Preston Board of Finance  
Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, July 15, 2020 at 7:00 P.M.  
Teleconference Call

**Call to Order** – John Moulson called the meeting to order at 7:04 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 – excused
   - Vacancy

   **Also Present**
   - Sandra Allyn-Gauthier – First Selectwoman
   - Jerry Grabarek - Selectman
   - John Spang – Financial Director
   - 2 other members of the public

2. **Correspondence**

   John Moulson asked Board members to refer to their packets. One letter would be discussed later.

3. **Public Comment**

   There was none.

4. **Approval of Minutes**

   **June 17, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes**

   Andy Depta motioned to approve the June 17, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. Denise Beale seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. **Candidate for Alternate Interview (None due to format)**

6. **Town Revenue and Status Report**
John Spang reports the Town Revenues are not final yet. Revenues are still coming in and being tabulated. Property taxes are at $11.6 million but were budgeted at $11.4 million. Town Clerk fees are at $69,700 which is above budget. Building permits were budgeted at $45,000 but to date is at $63,000 an $18,000 increase. Landfill fees are also ahead of the budget. The Fie Departments $35,000 has come in. Also, State Aid and the Mashantucket Grant have come in and are posted. LoCIP didn’t come in yet, but it hasn’t been spent. At this point it’s looking favorable for a $173,000 overage.

It’s important to note that taxes are due July 1st but will not be considered late until after October 1st.

Andy Depta pointed out a discrepancy on the label of a line item – 4015 Sale of Property.

John Spang shared that the discrepancy is correct and in the new system it will be relabeled for clarity.

Stacey Becker asked if all General and Board of Education budget and Bond payments have been made.

John Spang acknowledged that all payments have been made.


John Spang shared that there was no formal report. He stated that the unencumbered balance is approximately $173,000 with a few invoices still to come in and some payroll still to paid out. Several grants related to COVID are needing to be completed and submitted that will help offset some of the spending. Most of the money being returned is within transportation and buses. There were no salaries, repairs, or gas spent since March.

Other areas of savings were substitute teacher pay and after school activities that were cancelled. Also, Health & Dental will come in under budget by $3,000 because teachers will pay more for their plan.

a. BoE Liaison Report - Andy Depta

Andy Depta shared 3 major points that were discussed at the Board of Education’s meeting.

➢ Capital Improvements – The Science Lab is on schedule to be completed by the start of school.
➢ Three new buses came in; however, it was decided to keep the 3 old buses to deal with the COVID regulations and potentially having to increase bus runs.
➢ PPM parking lot and roof projects are waiting for cost analysis of these projects before they move forward.

The school is still working on their plans to reopen and it is still projected to open on August 31st.

Stacey Becker asked when the final plans for reopening be in place.

Andy Depta stated that the plan not only needs to be set but also approved by the state.

John Spang stated that schools must have their plans submitted to the state by July 24th.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier reported that there were still outstanding items from June that need to be paid such as payroll and Social Security. There are approximately $84,000 unencumbered funds. And the State Police cost of $350,000. Sandra Allyn-Gauthier conservatively estimates a $180,000 or possibly higher to be returned to the town.

Sandra then shared the issue of water damage to the Town Hall on July 1st during a heavy rainstorm. She explained that the event occurred luckily while people were still in the building so it could be dealt with quickly and efficiently by the Town Crew and the Fire Dept. Both worked diligently to minimize the damage. CERMA was notified to access the damage. Mystic Air Quality was called to test for lead, mold, and asbestos. They are still assessing what work and remediation must be done to rectify the situation. Until repairs are completed the lower level staff will need to work elsewhere. It is estimated that the repairs will take 30-60 days. Fortunately, no documents were damaged.

Andy Depta asked if the windows will be redesigned.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier explained the CIRMA is doing a risk and cost analysis of the event, and the likelihood of it reoccurring in the future.

9. PRA Update

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier shared that the funds needed are on the Tuesday July 21st Bond Commission Agenda. The PRA are hoping that everything is done and they’re up and running by the end of the summer.

Stacey Becker asked if it would be approved.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier replied 99.9% sure that the Bond will be approved.

10. Old Business

a. Amend Rules of Order for Alternates

John Moulson shared that the comments from both the Town’s Attorney and the Secretary of the State state that alternates need to be from the same party as the absent member; John stated that it seems to indicate we need a democrat and a republican alternate.

Andy Depta pointed out that is not indicated in our policy.

Stacey Becker asked if the Board’s policy should be reworded to include, ‘in accordance with State Statue 9-167a.

John Moulson stated that we could make it more restrictive.

Andy Depta shared that he felt Stacey Becker’s solution was all that was needed.

Stacey Becker shared that she felt that the alternates should not be treated separately.
John Moulson shared that it’s a 2-member board and that we are appointing them as alternates.

Bob Congdon stated that we need to fill the vacancy with a democrat or an independent.

Stacey Becker stated that she would update the Board’s policy in the 3 different areas and that the board could review and vote on them at the next meeting.

