FY2024 pursuant to the RTM-approved collective bargaining agreement for the Public Works Union Contract. Ms. Luberda indicated the changes met the Town's management goals.

General Fund Transfer

From:		
10149040-588802	Contingency	(\$35,145)
To:		
10141170-517000	Regular Wages & Salaries - GGB	\$ 3,246
10141170-518000	Overtime - GGB	976
10143010-517000	Regular Wages & Salaries - Public Works	22,904
10143010-518000	Overtime - Public Works	2,409
10143040-517000	Regular Wages & Salaries - Solid Waste & Recycling	4,598
10143040-518000	Overtime - Solid Waste & Recycling	<u>1,012</u>
	Total	\$35,145

Motion to approve the transfer and resolution made by Mr. DiAdamo, seconded by Mr. Valette, vote was unanimous.

**RESOLVED:** That The Board of Finance recommends to the RTM a transfer from contingency for \$35,145 to the noted accounts to fund compensation changes pursuant to the recently approved Public Works Collective Bargaining Agreement for the period of July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

11. The Board heard a transfer request from Debi Mirto, Director of Information Technology for FY2024:

ARPA Fund

Increase:

260-90000-480296	Fund Balance Transfer	\$30,000
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Increase:

260-41190-579150	Technology Acquisitions (Phone System)	\$30,000
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After Q & A regarding use of ARPA funding, a motion to approve the transfer and resolution was made by Mr. Valette, seconded by Ms. DeLise, vote was unanimous.

**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Finance recommends to the RTM an increase in the cumulative ARPA fund appropriations from \$6,572,000 to \$6,602,000. This appropriation will be used to fund the purchase and installation of a new phone system for the police department.

12. The Board heard a presentation including visual slides (previously distributed) by Thomas Mahoney, Fire Chief regarding staffing and facility plans for Fire Services. Also present were: Commissioners Robert Massey and David LaCroix and Assistant Fire Chief Brian Koczak. Attached is a meeting handout entitled "Branford Fire Department Staffing and Facilities Plan Summary." Chief Mahoney opened a discussion with Q&A regarding four challenges: Decline in # of volunteer fire fighters, increased calls for service, recent development and future projected growth, an inequity of service throughout the town (4 minute response benchmark.) A conceptual new fire station is strongly suggested on Town-owned property located at 32 Acorn Road to protect the east side of the Town. The site could house a 3,600 square feet footprint with a second floor or 7,200 sq. ft. building with two bays, four apparatus total (two in the front, two in the back.) First Selectman Cosgrove indicated the site mitigation has been cleared but needs land use regulatory process review of site plans. He made it clear this is a concept only at this time. Finance Director Finch offered closing comments. No votes were taken as this was an informational/conceptual presentation only, and will be addressed in the upcoming budget cycle.

13. To consider and act on the following proposed resolution introduced and read by Chairman Mooney:

"RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$1,100,000 FOR THE FLEET FUELING STATION PROJECT AND THE FINANCING OF SAID APPROPRIATION BY THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OF THE TOWN AND NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF SUCH BONDS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$1,100,000 THEREFOR"

and to recommend the resolution for adoption by the Representative Town Meeting.

Chairman Mooney asked if there is a motion to waive the reading of the entitled resolution, incorporating its full text into the minutes of this meeting. Motion to waive the reading of the resolution made by Mr. Valette, seconded by Mr. Cassella. The vote was unanimous and Chairman Mooney declared the motion carried. It was noted the full resolution was previously available to Board members and the public via the Town website.

Town Engineer, John Hoefflerle gave a summary presentation reminding the Board that the project was first introduced with his March budget presentation, and the Finance Director added additional comments. There was opportunity for Q&A. Chairman Mooney repeated the resolution and Mr. Valette moved said resolution, a copy of which is attached hereto, be adopted as introduced, and the motion was seconded by Mr. DiAdamo. The vote was unanimous and Chairman Mooney declared the motion carried and the resolution adopted.

14. To consider and act on the following proposed resolution introduced and read by Chairman Mooney:

"RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$2,250,000 FOR THE SUPPLY POND BRIDGE PROJECT AND THE FINANCING OF SAID APPROPRIATION BY THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OF THE TOWN AND NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF SUCH BONDS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$2,250,000 THEREFOR"

and to recommend the resolution for adoption by the Representative Town Meeting.

Chairman Mooney asked if there is a motion to waive the reading of the entitled resolution, incorporating its full text into the minutes of this meeting. Motion to waive the reading of the resolution made by Mr. Cassella, seconded by Mr. Valette. The vote was unanimous and Chairman Mooney declared the motion carried. It was noted the full resolution was previously available to Board members and the public via the Town website.

Town Engineer, John Hoefflerle gave a presentation indicating that this project was also first introduced during the March budget presentation. A State local 50/50 bridge grant was

granted, and the total cost with contingencies is \$2,250,000. Chairman Mooney repeated the resolution and Mr. Valette moved said resolution, a copy of which is attached hereto, be adopted as introduced, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Cassella. The vote was unanimous and Chairman Mooney declared the motion carried and the resolution adopted.

15. The Board heard a transfer request and resolution from the Finance Director Jim Finch for FY2024:

General Fund - Appropriation Increase

Increase:

10190000-480296	Fund Balance Appropriation	\$285,000
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Increase:

10149010-523120	Police Pension Contribution	\$285,000
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Chairman Mooney read the resolution:

**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Finance recommends to the RTM an appropriation from undesignated fund balance in the amount of \$285,000. This transfer will increase the fiscal year 2024 General Fund budget from \$130,315,768 to \$130,600,768 and will be used to fund police pension requirements.

The transfer and resolution were approved unanimously by motion from Mr. Cassella, seconded by Mr. Valette.

16. Finance Director Jim Finch presented his recommendation that the Board of Finance appoint the accounting firm of CliftonLarsonAllen LLP to perform the annual audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, at the proposed fee of \$80,900. Mr. Finch spoke on the status of the FY2022 audit status with draft financials are expected next week, with the audit wrap-up to be ready approximately the first week in December. The auditors are anticipated to start the FY2023 audit in February, 2024 for a December, 2024 timetable finish.

Mr. Valette made the motion to approve the appointment of CliftonLarsonAllen LLP seconded by Ms. DeLise. The vote was unanimous.

**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Finance approves the appointment of CliftonLarsonAllen LLP to perform the annual audit for fiscal year ending June 30, 2023.

17. Adjournment -- The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m. by motion from Mr. Cassella, seconded by Mr Valette.

Dated this 13<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2023



Lisa E. Arpin, MMC MCTC  
Board of Finance Clerk