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## BOARD OF FINANCE

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## BOARD OF FINANCE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

Thursday, February 8, 2024

Time: 7:00 p.m.

*Via Zoom*

### MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Chair, Richard Freedman, called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. *(Video 00:00:10)*

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair, Richard Freedman; Vice Chair, Mary Lou Rinaldi; Members: Geoff Alswanger, Laura Burwick, Dennis Mahoney, and J.R. McMullen.

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Tamu Lucero, Ben Barnes, Bill Maguire, Anita Carpenter, Frank Petise, Luke Bittenwieser, Erin McKenna, Jody Bishop-Pullan and Chris Dellaselva.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: There was none.

#### 1. MINUTES *(Video 00:00:57)*

Request for approval of Minutes of the following meeting:

01112023 Regular Monthly Meeting

Submitted by: Clerk, Board of Finance

***Motion to approve by J.R. McMullen, seconded by Mary Lou Rinaldi. The vote passed unanimously, 6-0-0.***

2. BUDGET UPDATE – BOARD OF EDUCATION (Video 00:01:26)

Ryan Fealey, Director of Finance, Board of Education, was not present. Dr. Tamu Lucero addressed the Board in Mr. Fealey’s absence. Ms. Burwick referenced Mr. Fealey’s report that was submitted prior to the meeting and asked for confirmation that the Governor’s budget will reduce funds (Alliance Grant dollars) previously allocated to K to 12 funding. Ms. Burwick asked if that amount has been considered in the budget that’s been submitted to the Board of Education. Dr. Lucero advised that the Alliance funds, estimated to be 1.5 million dollars, were included when creating the budget.

Mr. Alswanger pointed out that after reviewing the District Reference Group (DRG) chart in Mr. Fealey’s meeting support documents, Stamford falls behind all other districts in terms of non-local support (source: [https://public-edsight.ct.gov/overview/per-pupil-expenditures-by-function---district/revenue-sources?language=en\\_US](https://public-edsight.ct.gov/overview/per-pupil-expenditures-by-function---district/revenue-sources?language=en_US)). Mr. Alswanger reiterated the City will not be able to properly fund the schools without fair and adequate state funding. Dr. Lucero stated that one of the things being adjusted in policy work is recognizing the importance of continued dedicated advocacy work. Dr. Lucero announced that she is now the Co-chair of the Urban Superintendents Association. In that capacity, Dr. Lucero has written letters to our State delegation in addition to the Education Committee. Jackie Heftman, BOE Chair, is working with other urban district Board Chairs. The goal is to strengthen lobbying efforts in new and innovative ways to secure more funding.

3. REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF CHANGE ORDER (AMOUNT REQUESTED IS GREATER THAN 15% OF ORIGINAL CONTRACT) TO THE FY22 CONTRACT WITH RSM US (Video 00:11:02)

This is a request to approve a change order to add \$620,000 to the contract value with RSM US, bringing the FY22 amount to \$966,500 and the three-year contract value to \$1,693,000.

The City entered into the contract with RSM US to complete audits of City, WPCA and several pension fund financial statements for FY22, 23 and 24. The audit work for FY22 was only recently completed and involved considerably more effort than the original agreement envisioned because, in significant part, the City did not provide audit-ready financial statements in a timely way. The City’s shortcomings in completing this work are reflected in the findings made by RSM, including more than 120 adjusting journal entries after the financial reports had been submitted for audit. Under our agreement, additional time required by RSM based on the City’s failure to comply with the criteria in the engagement letter will result in additional costs for completing the audit.

Invoices received to date from RSM for work on the FY22 audit are summarized below:

Invoice total	City	WPCA	Pension
<b>738,500</b>	<b>623,000</b>	<b>57,750</b>	<b>57,750</b>
623,000	623,000		
57,750			57,750
57,750		57,750	
<b>738,500</b>	<b>623,000</b>	<b>57,750</b>	<b>57,750</b>

In addition, RSM has claimed additional costs based on total hours performed between \$100,000 and \$225,000. All told, RSM reports having worked 5,773 hours, compared to the original estimate of 2,100 hours. Additional support for this claim has been requested and upon receipt of that information, negotiation for an equitable resolution with RSM will resume.

