

**Board of Finance  
December 14, 2021  
Regular Meeting**

**Minutes**

**Present:** Chairman Kerry Guilfoyle; Members Dan Charest, Ben Witte, Paul LeClair, Lou Helt; Alternate Member Allen Voghel; Member of the Public Charlie Neale; Treasurer Gordon Ross, First Selectman Dan Jerram; Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

Chairman Guilfoyle called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

Chairman Guilfoyle seated alternate Allen Voghel to fill the vacancy on the Board for the meeting. The Agenda was adopted without any changes.

**Minutes – November 16, 2021**

**MOTION:** by Helt to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2021, meeting as presented seconded by Voghel.

Board of Finance member Dan Charest asked a question about the agreement between MDC and Ski Sundown and the water diversion permit that is mentioned in the minutes. First Selectman Dan Jerram explained about the raw water feed connection that was given to the town by MDC many years ago when the Reservoir was created. The pipe was disconnected due to not being able to use raw water to mix with potable water. Ski Sundown approached town for use of the connection for snowmaking purposes. Ski Sundown pays MDC for the water usage. Mr. Charest thanked the First Selectman for the background information.

Chairman Guilfoyle called for a vote on the motion.

*Unanimous.*

**Communications:**

Chairman Guilfoyle stated that she had received (and forwarded to the Board members) an updated regular meeting schedule from Board of Education. Also, she had received a letter from the Democratic Town Committee recommending Charlie Neale to fill the vacancy on the Board of Finance. Guilfoyle commented that the appointment would occur later in the meeting.

**Public Comment**

Aulay Carlson, West Hill Road, addressed the Board and read a letter he wrote. The topic of the letter was the federal government APRA funds. Aulay was critical of the process currently in place regarding determining the best use of the American Recovery Plan Act funds. Mr. Carlson wants to see a committee formed and he also would like to see a list of the ideas that have been mentioned at the meetings posted on the town website. He encouraged the Board of Finance to take the lead on determining the best use of funds. He suggested that the Board of Finance form a subcommittee to review requests for funding and make their recommendations for best use of the funds. There was no discussion regarding the letter.

**Discussion and possible action of BOF vacancy**

Chairman Guilfoyle reiterated her earlier statement that a letter had been received from the Democratic Town Committee recommending that Charles (Charlie) Neale be appointed by the Board of Finance to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of former Chairman Wexler.

**MOTION:** by Helt to approve Charles Neale to be appointed to fill the vacancy on the Board of Finance, seconded by Witte.

*Unanimous*

Ms. Guilfoyle welcomed Mr. Neale to the Board and reminded him that he will need to be sworn in prior to taking his seat on the Board.

Mr. Neale asked for permission to address the Board and offer some of his personal thoughts. Mr. Neale gave his opinion regarding town management, stating that politics should not play primary role in decision making; it is his belief that decisions should be made based on doing what is the best for the town. Mr. Neale stated that as a newcomer to the Board of Finance, he would ask for patience as he “learns the ropes.”

