

Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
February 12, 2025 6:30 PM
Warren Memorial Town Hall
Veteran's Room

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STAFFORD, CT

2025 FEB 19 PM 12:11
10 pages
Matthew McKenney
TOWN CLERK

1. Chairman Steven Geryk called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.
2. Present were members Anthony Armelin, Tony Pellegrino, Harold Blake Hatch, and Matthew McKenney. A quorum was established

Also present were BOF Alternate Shelley West, Robert Proulx, First Selectman William Morrison, Finance Director Yana Abramovich, CBIZ (Marcum) Managing Director Kyle Connors, former Stafford Little League President Bill Utermarck.

Upon a motion by Mr. Pellegrino, seconded by Mr. McKenney, the Board unanimously approved seating Ms. West in place of David Walsh.

3. Upon motion of Mr. Pellegrino, seconded by Ms. West the Board unanimously approved the February 3rd, 2025, meeting minutes.
4. CBIZ (Marcum) Managing Director Kyle Connors presented the FY 2023-2024 financials and single audit reports to the Board of Finance. The Total Fund Balance increased by \$1.2 million, with the Unassigned Fund Balance reaching \$4.5 million, up from \$3.5 million in the prior year. The Unassigned Fund Balance represents 9.9% of the Operating Budget, which is slightly below the healthy target range of 8-16% of budgeted expenditures, while the Town's policy sets a target of 10-14%. In 2024, the Town transferred \$1.5 million to the Utility Fund to cover an operational deficit in that fund. Property taxes, including in-lieu-of-tax payments, were consistent with the budget. The tax collection rate for the current year assessment was 97.9%.

There was a discussion about the Town and Board of Education reconciliation, which improved significantly for the fiscal year 2024 period under audit. It was a finding that the auditors recommended continued improvements to the Board of Education's internal controls. Specifically, the finding highlighted that the Board does not maintain formal documentation of processes and procedures, which led to the identification of segregation of duties issues over cash receipts and journal entry review processes.

5. Finance Director Ms. Abramovich provided an audit update. The Town received the final draft of the federal and state single audit. The finalized audit will be submitted to the appropriate state and federal agencies for review and compliance.

6. Ms. Abramovich then reviewed the audit RFPs and recommended that the Town retain its current audit firm, CBIZ (Marcum). Both firms that submitted proposals were equally qualified, with nearly identical cost structures. After conducting interviews with both firms, which responded thoroughly to all inquiries, it was concluded that, due to the familiarity of CBIZ (Marcum) with the Town's and BOE's operations, retaining the current firm would be more advantageous than starting the process from scratch. The Town was extremely happy with their performance and communication throughout the audit process. Chairman Mr. Geryk concurred with the recommendation, emphasizing that CBIZ (Marcum) had provided significant additional services for both the Town and Board of Education without charging extra fees.
7. Upon motion of Mr. Armelin, seconded by Mr. Hatch, the Board unanimously approved awarding a three-year contract to CBIZ (Marcum).
8. Next, Ms. Abramovich presented the 2024 Grand List figures. She noted that expenses and revenues are not yet finalized and may change. The proposed mill rate calculation was conducted to provide the Board of Finance with an understanding of the current financial position. The total taxes to be raised based on the proposed Town and Board of Education budgets for FY2025-2026 amount to \$36,742,963. The Board of Education voted for a significant budget increase of 5.48% over the FY2024-2025 fiscal year.

Ms. Abramovich highlighted a significant decrease in projected non-tax revenues for FY2025-2026 compared to FY2024-2025. She recommended increasing the allowance for uncollectible taxes by \$490,000, to reflect an expected tax collection rate of 97%. Additionally, the Town did not budget for the Somers contract for Building Officials due to uncertainty regarding its extension, leading to a \$96,000 decrease in budgeted revenue. Family Services revenue declined by \$110,000 to reflect the correct insurance reimbursement rate, and the Board of Education's Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant was reduced by \$294,000.

One mill is valued at \$876,691, and the proposed mill rate increase is 3.32 mills, from 38.59 in FY2024-2025 to proposed 41.91 in FY2025-2026. Ms. Abramovich emphasized that this represents a very substantial increase.

9. Ms. Abramovich presented budget transfers that were previously approved at the Board of Selectmen meetings to adjust salary line items to reflect actual salary amounts. Funds had been budgeted in the Special Revenue Compensation Fund while negotiations were ongoing. Additionally, she reviewed other miscellaneous transfers as outlined in the attached documentation.
10. Upon motion of Mr. McKenney, seconded by Mr. Hatch, the Board unanimously approved budget transfers.