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Once this final amount is resolved, RSM's total bill for the FY2022 audit services will be up to \$965,000, which is more than 15% greater than the \$346,500.00 previously approved by the BOR for FY22. Therefore, this change needs the approval of the Director of Administration, the Mayor and the Board of Finance per City Code Sec. 23-18.4.C.(2).

<b>Action Requested:</b>	Approval of Contract Increase over 15%
<b>Amount:</b>	\$620,000
<b>Submitted by:</b>	Ben Barnes, Director of Administration
<b>Attending:</b>	Ben Barnes

Ben Barnes presented the detailed information to support the approval of this item.

Members of the Board reiterated their disappointment in city employees' inadequate contributions during the process to complete the FY22 Audit. Chair Freedman stated that we shouldn't be paying very expensive people billing by the hour to complete work that should have been done by city employees on the payroll.

***Motion to approve by Mary Lou Rinaldi, seconded by Richard Freedman. Dennis Mahoney made an amended motion to authorize \$417,250, seconded by J.R. McMullen. The amended motion failed by a vote of 2-4-0. Freedman, Rinaldi, Alswanger and Burwick voted against. The original motion to approve passed by a vote of 5-1-0. J.R. McMullen voted against.***

4. REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF A CHANGE ORDER (AMOUNT REQUESTED IS GREATER THAN 15% OF ORIGINAL CONTRACT) TO THE CONTRACT BETWEEN THE CITY AND ATTORNEY MEDNICK  
(Video 00:57:23)

The City entered this contract with Attorney Mednick in October of 2022. At that time, no Board approvals were required because his fees were estimated not to exceed \$100,000.00. The City later sought and received approval from the Board of Finance and Board of Representatives in October of 2023, at which time Attorney Mednick's fees were estimated to reach \$177,000.00

To date, Attorney Mednick has been paid \$203,550.05 for these services. He now seeks an additional \$22,520.35 in his final bill. With this final amount, Attorney Mednick's total bill for these services will be \$226,070.40, which is more than 15% greater than the \$177,000.00 previously approved by the BOR and, therefore, needs the approval of the Director of Administration, the Mayor and the Board of Finance per City Code Sec. 23-18.4.C.(2). Please note that Attorney Mednick's final bill reflects a \$48,306.85 write-off from him and a \$10,632.75 write off from Halloran & Sage.

<b>Action Requested:</b>	Approval of Contract Increase over 15%
<b>Amount:</b>	\$226,070.40
<b>Submitted by:</b>	Chris Dellaselva, Assistant Corporate Counsel
<b>Attending:</b>	Chris Dellaselva

Chris Dellaselva presented this item.

Chair Freedman summed up the comments of the Board by noting this item's increased expense has nothing to do with the merits or non-merits of the charter revision efforts; rather, the poor management of the legal fees by the Commission, the Board of Reps, and the City.

***Motion to approve by Richard Freedman, seconded by J.R. McMullen. The vote passed unanimously, 6-0-0.***

5. REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION – FY23/24 – INCREASE CONTINGENCY (Video 01:02:54)  
This is a request to transfer \$1,500,000 from detailed salary line items to Contingency Fund.

<b>Action Requested:</b>	Approval of Appropriation
<b>Amount:</b>	\$1,500,000
<b>Fund/Budget:</b>	Salary/General Fund
<b>Submitted by:</b>	Elda Sinani, Director of OPM
<b>Attending:</b>	Bill Maguire, Assistant Director of OPM

Bill Maguire advised that the funding for this item comes from salary line items detailed in the submitted meeting [document](#).

At the time contract negotiations were finalized for MAA, Police and Fire, the existing contingency fund balance (funded in anticipation of these settlements) was insufficient to honor the actual final settlements. The Board requested that the necessary additional funds be transferred from individually identified sources rather than the originally submitted General Fund.

***Motion to approve by Laura Burwick, seconded by Mary Lou Rinaldi. The vote passed unanimously, 6-0-0.***

6. REQUEST FOR A CAPITAL PROJECT APPROPRIATION– (001390) – FY 23/24 –GRANT --MICROTRANSIT PROGRAM (Video 01:08:22)

This is a request for a capital project appropriation that will be used to create a microtransit pilot program to enhance transit and mobility options for residents from traditionally underserved neighborhoods and reduce traffic congestion.

