Preston Board of Finance

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, April 22, 2020 at 7:00 P.M.

Teleconference Call

Call to Order – John Moulson called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

1. Roll Call

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

**Alternates**
- Matthew Davis – seated for Denise Beale
- Vacancy

Also Present
- Sandra Allyn-Gauthier – 1st Selectperson
- John Spang – Financial Director
- Gerry Grabarek – Selectman
- Sean Nugent – PRA
- Kenneth Zachman
- 3 other members of the public

2. Correspondence

John Moulson referred member to the packet in order to save time due to the anticipated length of the meeting. In the Board's packet were the following:

- February 25, 2020 – John Spang – email: explaining the encumbered $1,500 from the FY19 budget was due to a purchase order being received after the audit.
- February 27, 2020 – John Spang – email: follow up State Charts of Accounts and Windsor Locks Chart of Accounts
- February 27, 2020 – Matthew Davis – email: explaining his absence at the Feb. 26th meeting was due to his attendance at Governor Ned Lamonte’s Town Hall Discussion on Education in Willimantic.
- March 12, 2020 – Mathcw Davis email: requesting a postponement of the March 18th meeting
- March 13, 2020 – John Moulson – email: stating that the March 18th meeting should not be cancelled and that if any one was feeling ill, they shouldn’t attend
- March 13, 2020 – Nancy Musa – email: after consulting with Patrick McCormack Director of Uncas Health District Preston Town Hall will continue to operate ‘business as normal’ while taking taking extra precautions
- March 13, 2020 – Nancy Musa – email: Governor Lamonte’s Office Update with actions to be taken
- March 15, 2020 – Sandra Allyn-Gauthier – email: explaining the cleaning procedures staff will follow at the Town Hall and that teleconferencing capabilities were being investigated so that the business of the town could continue.
March 17, 2020 – Nancy Musa – email: letter from Sandra Allyn-Gauthier with an update on the Towns responds to the health crisis and requesting that Chairs of Boards and Commissions cancel their non-essential meeting until the teleconferencing capabilities are in place
March 17, 2020 – Nancy Musa – email: Governor Lamonte’s update and newly adopted executive orders from 16th
March 20, 2020 – Nancy Musa – email: letting Chairs of Boards and Commissions know that teleconferencing capabilities are set up and the procedures that will need to be followed
March 24, 2020 – Nancy Musa – email: Governor Lamonte’s Updates and newly adopted executive orders from March 20th
March 24, 2020 – Nancy Musa – email: Governor Lamonte’s Updates and newly adopted executive orders from March 23rd
March 25, 2020 – Nancy Musa – email: Governor Lamonte’s Updates and newly adopted executive orders from March 24th
March 26, 2020 – Nancy Musa – email: Governor Lamonte’s Updates and newly adopted executive orders from March 25th
March 30, 2020 – Sandra Allyn-Gauthier – email: letter to the Town that a resident has tested positive and several phone numbers that people can use to get help
April 2, 2020 – Nancy Musa – email: Governor Lamonte’s Updates and newly adopted executive orders from April 1st
April 3, 2020 – Nancy Musa – email: Governor Lamonte’s Updates and newly adopted executive orders from April 2nd
April 7, 2020 – Sandra Allyn-Gauthier – email: letter stating the number of Covid-19 cases in the county, urging people to stay diligent in their efforts, check the Town’s website frequently for information, and stating the hours for the transfer station
April 8, 2020 – Nancy Musa – email: Governor Lamonte’s Updates from April 7th
April 9, 2020 – Nancy Musa – email: Governor Lamonte’s Updates from April 8th
April 9, 2020 – Nancy Musa – email: updating telecommunication procedures
April 14, 2020 – Donald Miles (FIG Capital) – email: letter promoting the use of tax lien sales
April 15, 2020 – Nancy Musa – email: reminder and key points to keeping the teleconferencing calls simple for all involved

3. **Public Comment** – There was none.

4. **Approval of Minutes:**

February 26, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes

**Andy Depta motioned to accept the Minutes as presented. Bob Congdon seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

Bob Congdon motioned to waive the Minutes from the Special Meeting of January 15, 2020 onto the agenda. **Andy Depta seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

January 15, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes

**Andy Depta motioned to accept the Minutes as presented. Stacey Becker seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**
5. No candidates for Alternate interviewed due to telecon meeting format.

6. Town Revenue and Status Report – John Spang

John Spang reported that 98.4% of the taxes have been collected; which is ahead of last year at this time. He pointed out that Line 2015 – Sale of Property - $50,000 is the gift received for Indian Town Road. Mr. Spang also pointed out that Town Clerks fees are slightly behind last year and that Investment Income is down. He pointed out that about half of the Mashantucket Pequot Grant has been received. At this time, it is hopeful that the town will come in on budget this year. Stacey Becker asked about the Town Road Aid (TRA) and Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated that it should be in by the end of this week.


John went over the Board of Education’s operating budget for the 9-school day in the month of March; the Governor’s Executive Orders regarding Education; and what to expect in the coming months:
- Per Governor's Orders education will continue.
- Per Governor's Orders schools will continue to engage students.
- Per Governor's Orders school will continue to employ and pay staff.
- Schools have shifted to digital learning even though it wasn't planned for and teachers are keeping students engaged in learning activities with 95% of the student population engaged.
- There will be several areas of the budget that will not have expenditures for the remainder of the year. Items such as fuel for buses and substitute teachers; however, there will be new expenses such as cleaning supplies and disinfects.

Andy Depta questioned the virtual learning that is occurring in Town, he shared that he can't find the plans or lessons posted online anywhere.

John said that he didn't know the actual plans or lessons and would forward the question to the Board of Education and email the answer to him. He went on to say the Board of Education is expecting their unencumbered balance as of June 30, 2020 to be higher than their originally expected $100,000.