11. Presentation of Department of Public Works Budget was rescheduled.
12. Next the Board of Finance discussed the ongoing concerns surrounding Stafford Little League. While the Board acknowledged the community's dissatisfaction with the league's financial situation, including the actions of the Vice President, there were limited options for intervention, as the league is a separate entity and not under the town's control. The Board noted that Stafford Little League has not accepted the town's stipend for two years, unlike other leagues in the area, although the town continues to provide facilities and cover utility costs for the league.
13. During the CFO/Chair Update, the Board of Finance continued discussing the projected deficit for the Board of Education (BOE) and the implications of state law governing the BOE's budget preparation, approval, and modification. As of February 12, 2025, the Board had not approved any additional appropriations for the BOE in FY2024-2025. Under state law, BOE expenditures cannot exceed the municipality's appropriation plus any additional funds the BOE receives, such as grants or local fundraisers. If additional funds are needed, the BOE chairman must notify the Board of Finance or other applicable authorities and submit a request for additional funds, following the same process as other municipal departments, boards, or agencies. No additional funds can be spent without supplemental appropriation, and any spending must not exceed the approved amount (CGS § 10-222). The law also prohibits BOE officials from authorizing expenditures beyond the approved budget and holds them personally liable for any unauthorized spending (CGS §§ 7-348 & -349).
Chairman Mr. Geryk asked Finance Director Yana Abramovich to request the following information from the Board of Education (BOE) and have it ready for presentation at the next Board of Finance meeting on February 19, 2025: FTE count for FY 2023-2024 and FY 2024-2025 at budget adoption, along with the current count supported by payroll information; any unbudgeted new positions in FY 2024-2025 with associated costs; and a worksheet detailing the \$2.5 million increase in spending from FY 2023-2024 to FY 2024-2025. He also asked the BOE to present this information at the meeting. The Board of Finance will also be expecting year-to-date financials in the format previously communicated by the Finance Director.
14. Upon motion of Mr. McKenney, seconded by Mr. Armelin, the Board unanimously adjourned the meeting at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted:



Yana Abramovich
Acting Secretary

TRANSFER REQUEST FORM

Fiscal Year: 2024-2025

Department: **670 Transfer Out to various payroll lines**

Transfer **From** Account # **20-670-9971**

Account Name: **Special Revenue Compensation Fund**

Transfer **To** Account # **20-125-1100**

Account Name: Human Resources \$5,242.00

Transfer To Account #**20-125-2015**

Account Name: FICA \$275.00

Transfer To Account #**20-170-1100**

Account Name: Finance Director \$15,829.00

Transfer To Account #**20-170-2015**

Account Name: Fica \$706.00

Transfer To Account #**20-170-1150**

Account Name: Finance Dept (Increase in hours) \$8,493.00

Please describe the reason for the transfer:

This is to correct actual salary amounts in the salary line items for non-union employees: Funds were budgeted for in the Special Revenue Compensations fund as negotiations were taking place.

Beth A. Dault

Printed Name: (person requesting transfer transfer)

[Signature]
Signature: (person requesting transfer)

Date: 1-8-2025
Reviewed by the Board of Selectmen

Date: 1-12-25
Approved by Board of Finance

Requires Town Meeting approval per C.G.S. 7-348 Yes X No

Approved at Town Meeting: N/A

TRANSFER REQUEST FORM

Fiscal Year: 2024-2025

Department: 670 Transfer Out to various payroll lines

Transfer From Account # 20-670-9971

Account Name: Special Revenue Compensation Fund

Transfer To Account # 20-100-1005

Account Name: General Government \$2,029.00

Transfer To Account #20-115-1002

Account Name: IT Coordinator \$2,499.00

Transfer To Account #20-140-1100

Account Name: Assessor \$2,500.00

Transfer To Account #20-140-1150

Account Name: Assessor Dept \$1,520.45

Transfer To Account #20-160-1150

Account Name: Tax Dept \$1,557.00

Transfer To Account #20-200-1100

Account Name: Building Manager \$2,500.00

Transfer To Account #20-200-1150

Account Name: Building Maintenance \$2,514.00

Transfer To Account # 20-241-1150

Account Name: Police Dept administrative \$1,465.00

Transfer To Account #20-330-1171

Account Name: Community Center Admin \$2,500.00

Transfer To Account # 20-505-1100

Account Name: Social Services \$1,438.00

Transfer To Account #20-510-1100

Account Name: Family Services Dept \$2,500.00

Transfer To Account # 20-510-1012

Account Name: Family Services office

\$4,024.00

Please describe the reason for the transfer:

This is to correct actual salary amounts in the salary line items: Funds were budgeted for in the Special Revenue Compensations fund as negotiations were taking place. Union Contracts have been ratified.

