

TOWN OF BOZRAH
SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF FINANCE
ZOOM - VIDEO CONFERENCE
April 13, 2020

Item 1: Chairman Mike O'Connor called the Quarterly Meeting of the Bozrah Board of Finance(BOF) to order on the Video Conference Application Zoom on April 13, 2020 at 7:00p.m.

Members Present: Chairman Mike O'Connor, Raymond Barber, Michel Leask, Phil Lavallee, Ann Chambers and Evan Gilman.

Others Present: First Selectman Carl Zorn, Selectman Bill Ballinger, Selectman Glenn Pianka, Town Treasurer Diana Santo, Tax Collector Nancy Renshaw, BOE Jeanne Goulart, Financial Manager Sue Lyon, BOE Ruth Levy, Specialized Director Eileen Hargreaves and 6 members of the public.

Item 2: Public Comment

No public comment.

Item 3: Report from the Treasurer

Town Treasurer, Diana Santo, presented the Board with the Treasurer's report.

Attachment 1

Item 4: Report from the Tax Collector.

Tax Collector, Nancy Renshaw, presented the Board with the Tax Collector's report. N. Renshaw noted 98% of all taxes have been collected.

Item 5: Board of Selectmen update on current budget status (FY 2019/2020)

Attachment 2

First Selectman, Carl Zorn, updated the Board of Finance on the current budget status. C. Zorn noted several line items on the budget were over or under what was budgeted, but 60 - 70% of the overall budget has been expended.

R. Barber questioned why it was expected to have \$10,000 excess in the Fire Department line items. C. Zorn noted he had not spoken to the Fire Department, but he believes the un-spent money comes from the Per-Diem FireFighter/EMT line. C. Zorn will check in with the Fire Department.

C. Zorn noted the Planning/Zoning line item went about \$8,500 over budget and the Inland/Wetland line item about \$3,000 over budget because they hired a Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO). The ZEO is split between the Planning/Zoning and Inland/Wetlands. C. Zorn noted he will need to transfer more money into the two accounts. M. O'Connor noted the BOS should not wait until the end of FY 2019/2020 to do the transfer.

C. Zorn noted the Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) for the sewer project on Route 82 can not be completed until Spring when the trees have bloomed. The BOS expects to spend about \$20,000 FY 2019/2020 on the Sewer Project line item and about \$40,000 FY 2020/2021.

C. Zorn noted the BOS had budgeted money to put up a pole barn for the DPW. They are now required to have a wash station for the DPW equipment. C. Zorn suggested they used the unspent money in the budget to build the wash station. R Barber suggested that they look into a shared washed station with other towns. G. Pianka noted the wash station would cost around \$500,000 and they should consider regionalization.

Item 6: Board of Education update on current budget status (FY 2019/2020)

Attachment 3

Jeanne Goulart of the BOE updated the Board on the current BOE budget status. J Goulart noted the BOE expects to overspend the budget by \$15,957. They are freezing about \$30,000 of their budget to cover the cost.

J. Goulart noted since the school has closed due to COVID-19 they have saved \$132,000. The BOE is paying 82% of transportation due to government orders even though the buses are not running. Ruth Levy of the BOE noted that the Governor's orders say they have to pay the bus company in full or find a compromise. Ruth Levy also noted due to the Governor's orders the BOE will continue to pay tuition for students while they practice distance learning from home.

Eileen Hargreaves noted they considered offering Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy services virtually, but less than half of the families responded. This will save the BOE about \$6,000. She also noted the students in special education that are 18-21 years old are offered virtually support from Sharpe Training.

R. Barber questioned how many hours a day the teachers will spend teaching online. Ruth Levy noted they have spent more hours than usual to individualize their online work for students. R. Barber also questioned if all students had access to the internet and a computer. Ruth Levy noted students that did not have a computer were given one. R. Barber questioned how the special classes such as gym, art, music,

etc. were being taught online. Ruth Levy noted they are taught through videos, lessons and emails. They are sending out surveys to parents on what parts of distance learning is working and what can be changed.

Item 7: Receive budgets from the Board of Education and Board of Selectmen for FY 2020/2021

Board of Education:

Jeanne Goulart presented the Board of Education's proposed budget for FY 2020/2021. The total proposed budget is \$6,458,363. J. Goulart noted there has been an increase in high school tuition and an increase in school psychologist hours. The BOE decreased the money budgeted for substitute teacher due to a new Substitute Service. They renewed a 5 year contract with the bus service, First Student, with an increase of 3%.

M. Leask questioned how many Special Education students were provided for by the town. J. Goulart noted there are 31 special education students in Kindergarten through eight grade, 7 special education students in high school, and 5 special education students outplaced.

R. Barber questioned why the health insurance line went up in cost. J. Goulart noted the health insurance line item increased by \$140,000 due to more people requesting coverage and the rate of the insurance going up. The increase starts in October.

Board of Selectmen:

C. Zorn presented the Board of Selectmen's budget for FY 2020/2021. The total budgeted for general government is \$1,799,410, representing a 4% increase from the last budget. The total budgeted for the capital budget is \$1,049,346, representing an 18% increase from the last budget. C. Zorn noted he raised all town hall employees' salaries by 3%. C. Zorn noted increases in the budget for the Election, Health Insurance, Registrar, Town Clerk, Assessor, Legal Fees, Auditor, Planning/Zoning, Inland/Wetlands and DPW Internet. C. Zorn noted decreases in the budget for Fire Marshal, DPW Equipment and the Building Official.

M. O'Connor noted there will be a 2 week public comment period through email. This is to replace a Public Hearing, which can not be done at this time due to COVID-19. Email comments to moconnor@bozrahct.org The budgets are posted on the town website. The BOF will review the comments at the next meeting.

Item 8 : Appoint auditor for FY 2020/2021

MOTION 1: R. Barber made a motion to appoint Sandra Welwood LLC for auditor for FY 2020/2021.

M. Leask seconded the motion.

Vote unanimous - **MOTION CARRIED**

Item 9: Establish Meeting dates for FY 2020/2021 budget process

Monday April 27, 2020 at 7:00p.m. via Zoom

Item 10: Public Comment

Evelyn Brown, Fitchville Road, commented on the 5 year plan budget document.

Glenn Pianka, Fitchville Road, commented on the BOE budget, noting that they should reconsider some line items.

Item 11: Adjourn

MOTION 2: R. Barber made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 p.m. P. Lavallee seconded the motion.

Vote unanimous - **MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully Submitted for the Board,

Heather Barber
Recording Secretary