

TOWN OF BOZRAH
QUARTERLY MEETING
BOARD OF FINANCE
ZOOM - VIDEO CONFERENCE
December 14 , 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 December 14, 2020 at 7:00p.m.

Members Present: Chairman Mike O'Connor, Raymond Barber, Michel Leask, Phil Lavallee, Steve Seder, 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, Principal Catherine Dowler, Eileen Hargreaves and 6 members of the public.

Item 2: Public Comment

Sarah Orr commented that the Board should accept the Board of Education request.

Item 3: Approve the minutes from August 24, September 2 and September 21, 2020 meetings

M. O'Connor noted the minutes from August 24th and September 2nd were approved last meeting.

E. Gilman noted he was present on September 21, 2020 although the minutes did not list him as present.

MOTION 1: S. Seder made a motion to accept the September 21, 2020 minutes as corrected. R. Barber seconded the motion. E. Gilman abstained.

Vote 1 abstained - 5 yes - **MOTION CARRIED**

Item 4: Report from the Treasurer

Diana Santo presented the Board with the Treasurer's Report (Attachment 1).

Item 5: Report from the Tax Collector

Nancy Renshaw presented the Board with the Tax 5 Dashboard (Attachment 2).

Item 6: Board of Selectmen

a) Update on current budget status

C. Zorn noted 45 - 55% of the budget has been expended.

b) Hear and Act on request for fire truck repairs

C. Zorn noted the fire department's ladder pumper truck has a broken pump. He noted the fire department went to the Board of Selectmen requesting \$22,000 to help with the repair. At the Board of Selectmen's meeting Chief Sholes noted he did not want to spend all of the \$25,000 budgeted for fire company capital projects, he noted the money budgeted there was for equipment, gear, packs, etc. B. Ballinger explained the fire department bought the parts for the repair with \$2,000 from their capital projects line.

S. Seder questioned if this project went out to bid. B. Ballinger noted Chief Sholes researched the options.

MOTION 2: S. Seder made a motion to appropriate \$22,000 from the general fund for the repairs to the fire truck. R. Barber seconded the motion.

Vote unanimous - **MOTION CARRIED**

c) Hear and act on refinance up to \$2M

C. Zorn noted the town's bond attorney Bruce Chudwick explained that bond refinances are approved by the Board of Selectmen. C. Zorn noted the Board of Selectmen agreed to refinance two bonds to get a lower interest rate of 2.5%. C. Zorn noted the town's outstanding debt is around \$1.5M.

R. Barber questioned the legal fees for refinancing. C. Zorn noted legal fees are about \$30,000.

S. Seder questioned when the bonds would have been paid off before refinancing. M. O'Connor noted the bonds would have been paid by fiscal year 24/25. M. O'Connor noted the bonds are now extended for 15 more years.

d) Options for street sweeper

C. Zorn noted the current street sweeper is broken. He noted under the governors emergency rules the town can request to purchase items that are related to public safety. C. Zorn found a used street sweeper to purchase at \$189,000 with around 4 hours on it and with vacuum capability. C. Zorn explained the town shares a street sweeper with the towns Sprague and Franklin. He noted the shared street sweeper is stored in Sprague and Bozrah has to wait until it is their turn to use it. C. Zorn noted he spoke with the first selectman in Sprague and found they plan on charging Bozrah maintenance fees on the shared sweeper. C. Zorn noted if they included the purchase of the street sweeper in the bond it would cost \$3,000 a quarter.

R. Barber noted the town has not had luck buying used equipment in the past. He noted the street sweeper is only used a few weeks a year and does not believe it is reasonable to purchase one. R. Barber commented it would be worth it to pay Sprague maintenance costs instead of buying the

new sweeper. R. Barber questioned if the new sweeper comes with any guarantees. C. Zorn noted there is a 90 day guarantee once purchased.

S. Seder questioned the residual value on the old street sweeper. C. Zorn noted it has not been appraised yet. S. Seder also questioned what it would cost to hire someone to sweep the streets. C. Zorn noted he does not have a quote for that, but that expects it to cost double what it would to do it on your own.

P. Lavalley questioned the lifespan of a street sweeper. C. Zorn noted if the sweeper is well taken care of it can last up to 20 years.