<b>Action Requested:</b>	Approval of Appropriation
<b>Amount:</b>	\$2,558,239.66
<b>Fund/Budget:</b>	Grant (State – DOT)
<b>Submitted by:</b>	Luke Buttenwieser, Junior Planner, Transportation
<b>Attending:</b>	Frank Petise, Transportation Bureau Chief Luke Buttenwieser

Frank Petise and Luke Buttenwieser presented this item, a State grant funded microtransit pilot program. The program would supplement the current transit system by providing an on-demand vehicle transport (similar in nature to UBER/LYFT) to underserved neighborhoods on the east and the west sides, connecting them to downtown and the transportation center. The city currently lacks a consistently accessible east/west connection.

***Motion to approve by Geoff Alswanger, seconded by Richard Freedman. The vote passed unanimously, 6-0-0.***

7. REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF CONTRACT BETWEEN THE CITY AND FUSS & O'NEILL, INC. – RFP 2023.0003 – STAMFORD COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCY PLAN (Video 01:24:42)

This is a request for approval of a contract with Fuss & O'Neill for a Stamford Coastal Flood Resiliency Plan (RFP 2023.0003). This Project will include data collection and analysis, modeling, identification of critical infrastructure and analysis of the urban tree canopy, extensive community engagement; preliminary conceptual plans including cost benefit analysis and identification of potential grant and funding opportunities. Fuss & O'Neill will substantially complete this work within eighteen (18) months of contract execution. The fees for these services will be \$250,000 payable on a work completed basis. Fuss & O'Neill will also be reimbursed for certain expenses not to exceed \$5,000.

<b>Action Requested:</b>	Approval of Contract
<b>Amount:</b>	\$255,000.00
<b>Submitted by:</b>	Erin McKenna, Senior Parks Planner
<b>Attending:</b>	Erin McKenna

Erin McKenna presented this item and the need for this Stamford Coastal Flood Resiliency Plan which will allow Stamford to develop new projects that can take advantage of grant funding opportunities for final design and implementation.

***Motion to approve by Geoff Alswanger, seconded by Laura Burwick. The vote passed unanimously, 6-0-0.***

8. REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION –FY23/24 – GRANT – STATE FUNDS – HISTORIC DOCUMENTS PRESERVATION (Video 01:26:54)

This is a request to appropriate additional funds to match the grant award which was increased from \$10,500 to \$11,000.

<b>Action Requested:</b>	Approval of Appropriation
<b>Amount:</b>	\$500
<b>Fund/Budget:</b>	Grant (State)
<b>Submitted by:</b>	Lyda Ruijter, City & Town Clerk
<b>Attending:</b>	Anita Carpenter, Grants Officer

Anita Carpenter presented this item.

***Motion to approve by Dennis Mahoney, seconded by Mary Lou Rinaldi. The vote passed unanimously, 6-0-0.***

9. REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION – PUBLIC HEALTH MEDICAL RESERVE CORP (MRC)--  
FY23/24 – GRANT – STATE FUNDS – CONNECTICUT HEALTH CARE COALITION (Video 01:27:27)

The Stamford Department of Public Health Medical Reserve Corp (MRC) has received a grant from the Connecticut Health Care Coalition for a "go bag" giveaway for the community to increase family preparedness. A large portion of the Stamford population is cost burdened, which can interfere with residents' ability to prepare appropriately for disaster. During the giveaway, residents will fill a backpack with essential supplies that will be purchased with this grant and donated by our Community Partners. The Community Partners will also be in attendance to provide information and resources to enhance preparedness. The event is anticipated to take place in April 2024 to prepare for hurricane season.

