

**Preston Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, February 17, 2021 at 7:30 P.M.
Teleconference Call**

Call to Order – John Moulson called the meeting to order at 7:34 P.M.

1. Roll Call

Members

John Moulson – Chairman
Bob Congdon - Vice Chairman
Stacey Becker - Clerk
Andy Depta
Denise Beale – arrived at 7:37 P.M.
Zachary Maurice

Alternates

Matthew Davis - absent
Vacancy

Also Present

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

2. Correspondence

- February 1, 2021 – PKF O’Connor Davies – letter: accepting an invitation to present a proposal
- February 2, 2021 – Marcum LLP – letter: accepting an invitation to present a proposal
- February 3, 2021 – King, King, and Associates, CPA – letter: accepting an invitation to present a proposal
- February 12, 2021 – Sandra Allyn-Gauthier – email: requesting preliminary estimates of Preston’s municipal aid be added to the BoF meeting packet
- January 28, 2021 – Flagship Networks – email: promotional information
- February 3, 2021 – Leigh Pappas – email: FOI Training Invitation

3. Executive Session to interview audit firms. Each firm is limited to 30 minutes.

Zach Maurice motioned to move to an Executive Session at 7:59 P.M. Denise Beale seconded the motion. Bob Congdon, Stacey Becker, Denise Beale, Zach Maurice, and John Moulson voted in favor of the motion. Andy Depta voted against it. The motion carried 5 to 1.

The Regular meeting reconvened at 8:40 P.M.

4. Approval of Minutes

- a. BoF Regular Meeting of January 20, 2021**

Andy Depta motioned to approve the January 20, 2021 Minutes. Bob Congdon seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

b. BoF Emergency Meeting January 27, 2021

Bob Congdon motioned to approve the January 27, 2021 Minutes. Denise Beale seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Candidate for Alternate Interview

John Molson stated that he spoke to Leigh Pappas and that she will repost the notice that the Board of Finance is looking for an Alternate.

6. Town Revenue Report

John Spang report that the Town continues to do well with regards to revenue. He complimented Jill Keith and her efforts to continue to bring in revenues for the town. Mr. Spang pointed out at this point 86.6% of this year's taxes have been collected compared to a year ago it was under 82%. Looking at the Prior Year Taxes Line Item it is \$71,000 over budget with \$131,000 collected compared to a year ago it was under \$84,000. Liens & Fees is also doing well with \$14,000 over budget, while a year ago it was under \$50,000. The Town Clerk Fees continues to do well with Building Permits, which is \$47,000 which is over budget. All these areas are seeming to continue to do well and is good news for the town.

Andy Depta asked if the the Tax Collector is going after payments more aggressively than in the past. John Spang wasn't sure and suggested that she be invited to the next meeting to perhaps to explain thoughts and methods.

7. Board of Education Financial Report

John Spang reported that on Monday February 22, 2021 Preston Plains Middle School will be starting face to face learning 4 days a week. This means that all Pre-K through 8th grade students will be in schools 4 days a week until the end of the school year. Wednesday will remain a virtual learning day. At this point with 5 of the 10-month school year completed only 45.5% of the budget has been spent, compared to last year at this point 49% had been spent. However, once a run of February checks clear spending will look more similar to last year with 51% of the budget spent. That being said savings continue especially in the area of transportation. The new bus fleet means the repair budget isn't being used. The hybrid model means fewer days the buses are used and less fuel bill. At this point it looks like about a \$78,000 savings.

Looking at the bigger line items such as salary that will come in on budget. Health Insurance is pretty steady and there looks to be an \$11,000 shortfall. Secondary education or high school tuitions are predictable because you're paying for the previous year so there are no surprises there.

Andy Depta questioned the ad seen in the paper for substitute teachers.

John Spang stated tat now that the school is moving to face to face learning that more subs will be needed. Also, that substitutes have a constant turn over and the really goods ones tend to get hired. So, there is always a need to add subs to the pool.

a. BoE Liaison Report

Andy Depta report that there was none for this evening.

8. Board of Selectmen Financial Report

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated that at the end of January approximately 50% of the budget is spent. She also mentioned that it is hoped that by the end of February the fine tuning of mapping will be completed. She also mentioned with the winter weather as it is, this year's supplies seem to be tracking favorably.

