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TOWN OF PLAINFIELD
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

The Board of Finance for the Town of Plainfield held a Special Meeting on Wednesday, April 13, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. at the Plainfield Town Hall. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Gorman at 6:30 p.m.

Members present: Dean Gorman, Don Kivela, Tom Sinkewicz, Gary Stalaboin, Ted Dumaine, and Adrian Ferrari.

Members absent: Linda Fedor (alternate) and Keith Sheeley (alternate)

Also present: Kevin Cunningham, First Selectman; Art Gagne, Selectman; Kelly Vachon, Finance Director, Mary Ann Chinatti, Town Planner.

Dean Gorman stated that Linda Fedor gave advance notice of her absence from the meeting.

Acceptance of minutes for March 30, 2022 meeting.

Don Kivela motioned to approve the minutes of the March 30, 2022 meeting. Tom Sinkewicz seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

Acceptance of minutes for April 6, 2022 meeting.

Don Kivela motioned to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2022 meeting. Gary Stalaboin seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

New Business:

a. Discuss and act upon sale of I-Park Lot #30.

Kevin Cunningham reported that Roma Construction wants to purchase Lot#30 for \$59,000. He would like to set up a town meeting for 4/26 at 7pm to vote on the sale. Gary Stalaboin asked what it would be used for, and Kevin Cunningham stated a 4,000-5000 sq foot building, 10-12 positions. They will be more of material disposition of the company and doing maintenance on their machines which will be taxed in Plainfield. Ted Dumaine asked if it would go out to bid. Kevin Cunningham stated that the Board of Selectmen hired a company to help sell final lots so difficult to sell, rocky, wetlands not much buildable space. There are no more lots to sell, and we proposed in next year's budget selling the last one for \$25,000 so now that revenue needs to be adjusted.

Ted Dumaine motioned to approve sale of Lot #30 and go to town meeting for approval on 4/26. Adrian Ferrari seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

b. Meeting with Department Heads to discuss FY 2022/23 Budget Proposal.

Chairman Dean Gorman asked that the presentations begin.

Economic Development/Planning and Zoning: Town Planner, Mary Ann Chinatti, will present for Economic Development and Planning and Zoning. Only increase in Economic development is a 3% salary increase as the First Selectman proposed. Changes for Planning & Zoning is the mapping and wide standard copier reduced by \$685. Addition for GIS hosting increase of \$16,700 so the town will be able to input when new subdivision is approved and not have to hold off to submit on semi-annual basis to current contractor. With current firm unable to create presentation maps and need to do it by hand, we met with First Selectman today and will possibly work with assessor and sewer depart at the end of the month. This may not stay in planning line but if it does the \$16,700 is only for the first year includes training for the employees. After this year maximum \$11,700 which is high side, it includes a \$6,000 cap technical support if needed. Also, in Planning an engineer line item. Kevin Cunningham explained that on GIS may be possible sewer department may take on that cost. They want to do more work in-house and reviewed work being done, Shepard Hill sidewalks and they need help on these projects. They normally subcontract out but want to do more in-house. Dean Gorman asked if they anticipate an in-house engineer as a potential source of revenue; he said no. Gary Stalaboin asked if it was grant money for the sides walk and Kevin Cunningham concurred, but the town must pay for design engineering. Gary Stalaboin asked if it was going under the bridge, and he stated yes. Gary Stalaboin stated he felt it was more of a State issue. He asked how far the sidewalks go and Kevin Cunningham stated that on the Eastern bank starts out, go under bridge heading to Pratt Street total 3 buttons for crossing. Mary Ann Chinatti stated they are looking at an easement near Big Y and working with Amazon. Gary Stalaboin asked if they need to inform them of the easements and Kevin Cunningham stated yes, he met with lot management with Big Y to explain what is going on. Gary Stalaboin asked if \$46,800 is for Shephard Hill engineering and Mary Ann Chinatti stated yes. Kevin Cunningham stated that this is phase one of three phases. All three have been approved and he will forward copies to him.

Grant Writer: Jordan Lumpkins stated he has been with the town just under a year got \$325,000 of grants in the past year, some larger ones include \$100,000 for summer camp over 150 students attended and \$75,000 for a senior van that will take about a year to arrive. Police department got about \$35,000 for policy updates and new helmets for officers and with the recreation department about \$200,000 increase towards programs. He is assisting with economic development website and help with Town Facebook and digitizing ordinances. He does grant writing but also tries to help out any way he can.

Animal Control: Karen Stone, Animal Control Officer, stated the salaries are contractual and additional \$300 for vet fees. Dean Gorman stated that it was the same last year, any

type of variation expected. Karen Stone stated they get dog good donations and sometimes donations for vet fees. Gary Stalaboin asked if fuel is ok, and she stated yes.

Library: Mary Poitras and John Ions presented. They are asking for a small raise for 4 part-time employees and 3 are paid minimum wage. It is \$13 an hour in August and going up to \$14 on July 1st this year. Regarding fuel and electricity, insurance costs and legal they are working with Jordan Lumpkins on grants. Dean Gorman asked about the building foundation issues and if they are working on it and Mary Poitras stated yes. Ted Dumaine asked if they work with the Senior department and she said yes, they deliver books to the senior center and to people.