Bob Congdon agreed with these actions.

b. Annual Report Status – Stacey Becker

Stacey Becker reported that with the help of Sandra Allyn-Gauthier and Leigh Pappas hard copies of the Annual Report were printed and distributed to 4 locations around town in addition to the Transfer Station. There members of the public would have access to the report. The locations were Lu Mac’s, Fleming’s, Lopresti’s and Preston Market.

Andy Depta asked if the business were receptive to allowing the Annual Report to be placed at their business.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated that all the businesses were contacted ahead of time to gain their permission and all were happy to help.

c. 2015-18 Bond Package Review

Andy Depta asked the purpose of this on our agenda.

Bob Congdon suggested that the Board of Selectmen explain where we are with the different Bonds and accept the report.

Andy Depta suggested that we let the auditor deal with this.

John Moulson requested that John Spang discuss this with the auditor.

Stacey Becker asked if we need to motion to approve the pay offs.

Bob Congdon explained that when a project is completed some are under budget and some are over. The remaining funds need to be dealt with so that when a Bond is completed it shows a zero balance.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated that recommendations need to be made about what to do with any remaining funds.

Bob Congdon stated that any recommendations for excessive Bond money must go to a Town Meeting to make that decision legal.

Stacey Becker asked who had all that information.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier explained that John Spang and Sue Nylen were working on those accounts.
d. Issues with our email system - Stacey Becker

Stacey Becker explained and shared on screen the different ways that the Board of Finance could receive their emails. She explained that any emails that come into the Board immediately gets sent to everyone through forwarding rule. She stressed that all communication should go through the Chair.

Andy Depta questioned why a report he sent out also came back to him. He also questioned that his report was considered a communication.

Stacey Becker explained that she could set up the email so that it shows the original author’s email address. She also cautioned member to not respond to the email that that should be done by the Chair.

John Moulson stated that he didn’t have a problem with everyone getting the email address.

Stacey stressed again that even though every email goes to every member only the Chair responds.

Bob Congdon stated that it was critical that if we see an email, we can share with the chair only how to respond to it.

It was decided that the the sender’s email address would be visible to all.

e. Resurfacing Tennis and Basketball Courts

There was no new information on this topic.

Stacey Becker asked if this project would qualify for the STEAP Grant which requires the funds to be use for recreational purposes.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier agreed that this project would qualify and mentioned that the deadline is August 14th. He said she would investigate it.

Bob Congdon suggested that the school parking lot be a part of the same application. Bob also asked about CHIP Sealing where the town was at with that.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier shared that they were still working on that.

11. New Business

a. Tax Collector Suspense List

Andy Depta shared that he had a long discussion with Jill Keith about this List and how it worked with sending out delinquent taxes.

Bob Congdon shared that because of this List we don’t spend money to send out delinquent tax notices.
Bob Congdon motioned to approve the Tax Collector Suspense List submitted by the Tax Collector. Andy Depta seconded the motion the motion carried unanimously.

b. **New letter from Auditor Sandra Welwood**

John Spang summarized the letter explaining that Sandra Welwood would like additional funds to prepare the audit report this year due to the additional requirements because of the pandemic. The government is now asking auditors to look at certain items that are greatly impacted by COVID, such as the CARES Act. He also explained that Sandra Welwood put together a questionnaire with 21 questions asking for details to help her prepare the kind of report the government is requesting of auditors.

John Moulson stated that the additional $8500 seemed a bit high.

Bob Congdon asked if we need to act on this.

John Spang shared that she is requesting that we sign an amendment to our contract and that she has an answer by July 15th, or she stops work.

Bob Congdon suggested she provide an explanation of how she came up with a cost 30% over the contracted price.

Andy Depta agreed with Bob Congdon and then asked if this cost is incurred because of COVID could the funds come from a grant or federal funds.

Bob Congdon suggested FEMA. And then stated that she takes 2 weeks to complete our audit this is very expensive.

John Spang said he would share with her the Board’s feeling and the situation.

Bob Congdon stated that he realized that things are being required this year that are different but we’re a municipality that has worked with her before.

Andy Depta asked the group where we go from here.

John Moulson suggested that he write her a letter to request justification of the increase. He will send a draft to the members so that they can make suggestions.

Andy Depta felt the draft should be sent to the Board of Selectmen and John Spang as well.

Denise Beale shared that her experience with the additional accounting that needs to be done due to the pandemic that the request doesn’t seem too high. From what she is seeing and experiencing firsthand dealing with the many new requirements for accountants; everyone’s going to incur these costs because of COVID.
Stacey Becker stated that regardless of the tone of the letter we need to send our letter and go from there. She then asked John Spang if she is aware that we won’t respond today.

John Spang answered that she is aware.

Bob Congdon suggested that John Spang call Sandra Welwood and let her know a letter is forthcoming. And please mention reviewing the completed bond packages for the upcoming audit.

12. Public Comment –

There was none.

13. Adjournment

Bob Congdon motioned to adjourn at 8:44 P.M... Stacey Becker seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Lang

Recording Secretary