Bob Congdon asked that John go through the unencumbered items and eliminate as much as possible by next month's meeting. Items like fuel, substitute teachers, legal expenses, and others. Sound accounting is needed in order to make tough decisions next month.

John Spang pointed out there will be some legal expenses due to unfinished negotiations with the bus drivers.

Attention was then turned to Capital Projects, specifically the funding of the Science Labs. Bob Congdon felt that it is problematic that the overage amount is going to come out of the operating budget and the decision was made by the Board of Education without going to a Town Meeting or the Board of Finance. Stacey Becker, who attended the BOE meeting when the additional funding for the Science Labs was discussed, pointed out that Sean Nugent asked that it be brought to the Board of Finance, but he was out voted. John Moulson felt that the overage should have come out of Capital Projects rather than their operating budget. Andy Depta suggested contacting the Board of Education for clarification on the matter. John Moulson will do so.
a. **BoE Liaison Report** - There was no report due to closures because of the health crisis.


Sandra reported that the Board of selectman budget is under budget at this time. Approximately 60% of the budget has been spent. The Board of Selectmen are keeping a close watch at the budget by looking at what can be put on hold and what needs to be done. They are anticipating a return of funds to the Town at the end of the fiscal year. By reaching out to department heads the following saving are anticipated:

- **Elections** – Due to the Governor’s Executive Order the Primary has been moved to August 11th creating a $3,000 savings.
- **Town insurance and gasoline and diesel use is down so there will be a savings there.**
- **Public Works** – reduce in salary and a mild winter have created savings; however, a few recent windstorms have occurred so we not out of the woods completely in this area. There is at this point an anticipated savings of $33,500.
- **Parks and Rec** – due to cancellation of events a savings of between $5,500 and 6,500 is expected. There are a few events planned for June, but whether they will occur is not definite.
- **Senior Affairs** is expecting to return $11,500
- **The Library** is expecting to return $11,400
- **PRA** – as of the March 27th Board of Selectmen Meeting are looking to return $30,000 to $50,000. Taking these all into account it looks like a possible return of between $107,000 to $127,000 to the Town.

Sandra then shared that the Town Hall staff continues to provide service to the citizens via emails, notices, and a new drop box has been added to the front of the Town Hall.

Bob Congdon comment that the TRA funds should leave about $120,000 in Public Works and suggested that the Board of Selectmen look into possibly increasing the chip sealing this year in anticipation that the following year will be a very hard year for budgets.

Andy Depa asked Sandra if the Board of Selectmen had a Plan B if the budget doesn’t pass in June. Sandra explained that past practice was for the Board of Finance to allocate funds to cover essential needs until the budget passes.

9. **PRA Update** –

Sean Nugent reminded the Board that they were waiting for the State to approve the additional 7 million Bond. The Bond has been approved by legislature and it was signed by the Governor, it is part of the Bond Package, and now waiting for it to be on the Bond Commission’s agenda. It was on the agenda, but they had difficulties on their teleconferencing meeting so we’re still waiting for that step to happen. Once that is done, we’ll move forward to finish the cleanup of the property.

Andy Depa asked because Riverwalk is shut down, if the clerk of works was on furlough or being paid. Sean pointed out it has always been the practice to pay for work as it is performed. So, we are not making any payments at this time.

10. **Old Business**

a. **2005-18 Bond Package Review**

b. **Proposed Capital Projects Budgeting Sheet – A. Depa**

Andy Depa motioned to accept the Capital Improvement Program Project Proposal Form. Matthew Davis seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
John Moulson asked that the typo in section two be corrected.

c. Annual Report Status – Stacey Becker

Stacey reported that she had received all but a few reports and hopes to have them soon. She is hoping to have a draft done by the end of next week and will share it with Zachary Maurice to edit.

d. Resurfacing Tennis and Basketball Courts

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier shared that Amy was working on the proposal and that because of the health crisis both the tennis and basketball courts are closed now.

e. Budget Calendar

John Moulson asked Bob Congdon to lead this discussion because of his experience with this topic.

Bob shared that the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education have until May 7th to submit their budgets to the Board of Finance. Then 2 workshops would be needed to discuss each budget in turn. Then typically the Board of Finance would hold public Hearings, Town Meeting, and finally a Referendum all of which can’t be done at this time due to Executive Orders.

Andy Depta asked for dates of those activities.

Bob explained that typically the Town Meeting was held on a Thursday and 10 days later on a Tuesday would be the Referendum.

Andy Depta asked if the Special Meetings would be held in early May.

Bob Congdon suggested to request those 2 Boards for their budgets as they stand now so that the Board of Finance can begin to look them over. He added that they can continue to adjust their budgets until May 7th. After a discussion about dates for these meetings.

Bob Congdon motioned that Special Meetings be held on May 13th at 7:00PM for a BoS Budget Workshop and May 14th at 7:00PM for a BoE Budget Workshop. Stacey Becker seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Stacey Becker stated that she would place the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education budgets in the Board of Finance Drop Box as soon as she receives them so members could start looking them over. She will also post the excel forms that were used last year to expedite the workshop process. She also asked how a Town Meeting would be held in these times?

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier read Governor Lamonte’s Executive Order on the matter pointing out that the governor is giving towns permission to do things differently this year in light of the health crisis, but it stresses “that reasonable access to the public and to allow their input”.

Bob Congdon stressed that we proceed as “normal” until we are told differently because things are changing daily.

11. New Business – There was none.
12. Public Comment - There was none.

13. Adjournment

Bob Congdon motion to adjourn at 8:21 P.M. Andy Depta seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Lang
Recording Secretary
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