Andy Depta questioned the blue chemical that seems to be on the roads.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier explained that the pretreated salt that is being used is more cost effective, environmentally friendly, and in the spring won't clog catch basins and drainage like sand does.

9. PRA Update – No update

10. Old Business

a. Resurfacing Tennis and Basketball Courts – STEAP Grant

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated that they had just heard back from the state and that they are working through the paperwork process.

b. Board of Finance Budget Submission (2021-22) – tabled until March meeting

c. Proposed Budget Calendar – tabled until March meeting

11. New Business

a. Selection of audit firm for 2019-2020 fiscal year/multi year

Andy Depta stated that after reviewing both proposals that he found that O'Connor's presentation was too detailed about their firm and didn't really specify exactly how they would help. However, King & King really covered specific town issues and how to get us out of this dilemma.

Bob Congdon agreed with Andy's assessment of the presentations.

Stacey Becker preferred the King & King presentation because they tailored their proposal/presentation to Preston and came across as more personable.

John Moulson asked John Spang for his thoughts.

John Spang felt that it should be the Board's decision.

Andy Depta asked if the price could be negotiated.

Bob Congdon stated that they couldn't negotiate what was presented, but going forward there could be room to negotiate. Bob recommended accepting this year and next year and have John Spang ask about negotiating future pricing.

Stacey Becker asked if references were contacted.

John Spang only spoke to one, Lisbon, and they are very happy with this firm.

Stacey Becker asked why we didn't hear from Marcum LLP.

John Moulson shared that their bid was significantly higher than the other two.

Bob Congdon added that they had very little experience in Connecticut.

Bob Congdon motioned to engage King, King, and Associates, CPA for this year 2020 and 2021, and request options for 2022 and 2023. Andy Depta seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Stacey Becker asked when would we need the funds available for payment. She pointed out that the BoF Audit Line Item only had \$8,000 remaining since \$10,000 was paid to Sandra Wellwood in January 2021.

John Molson stated we need to receive a bill before we we make payment.

John Spang added that the Board of Education funds are all available because a payment to Welwood from the BoE was stopped before it could be processed. The amount of their funds is \$9,900.

Stacey Becker relayed that with the remaining \$8,000 in the BoF Audit Line and the BoE audit funds of \$9,900, then there was a total of \$17,900 available to apply to the new King, King, and Associates audit expense. The remaining funds needed are less than \$20,000 which the BoF can allocate from the Undesignated fund without a Town Meeting. Bob Congdon commended the group for going through the exercise of making sure they have the money needed.

Andy Depta thanked the team for their efforts to make sure this issue was resolved.

b. Progress of FY19-20 Annual Report

Denise Beale stated that she is working on this with the help of Stacey Becker. She stated that she has emailed all the Boards, Committees, and Commissions asking for the Annual Report. To date she has received one report back.

c. Other New Business

Stacey Becker requested a discussion of spreadsheet and learning old way verses new way; reminding that the old way had approximately 300 Line Items and Infinite Vision has 200 Line Items.

Andy Depta stated that it would be too much to do during a regular meeting.

Stacey Becker suggested a small group work on it and present it to the Board.

John Moulson asked if she had a group in mind.

Stacey Becker stated she would be willing to work on it with others; both Zach Maurice and Bob Congdon volunteered to work on it with Stacey.

Bob Congdon stated that the changes that we've seen over the past two months should help us moving forward.

Stacey Becker stated that she has already added the State Aid, which hasn't changed. She also asked about Teacher's Retirement.

Bob Congdon stated that the Sate threaten to have towns pay, but pulled it.

Also, under new business John Spang explained that several changes will occur in order to allow Sue Nylen to work with the auditor. First the Town's payroll will be handled by the Board of Education for the next 3 pay cycles. This may result in longer days to run the BoE and BoS payrolls because the fall on the same days. There will also be a part time assistant for Sue Nylen so she is available to work with the auditors.

12. Public Comment – There was none.

13. Adjournment

Andy Depta motioned to adjourn at 9:14 P.M... Bob Congdon seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Lang

Recording Secretary