The grant will pay for 200 backpacks each containing one flashlight, emergency ponchos, emergency blanket, bottled water, survival whistle, battery powered radio, spare batteries, granola bars and soup. The backpack will also have brochures and fact sheets about preparedness

<b>Action Requested:</b>	Approval of Appropriation
<b>Amount:</b>	\$9,743
<b>Fund/Budget:</b>	Grant (State)
<b>Submitted by:</b>	Jody Bishop-Pullan, Director of Health
<b>Attending:</b>	Jody Bishop-Pullan

Anita Carpenter commented on this item which will provide additional "go bags" to increase family preparedness.

***Motion to approve by Laura Burwick, seconded by Mary Lou Rinaldi. The vote passed unanimously, 6-0-0.***

10. TRANSFER REQUEST – FY23/24 OPERATING BUDGET – PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
(Video 01:28:43)

In FY2023, the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Grant (PHEP) Budget was revised because of the opportunity to support existing staff with grant funding. FY2024 reflects the same types of cost as were incurred in FY2023. The PHEP grant is used to plan and build capacity to strengthen the City's ability to respond to a range of public health threats and emergencies.

<b>Action Requested:</b>	Approval of transfer
<b>Amount:</b>	\$76,695
<b>Fund/Budget:</b>	Public Health Department "Consultant" line item to "Salary" line item
<b>Submitted by:</b>	Jody Bishop-Pullan, Director of Health
<b>Attending:</b>	Jody Bishop-Pullan

Per Anita Carpenter, this transfer corrects the original budget submission error in which the Grants Department designated funds to "Consultant line item" when it should have been to "Salary line item".

***Motion to approve by Geoff Alswanger, seconded by J.R. McMullen. The vote passed 5-0-1. Mary Lou Rinaldi abstained.***

11. REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION – FY23/24 – MAA WAGE INCREASE (Video 01:33:28)  
This is a request to appropriate funds from contingency to pay increased obligations for FY23/24 per the proposed contract settlement. **\*\*\*Item FAILED at 11152023 BOF Special Meeting and was HELD at the 12142023 and 01112024 Regular Monthly Meetings\*\*\***

**Action Requested:** Approval of Appropriation  
**Amount:** \$540,606  
**Fund/Budget:** Contingency  
**Submitted by:** Elda Sinani, Director of OPM  
**Attending:** Bill Maguire, Assistant Director of OPM

**Motion to approve items #11, #12 and #13 by Mary Lou Rinaldi, seconded by Geoff Alswanger.  
The vote passed unanimously, 6-0-0.**

12. REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION – FY23/24 – STAMFORD POLICE WAGE INCREASE  
This is a request to appropriate funds from contingency to pay increased obligations for FY23/24 per the recent contract settlement. **\*\*\*Item FAILED at 11152023 BOF Special Meeting and was HELD at the 12142023 and 01112023 Regular Monthly Meetings\*\*\***

**Action Requested:** Approval of Appropriation  
**Amount:** \$2,203,914  
**Fund/Budget:** Contingency  
**Submitted by:** Elda Sinani, Director of OPM  
**Attending:** Bill Maguire, Assistant Director of OPM

**\*\*\*See item #11, as items #11, #12 and #13 were considered together.\*\*\***

13. REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION – FY23/24 – STAMFORD FIREFIGHTERS WAGE INCREASE **\*\*\*Item was HELD at the 11092023, 12142023 and 01112024 BOF Regular Monthly Meetings\*\*\***  
This is a request to appropriate funds from contingency to pay increased obligations for FY23/24 per the contract settlement.

**Action Requested:** Approval of Appropriation  
**Amount:** \$4,461,103  
**Fund/Budget:** Contingency  
**Submitted by:** Elda Sinani, Director of OPM  
**Attending:** Bill Maguire, Assistant Director of OPM

**\*\*\*See item #11, as items #11, #12 and #13 were considered together.\*\*\***

14. BOARD OF FINANCE ITEM – REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED FY24/25 BUDGET PRESENTATION CALENDAR (Video 01:35:00)

The FY 24/25 BOF [Budget Calendar](#) was discussed, revised and approved.

ADJOURNMENT: (Video 01:51:15)

Motion to adjourn by Mary Lou Rinaldi, seconded by J.R. McMullen. The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

[This meeting is on video.](#)

*Tracy Donoghue*  
Tracy Donoghue  
Clerk of the Board