

**Preston Board of Finance  
Emergency Meeting  
Wednesday, January 27, 2021 at 7:30 P.M.  
Teleconference Call**

**Call to Order** – John Moulson called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M.

**1. Roll Call**

***Members***

John Moulson – Chairman  
Bob Congdon - Vice Chairman  
Stacey Becker - Clerk  
Andy Depta  
Denise Beale  
Zachary Maurice

***Alternates***

Matthew Davis  
Vacancy

***Also Present***

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier – First Selectwoman  
Jerry Grabarek – Selectman  
Ken Zachem - Selectman  
John Spang – Financial Director

Claire Bessette  
And 3 other callers

**2. Discussion of:**

- a. the withdrawal of contracted Sandra Welwood as Town Financial Auditor for 2019-2020**
- b. selection of new audit firm**
- c. time table for assignment of responsibilities for proceeding**

John Moulson read a letter from Sandra Welwood, stating that she was terminating the 2019-2020 Audit contract between the Town of Preston and her firm due to the town's inability to provide her firm with appropriate documentation in a timely manner.

Andy Depta shared that he was under the impression at the last meeting that requests from the auditor were being handled.

Stacey Becker pointed out that the letter states that most of the information from the town has not been provided.

Andy Depta asked what the holdup was.

John Spang shared that unfortunately unlike years past many auditors are insisting to complete audits virtually because of covid. The virtual or remote audit takes significantly longer with multiple added steps that require additional time on top of the town employees' traditional duties. The town

employees are doing the best they can. The audit for the grants was completed and the educational piece that was due in December was completed. John Spang also mentioned that at the last Board of Finance meeting it was asked how many audit extensions have been requested. He shared that over 300 have been requested, so it seems to be a universal issue.

John Moulson shared with the group that over the last several days he, Bob Congdon, and Sandra Allyn-Gauthier have tried to reach out to Sandra Welwood and it is clear that she will not reconsider.

Bob Congdon requested that all emails regarding the audit be forwarded to the Board of Finance members. Sandra Welwood has made assertions that we need to look into and have answers for. We need to see that Sandra Welwood repeatedly requested information that wasn't given to her.

John Moulson stated that he realized after speaking to John Spang that things were moving slower than usual, but didn't realize that it had become this big of a problem.

John Spang pointed out that the first sign of trouble he saw of an issue was on January 5<sup>th</sup> when he saw that the auditor was asking for a second extension and he called John Moulson.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier shared that the only communications directly from Sandra Welwood were on Jan. 5<sup>th</sup> and back on Nov. 30 requesting 2 items of information which were emailed to her on Dec. 15; and then with Assistant Susan Crater Dec. 17 about requesting a signature for an extension which was sent back Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>, and then on Dec. 28<sup>th</sup> the extension was sent to the OPM. Finally, on Jan. 21<sup>st</sup> the OPM had approved the extension. We were all shocked that this letter arrived on the Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>.

Andy Depta asked if the data she completed is available to the Board.

Bob Congdon replied that we own all the work that has been completed thus far.

#### **b. selection of new audit firm**

John Moulson asked how to move forward.

Bob Congdon stated that a new auditor needs to be found, he also asked John Moulson if this was in violation of CPA Professional Ethics.

Any Depta asked if there were grounds for possible legal action.

Bob Congdon stated that before that can be looked at, we need to procure an auditor. He asked when they interviewed auditors what other firms were interviewed.

John Spang stated that he had a list of all the auditors for all the towns in Connecticut.

Bob Congdon suggested a letter to a dozen auditors to see if any are interested in completing Preston's.

John Spang stated that some are good, but all are busy not only is it audit season tax season is about to start; but you never know.

John Moulson suggested picking a few and see if they are interested.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier mentioned that the same 3 seem to do surrounding towns so that may be a good place to start.

Bob Congdon, John Moulson, and John Spang will search for an auditor, with the possible assistance of Denise Beale and Zach Maurice.

Andy Depta asked if there would be any penalties that the town would incur.

John Spang said that the State Education Document was turned in December so he did not believe so.

**c. time table for assignment of responsibilities for proceeding**

John Moulson suggested a meeting before the next regularly scheduled meeting to discuss the progress.

Denise Beale would like to see a time of requests from the auditor and the responses from the Town. She is breaking a contract and that needs to not be lost in our hurry to complete the audit.

Bob Congdon, agreed that information needs to be gathered and look to see if the Town has grounds for action.

Stacey Becker stated that a recent payment was to be made; she referred to a recent email on Jan. 8<sup>th</sup> from Nancy Musa that a payment should go out the following week. She asked if that has been sent.

John Spang stated that a \$10,000 payment should be going out soon.

John Moulson requested that John Spang check on the payment and if it hadn't gone out that it not go out.

**3. Adjournment**

**Andy Depta motioned to adjourn at 8:12 P.M... Zach Maurice seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

*Kimberly Lang*

Recording Secretary