M. O'Connor noted they will discuss the purchase of the street sweeper further at a later date. A public hearing is scheduled for Wednesday December 16th at 7:00 p.m. to hear the town's feedback.

Item 7: Board of Education

a) Q4 Financial Update

Jeanne Goulart presented the Board with the Board of Education's expenditure report (Attachment 3). J. Goulart noted 37% of the budget has been expended.

J. Goulart also noted Superintendent Ruth Levy is leaving and thanked her for her work with COVID-19 relief funding.

b) Request for COVID allocation

J. Goulart presented the Board with a COVID Funding Request report (Attachment 4). J. Goulart noted the BOE has spent \$71,448 to date on COVID related expenditures. The report breaks down COVID related costs expected. J. Goulart explained in order to separate the children according to the state guidelines they need to split 6th grade in two classrooms. She noted the BOE is hiring a new teacher from January through June to fill that new 6th grade classroom. This new teacher would also work with special education students. J. Goulart noted for January to June they need an additional budget of \$59,906. J. Goulart explained with the expected grants the expected net increase in the BOE budget to the town due to COVID would be \$1,609.

R. Barber questioned the rooftop replacement cost. J. Goulart noted they got an engineering estimate from Silver/Petrucci and New England Mechanical. J. Goulart New England Mechanical is doing the replacement. R. Barber also questioned the cost to repair water fountains and bus cleaning costs. J. Goulart explained the water fountains need to be converted to fill water bottles. J. Goulart noted the BOE is required to provide busing for all students in town even if parents choose not to use the bus and the buses must be cleaned following each bus run. R. Barber questioned why the cost for the new teacher was so high if the teacher was only hired for

January to June. J. Goulart noted the \$43,311 budgeted for the new teacher includes benefits and taxes.

M. O'Connor asked the BOE to elaborate on the hiring of the new teacher. Catherine Dowler, principal, noted there are more special education students than the current staff can handle. She explained 10 special education students have been added since the beginning of the school year. C. Dowler explained the 6th grade class needed to be split because 22 students can not fit in one classroom. This new teacher would serve as a homeroom for the second 6th grade class and as an additional teacher for the special education students. M. Leask clarified this new teacher would not be teaching 6th grade subjects. M. Leask questioned if this new teaching position is not carried on to next year would there be unemployment costs. Sue Lyon noted it would.

M. Leask questioned how much of the \$71,448 COVID expenditures for the end of the year have been ordered and has any of that money been requested for reimbursement. C. Dowler noted most of those items have been ordered and received although some items have been put on back order. M. Leask also questioned the maintenance costs. C. Dowler noted the \$8,400 is to cover the COVID hire custodian.

S. Seder questioned if the expected reimbursement from the state is a guaranteed number. C. Dowler noted she understands that number has been allocated to the Bozrah School District. The BOE needs to submit their receipts to the state.

M. O'Connor noted money from the state is never guaranteed. He noted the state can pick and choose what is worth reimbursed and if those items relate to COVID.

M. Leask commented when creating budgets last year many people gave up raises and stipends. M. Leask explained that items that the Boards are requesting need to be absolutely necessary.

MOTION 3: S. Seder made a motion to allocate \$411,900 to fund the Board of Education. E. Gilman seconded the motion. R. Barber and M. Leask abstained.
Vote 4 yes- 2 abstained - **MOTION CARRIED**

Item 8: Update on FY 19/20 audit

M. O'Connor noted the audit is close to being completed. He explained a BOF meeting will be held in January to discuss the final audit.

Item 9: Set Quarterly Meeting dates for 2021 (March Budget Submission, June, September, December)

M. O'Connor noted the quarterly meeting dates for 2021 are:
March 22, 2021
June 21, 2021
September 20, 2021
December 13, 2021

Item 10: Such other Business as the Board may vote to hear

No other business.

Item 11: Final Public Comment

Glenn Pianka commented the street sweeper purchase is an unnecessary big ticket item at this time. He noted they should only purchase what is absolutely necessary.

Sarah Orr commented her appreciation to the Board for allocating the funds for the Board of Education.

Pat Goff commented on the special education student increase.

Item 12: Adjourn

MOTION 4: P. Lavalley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:43p.m. R. Barber seconded the motion.

Vote unanimous - **MOTION CARRIED**