**CARES Act**

First Selectman Jerram informed the Board of Finance that there are some funds remaining from the CARES Act funding that need to be committed prior to the end of the calendar year. He stated that the Town used some of the funds earlier in the year to supplement funding for the Farmington Valley Health District to provide COVID vaccine clinics. These clinics were extremely successful in helping residents get their vaccines. Some towns used CARES funding to purchase Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when COVID first became an issue. New Hartford was able to get adequate supplies of PPE through Emergency Management and other sources and therefore did not need to use the CARES funding for the purchase of PPE. This resulted in funds remaining in the allocation set aside for New Hartford. New Hartford Ambulance Association has reached out and notified the Town that their expenses increased substantially due to COVID. They had a lack of volunteers available due to the fear of COVID and this required having to rely on “pay for service” providers to keep the Ambulance barn staffed. The Association is significantly over budget at this time. First Selectman Jerram would like to have the Board of Finance consider using some of the CARES funding be used for the Ambulance Association. Additionally, Jerram asked the Board to consider an appropriation to the Farmington Valley Visiting Nurse Association to be used to provide additional Visiting Nurse Services to Seniors in New Hartford. Funds could be used to provide outreach services to insure that the needs of Seniors are being met during this pandemic. He noted that isolation has been a problem for many seniors and it would be beneficial to have extra outreach to perform wellness checks on Seniors who have not felt comfortable with resuming normal activities. Jerram explained that addressing a population that has been impacted by COVID is an acceptable use of the COVID CARES ACT funding. Chairman Guilfoyle asked what the difference was between Farmington Valley Visiting Nurse Association (FVVNA) and Foothills Visiting Nurse (FVN) services. Mr. Jerram explained that they are both provide visiting nurse services; however, the Selectmen have been considering changing providers and this is a good opportunity to try Farmington Valley and see what they can offer. Jerram noted that FVVNA works closely with the

Farmington Valley Health District which is the health district that services New Hartford. Jerram suggested that the remaining CARES funds be split between the Ambulance and services for seniors, with each entity receiving \$19,764. Board of Finance member Lou Helt agreed that seniors have suffered due to isolation that occurred during COVID and she supported seeking extra services. Member Charest asked if Barkhamsted would be providing additional funding to the Ambulance since they benefit from the service, too. Mr. Jerram replied that Barkhamsted did not get the same amount of CARES funding that New Hartford received and that he believed that their funds have been exhausted.

**MOTION:** by Helt to approve an appropriation of \$19,764 from CARES act funds to New Hartford Ambulance Association, seconded by Charest.

Member Charest asked what the limits are for additional appropriations by the Board of Finance. Mr. Jerram replied that the Board of Finance can supplement each department once per fiscal year with a cap of up to \$20,000. The Visiting Nurse and the Ambulance line items are in different departments; therefore both lines can receive additional appropriations up to the cap. If there is need for an additional appropriation within either of the two departments, town meeting approval will be required.

*Unanimous.*

**MOTION:** by Helt to approve an appropriation of \$19,764 to the visiting nurse line to be used for additional senior services; seconded by Leclair.

*Unanimous.*

**ARPA update:**

First Selectman Dan Jerram presented an update to the Board regarding the American Rescue Plan Act funding and options for use of the funds. He stated that there has been two public information meetings and there was good attendance at both meetings. The Board of Selectmen will hold special meetings to review/discuss the ideas suggested at the meetings and also to discuss the emailed requests that have been received.

Mr. Jerram informed the Board that he will be suggesting that some of the ARPA funds be used to pay for the expenses incurred to promote the public meetings. Informational postcards were sent to all households informing them of the meetings. Additionally, Mr. Jerram would like to see some of the funding set aside for administrative expenses. It may be necessary to hire a clerk that would be responsible for assisting with the clerical responsibilities that come with the administration of the funds. These types of expenses are allowable under the rules of the program. He plans to seek approval from the Selectmen to submit these expenses to the Board of Finance consideration of town meeting approval. Board member Helt stated that she was pleased to see good attendance and a good cross section of people at the meetings.

Member Charest asked if there will be a methodology in place for reviewing the requests for use of the funds that have been and will be made. He wanted to know if the Selectmen will be looking to see if there will be future expense associated with some of the ideas. He expressed his opinion that future liabilities need to be considered with a one-time allocation of funding. How will they determine which

proposals to fund? Mr. Jerram replied that as suggestions come in, the Board of Selectmen will need to consider each request on its own merit and determine what is the best use of these funds. It will be a work in progress. There is no rush to spend the funds. The funds don't need to be expended until 2024. Some suggestions that have been made include GIS mapping, preservation of water quality at West Hill Pond, financial assistance to the libraries and improvements to the parks. First Selectman Jerram informed the Board that sewer and water infrastructure improvements are a "free pass" – expenditures associated with these improvements are automatically approved expenses.