Beth A. DeDelt

Printed Name: (person requesting transfer)

[Signature]
Signature: (person requesting transfer)

Date: 1-8-2025

Reviewed by the Board of Selectmen

Date: 2-12-25

Approved by Board of Finance

Requires Town Meeting approval per C.G.S. 7-348 Yes _____ No X

Approved at Town Meeting: N/A

TRANSFER REQUEST FORM

Fiscal Year: 2024-2025

Department: **670 Transfer Out to various payroll lines**

Transfer From Account # **20-670-9971**

Account Name: **Special Revenue Compensation Fund**

Transfer To Account # **20-125-1100**

Account Name: Human Resources \$5,242.00

Transfer To Account #**20-125-2015**

Account Name: FICA \$275.00

Transfer To Account #**20-170-1100**

Account Name: Finance Director \$15,829.00

Transfer To Account #**20-170-2015**

Account Name: Fica \$706.00

Transfer To Account #**20-170-1150**

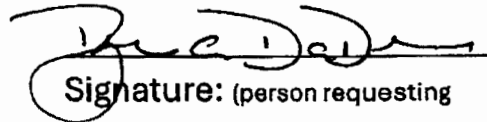
Account Name: Finance Dept (Increase in hours) \$8,493.00

Please describe the reason for the transfer:

This is to correct actual salary amounts in the salary line items for non-union employees: Funds were budgeted for in the Special Revenue Compensations fund as negotiations were taking place.

Beth A. DeDalt

Printed Name: (person requesting transfer)



Signature: (person requesting transfer)

Date: 1-8-2025

Reviewed by the Board of Selectmen

Date: 1-12-25

Approved by Board of Finance

Requires Town Meeting approval per C.G.S. 7-348 Yes X No

Approved at Town Meeting: N/A

TRANSFER REQUEST FORM

Department Name: Board of Selectmen

Fiscal Year: 24-25

Transfer From Account # 100-1004 \$ 1,000.00

Account Name: General Gov PT&OT/Clerical

Transfer From Account # / \$ /

Account Name: _____

Transfer To Account # 100-5320

Account Name: Vehicle Gas & Oil

Transfer Amount \$ 1,000.00

Please describe the reason for the transfer (why is the account overbudget).

Additional vehicle being paid for out of this account. Used by First Selectman and other departments to attend classes, workshops and as a spare when other vehicles are in for service.

Beth Dault

Printed Name: (person requesting transfer)

[Signature]
Signature: (person requesting transfer)

Date: 2/5/2025
Reviewed by the Board of Selectmen

Date: 2-12-25
Approved by Board of Finance

Requires Town Meeting approval per C.G.S. 7-348 Yes _____ No /

Approved at Town Meeting: N/A

TRANSFER REQUEST FORM

Department Name: Transfer Station

Fiscal Year: 2024 - 2025

Transfer From Account # 20-280-1160

Account Name: SALARIES: TRANSFER STATION

Transfer To Account # 20-280-1166

Account Name: PART TIME & OT

Transfer Amount \$ 4,000.00

Please describe the reason for the transfer (why is the account overbudget).

To cover the costs associated with the summer pilot program and overtime necessary to operate the Transfer Station while being short staffed. The Transfer Station has had a vacancy and overtime was required for hauling when the Transfer Station was closed. This was done to ensure adequate staffing on site when the Transfer Station is open.

Devin Cowperthwaite

Printed Name: (person requesting transfer)



Signature: (person requesting transfer)

Requires Town Meeting approval per C.G.S. 7-348 Yes _____ No

Date: 2/5/2025
Reviewed by the Board of Selectmen

Date: 2-12-25
Approved by Board of Finance

First Selectman

Board of Finance Chairman

TRANSFER REQUEST FORM

Department Name: Library

Fiscal Year: 2024-2025

Transfer From Account # 20-440-1004

\$ 162.50

Account Name: Part Time salaries

Transfer To Account # 20-440-2111

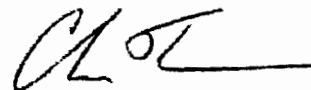
Account Name: Longevity

Transfer Amount \$ 162.50

Please describe the reason for the transfer (why is the account overbudget).

This is the number I was provided by the Town Finance Office.

Christopher Frank



Printed Name: (person requesting transfer)

Signature: (person requesting transfer)

Date: 2-5-25

Reviewed by the Board of Selectmen

Date: 2-12-25

Approved by Board of Finance

Requires Town Meeting approval per C.G.S. 7-348 Yes

No

Approved at Town Meeting: _____