Fire Marshal: Constantino Galasso stated he has been fire marshal for one year and also the Emergency Mgt Director. He inspects buildings to fire safety code. His budget is straight forward, new line item this year is for EOC for emergency operations center. During a storm they had issues with equipment, computer is outdated. Adrian Ferrari asked if this was the \$1500 and he stated yes. The EOC equipment will be a computer and if money is left over, they will get a tablet too.

Registrars: Sandra Chapman and Irene Bessette presented a budget increase with salary increase and supplies. Dean Gorman asked if they were union and she stated no. They stated the State mandates scanners be maintained yearly and the price is going up and also need memory cards and pay for the ballots. If not enough is ordered the town will have to pay a fine.

Tax Collector: Karen Vincent stated that salaries on contracted and conference costs went down because they are getting free training from CCM; cost of printing went up. She stated that collection rate is 98% and Dean Gorman stated that is outstanding. She stated that the tax sales help. The delinquent accounts are not a part of the 98% collection rate and the next tax sale is in May.

Building Inspector: Rick Martel, Building Inspector, stated the budget didn't change much. Vehicle expenses are up because on new tires and break job. This year in supplies they need new code books, new version coming out. He stated they are ahead of last years amount in building permit fees. Ted Dumaine asked about classes and he stated that they have to take 30 hours of classes a year virtually. Dean Gorman thanked him for the prompt service a couple of years ago when a tree punctured his roof.

Town Clerk: Diane Talbot reported that the general indexing increase in hopes housing market continue there were a lot more sales and recordings so it was a little short this year.

Assessor: Mary Ellen Hall stated the salary increase is a union contract. Budget went down because they are not paying for Vision upgrade. Ted Dumaine asked about the veterans and over 65 discounts and what they lose for revenue. She explained the benefits and will

have to look up what they lost in taxes. Gary Stalaboin asked about the increase in supplies, and she stated that the NADA books went up in price.

Finance: Kelly Vachon stated that there are salary increases due to union contracts. Audit went out to bid and came back at \$60,500, they saved \$500. The payroll services increase at \$6,500 is due to trying to do time and attendance with ADP. They are trying to do digital, now payroll takes 2 days to process. There is an increase in GFOA training, software decreased about \$700. Account Mate software is \$2500 a year. There is a small increase to supplies. Adrian Ferrari asked is there will be a productivity increase with time and attendance, and she stated yes, now it is on paper and very time consuming, ADP will save a lot of time. Gary Stalaboin asked if this will keep track of the staff's time from the highway department and she said yes as far as punching in.

Building and Grounds: Ron Roberts reported that salaries are up due to contracts, electricity is up due to the pool being closed during Covid and it is open again. Heating costs are increasing, and the refuse disposal is up to the little league taking that over; supplies are decreasing.

Recreation: Mark Simmons, Recreation Director, reported that staff salaries increased. Significant decrease in part-time salary part of the transition moving to self-sustaining model, user fees pay for staff. There is a new position, part-time recreation coordinator. Custodian new to budget. Transportation, senior expenses, and vehicles expense will remain the same. Swimming pool and lifeguard 2% increase due to minimum wage increases. Contractors for recreation software and monthly firewall subscription increase. Pest control is a new monthly contract. Supplies increase due to more responsibility with parks and athletic fields, little leagues, 12% increase. Dean Gorman asked about the senior increases and the part-time staff and Mark Simmons stated it was due to salaries and they have 4 part-time staff. Dean Gorman stated that Jordan Lumpkins was a big help with grants and Mark Simmons stated they have been awarded \$350,000. An email will be sent to Dean Gorman listing pending grants. Tom Sinkewicz asked if there has been communication making it clear who is responsible financially between the town and the little league. Mark Simmons stated not yet but they have been meeting weekly. The town owns land maintenance of land and recreation absorbs equipment and clothing; little league helps. Ted Dumaine asked about midget football league and Mark Simmons stated nothing is happening with that. Ted Dumaine asked why there is no exercise equipment at the senior center and Mark Simmons stated they do not have staff available in the event something was to happen and plus the equipment was old. Gary Stalaboin asked if the pool contracts are a part of supplies. Mark Simmons broke down supplies and discussed that direct mailing of \$8500 is new and so is park maintenance for \$20,000 for little leagues. Ted Dumaine asked if there is a program brochure available and he said yes, it is seasonal and on the website. TVCCA was discussed and the meals. Dean Gorman asked why the driver for the meals is not under recreation, Mark Simmons stated it falls under the senior center.