The Board of Education and Region 7 have received their own funds and Mr. Jerram noted that one nearby town did use some of their funds to assist in psychological assessments for children due to the negative impact COVID has had on mental health of children.

Member Ben Witte commented that he would like to be sure that the Board of Finance liaison is involved in the process; if the liaison is involved and included, then there shouldn't be any concerns among Board members regarding the process. The Board of Finance chose a liaison for that purpose. A discussion occurred regarding the New Hartford Ambulance requesting consideration for funds for a new ambulance. Their ambulances are older. Member Leclair asked what the lead time is for getting ambulance. Jerram replied that it could be many months. He gave the police car as an example, stating that it was ordered over 6 months ago and has still not arrived. The members on the Board supported the ambulance in concept, but no formal approval was given.

#### **Reports:**

Chairman Guilfoyle noted that all of the financial reports were sent well in advance of the meeting and thanked bookkeeper Witte for sending them to the Board members.

Ms. Guilfoyle questioned the \$14,000 in engineering expenses already incurred this year. First Selectman Dan Jerram replied that expenses have been incurred for the redesign of Cottage Street at the intersection of Route 219 near Callahan Park and Cedar Lane Bridge repairs.

Mr. Jerram informed the Board that there will be additional engineering services needed for river access behind Town Hall as requested by the Fire Department.

#### **Operations Update:**

Town Clerk will be appointed at a special meeting of Board of Selectmen at the beginning of January. This is still considered to be an elected position with an expiring term in January. Once the existing term expires, it becomes an appointed position.

The First Selectman informed the Board members that the town owned property on East Cotton Hill known as Surdam Farm has been vacated. This property had been rented for years and the tenants have recently moved out. Selectmen will need to discuss what should be done with this property. The audit is being completed.

Police Office Dan Janco is retiring and Officer Christopher Sorrel is leaving to take a job at end of month. An update was given on the New Hartford House; the owner has had a survey completed and plans to meet with an architect.

The proposed sale of the water and sewer asset sale is moving forward.

The Brodie Bathrooms are still a project that will be going out to bid as soon as there is time to work on that.

The GASB report for pension has been received. The Plan is 95% funded.

First Selectman Jerram stated that the Grand list will not be affected by the surge in sales prices recently seen in New Hartford. The Waring facility recently sold for 8 million, Marandinos plaza for 2 million, but these will not increase the grand list number.

**Treasurer Report:**

Town Treasurer Gordon Ross addressed the Finance Board. Mr. Ross explained that the treasurer is responsible for taking control of the tax revenue received and investing the proceeds into short term investments. Currently, there are a couple of newer money markets that have been offered to the town through Northwest Community Bank. Those money markets are the Municipal Money Market and the Platinum Money Market. Mr. Ross stated that the Treasurer is allowed to work with the First Selectman to bond on behalf of the town. Mr. Ross informed the Board members that the Town maintains a Standard and Poor's rating and that the rating is as good as it can get. The town is in good shape with debt ratios being low for a town the size of New Hartford.

Mr. Ross stated that the ARPA money is currently in the General Fund.

There were no questions for the Treasurer.

**Discussion and Possible Action on 2022 Meeting Date Schedule**

Chairman Guilfoyle distributed a list of proposed meeting dates for regular meetings of the Board of Finance. She proposed that the majority of meetings remain on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month –at 7:00 PM, with special meetings being called as needed.

**MOTION:** by Charest to approve the meeting schedule as presented, seconded by Helt.

*Unanimous.*

Having no other business, Chairman Guilfoyle called for a motion to adjourn.

**MOTION:** by Helt to adjourn at 8:40 PM; seconded by Charest.

*Unanimous.*

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant  
(substitute recording secretary)*

*Attachments:*

*Board of Finance meeting dates*

*Letter from Mary Beth Greenwood endorsing Charlie Neale to fill vacancy on Board of Finance*