Highway: Ron Berube reported that pay raises are contractual, also contractual are uniforms, pest control, and water. Garbage and utilities are going up and gravel due to fuel costs. Vehicle expenses are up due to parts prices increasing. The police and DPW mechanic fall under the same contract. They discussed the police mechanic working on highway vehicles and vice versa. Gary Stalaboin asked if they stockpile salt and he said yes starting in November. Staffing was discussed and Ted Dumaine asked if 10 was enough and he said they could always use more, had 13 in the past. Paving was discussed and what roads can get done with the budget they have. Dean Gorman asked about the road repair in the center of town near the railroad track and if the State was contacted, Ron Berube stated that the town hall needs to contact them, and they get in touch with the railroad company. Dean Gorman asked about the condition of the vehicles, and he stated they are about 18, 19, 20 years old. Ted Dumaine asked about paving done by budget vs need and stated they need to put money in the budget to get all the roads done. Kevin Cunningham stated it is very expensive and they have to evaluate it every year. Adrian Ferrari stated in order to keep the mill rate down they do the roads that are needed to be done first. Kelly Vachon explained the budget for paving, town aid road is about \$244,000 a year a portion used for paving, Municipal Revenue Sharing part of that used for paving and budget road construction for paving so this year is about \$500,000.

Selectmen: Kevin Cunningham wanted to first thank the staff for all their hard work on the budgets and their patience with recent issues they experienced. He stated that the grant writer brought in \$500,000 to \$600,000 so far. Regarding the Plainfield little league, they will have a definition of responsibility soon. Businesses have been making donations. We do maintenance of fields. Little league should maintain fences, we are just helping now. Also, electricity for building/grounds initial year was \$61,000, numbers went down when pool wasn't being used, but numbers are going up again. They are working on programs for recreation and senior center and the new programs are fantastic. Selectman's budget increased salaries 3%, there was a reduction in legal notices due to no more I-Park lots to sell. There is an increase in supplies due to chairs in offices need to be changed out. Adrian Ferrari asked the First Selectman how many hours he works? Kevin Cunningham stated he loves his job and wonderful staff supporting him. Over the years some selectmen didn't take a pay raise so there is some in balance. He would like to add more staff in the town and the Finance Director is under paid and we need to do something. Ted Dumaine asked about the higher car assessments. Kevin Cunningham reviewed grand list, asked BOF to consider giving information to town side and BOE the number looking to get to and what to cut so they can prepare.

Dean Gorman stated that tonight was about understanding the departments budgets but also tax increases is a concern. We have a poverty level of 57% of the student body, we need to be mindful of this. Also, the motor vehicle taxes will be high this year. We hope to keep the mill rate flat or a reduction, but it will take work on everyone's part, maybe postponed items to next year if it is not critical. He wants to thank the departments and appreciate the time, but it will be a work in progress. Maybe work on cost sharing expenses, put items out to bid and if possible, stay in house for more services. Kevin

Cunningham asked where we can make cuts and Dean Gorman responded that he is not sure he can give numbers now but looking at 75% of the budget is Board of Education and 25% remaining town budget to share the cuts. Kevin Cunningham stated they can call a special meeting with the Board of Selectmen. Ted Dumaine asked what the mill rate will be, and Kevin Cunningham stated looks at 28.57. Tom Sinkewicz stated that the Board of Education should be present during those discussions.

Dean Gorman stated that they received the budget on the 31st and if they could cut \$380,000 then get the mill rate to 28.2. Ted Dumaine stated that they are making cuts based on mill rate instead of need. Dean Gorman stated they need to be aware of what the citizens want. Gary Stalaboin asked if unemployment went up and Kelly Vachon stated that medical insurance went up. The ECS was discussed and talking to school departments what the amount is.

Town General: Kevin Cunningham reported legal fees decrease of \$25,000 out of contract negotiation so it reduced. The computer misleading increase with purchase of items due to upgrade of security of \$100,000. Assessor wants to go to the cloud which comes out of the \$100,000. Fireworks contract increased. He wanted to purchase a flatbed to used for the concerts as a stage and also parade. They would also like a new sound system with cameras and mics at the table for meetings. The State is coming out with live streaming and would need to hire someone on a regular basis. The highway and maintenance staff in current budget have 5 trucks still waiting for vehicles. He is suggesting a the parking lot, back corner a 2 car garage to work on vehicles here so not going back and forth. He would like at Lyons Park solar lights around track so no need to dig. Dean Gorman asked if the police evidence building is going out to bid and he said yes.

Gary Stalaboin motioned to accept the presentations as put forth tonight, seconded by Don Kivela. All in favor, motion passed.

Citizens Participation

Sean Peterson asked about where the buses are garaged do we rent space to them and do we charge for utilities. Kelly Vachon stated yes there is a contract with the school department and the town pays utilities. He also asked if we are charging little league to rent the buildings. Mark Simmons stated no for the little league rent but there is a field use fee, and the town is paying for utilities. Adrian Ferrari stated they never increased the little league due to Covid because there were no concessions revenue. Sean Peterson asked about rent in the senior center and the utilities. Kevin Cunningham stated there is rent for the senior center and there are discussions to increase the fees.

Mary Ann Chinatti stated in the last 4 years they have received \$4,000,000 in grants for the town, and she can provide a list to the Board.

Adjournment

Ted Dumaine motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 pm, seconded by Gary Stalaboin. All in favor, motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by,

*Suzanne Krodel
Recording Secretary*