

**Town of New Hartford
Board of Finance
Virtual Regular Meeting (via ZOOM)
MINUTES
September 8, 2020**

Present (via ZOOM): Chairman Regina Wexler, Ben Witte, Steve Tuxbury, Dan Charest, Kerry Guilfoyle, Paul Leclair, Alternate Lourena Helt; Bookkeeper Annie Witte, Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward;

Chairman Wexler called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

There was no need to seat any alternates.

The Agenda was accepted as presented.

Fill Vacancy on Board:

Chairman Wexler informed the Finance Board members that she had been advised by the Town Clerk to revisit the appointment of alternate Paul Leclair to fill the vacancy on the Board created by the resignation of member Reggie Smith. An alternate had been seated for the vacancy at the last meeting, when, in fact, the seat should have remained vacant for the meeting due to the fact that it was not an absence but a true vacancy. Therefore, in order to avoid any possible challenges regarding the filling of the vacancy, Chairman Wexler asked that it be re-addressed at this meeting.

MOTION: by Guilfoyle to nominate Paul Leclair to fill the vacancy as a regular member on the Board of Finance; seconded by Ben Witte.

Unanimous.

Chairman Wexler next addressed the filling of the alternate vacancy created by moving Mr. LeClair to a regular member. She stated that she had received a recommendation from Republican Town Committee Chairman Greg O'Brien to appoint Ryan Bingham to fill the alternate vacancy until the next Municipal election.

MOTION: by Witte to nominate Ryan Bingham to fill the vacancy as an alternate member on the Board of Finance; seconded by Guilfoyle.

Unanimous.

Minutes:

Chairman Wexler asked if there were any corrections to the minutes dated July 14, 2020. Hearing none, she proclaimed the minutes accepted as presented.

Communications and Other items presented to the Board:

Chairman Wexler stated that a letter had been received from Mr. Aulay Carlson. This letter was distributed to the Board and will be attached to the Minutes as correspondence. There was no discussion on the letter.

Reports:

Bookkeeper: Revenue & Expenditures Fiscal YTD and previous Fiscal YTD

The Board reviewed the reports that had been distributed via email (and included as hand-outs along with the posted agenda).

Member Tuxbury asked if the 19-20 collection rate was on track with projections. Mr. Witte replied that the final projected revenue summary sheet showed that the tax collections exceeded projections and he added that it shows a surplus of \$272,000 for the fiscal year.

Member Guilfoyle asked if taxes are on track for this year (20-21). Bookkeeper Witte replied that there has been no concern noted by the Tax Collector.

Member Tuxbury asked if there were any concerns being expressed with expenses related to COVID-19. Chairman Wexler replied that she had a brief conversation with Board of Education Chairman Tim Goff and he had stated that it was too early to be able to give a report on where things stand with expenses as things are changing every day. Reimbursements are unknown at this point in time and the full cost of expenses related to COVID is also unknown. Ms. Wexler added that she did not request a report from the Board of Ed this month due to the state of uncertainty, but will expect a report for the October meeting.

Opportunity for Public Comment:

Mr. Aulay Carlson stated that he had submitted a letter to the Board of Finance and asked if it would be addressed. Ms. Wexler stated that the letter had been received and forwarded to all Board members and re-stated that it would be attached to the minutes of the meeting. Mr. Carlson expressed displeasure that this was the process and asked that he be granted permission to read the letter aloud to the Board and have it duly noted in the minutes of this action. His request was granted and he read the letter aloud.

Any Other Business:

None noted.

MOTION: by Witte to adjourn at 7:25 PM, seconded by Guilfoyle.

Unanimous

*Respectfully Submitted,
Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant
(substitute for Recording Secretary Penny Miller)*

*ATTACHMENT to these minutes (read into the record as requested)
Letter from Aulay Carlson*

*ATTACHMENTS: (filed with the Town Clerk and available upon request)
Financial Reports – Current fiscal year 2020-21: August Revenue; August Expenditure
Financial Reports – FINAL Fiscal year 2019-20: FINAL 19-20 Expenditure Report, Final 6/30/20 Projected
Revenues (shows the projected surplus); FINAL June 2020 Revenue Report*

BOF 9.8.20

Aulay Carlson
455 West Hill Road
New Hartford, CT 06057

8 September, 2020

Board of Finance
New Hartford, CT

To the Board:

What is the role and purpose of the Board of Finance?

Over the last 8 years, the First Selectman, in his budget, has funneled two million dollars to a private non-taxpaying entity, the library, in New Hartford. This entity, when it was established, was supposed to be self-supporting. During the same period of time a town entity, the water and sewer department, bought and paid for by the taxpayers of New Hartford received nothing. That entity was also supposed to be self-supporting. That did not happen. So why were the citizens and taxpayers left on their own? Did the BOF say anything about the needs of our citizens? Now the library has plans to expand. Where is that money coming from? Well, it's coming from the town. Why spend library funds when the town will provide?

During the last ten years the Board of Education has received and spent over two million dollars a year on nothing. The BOE has 1150 school seats in this town. If all the students were put into Antolini School, that school would still be only 65% full. So, the BOF allows the BOE to fund empty seats at a cost of over \$2 million a year and never asks questions. Now if the student results were good or better, then you could make an argument that the money was well spent. You can't make that argument because over the last ten years, on the end of year's state tests show that 40% of New Hartford students have failed English and 50% have failed math. In the tests for 2019, only 56.8% of the students were at grade level. That's with a teacher and teacher assistant/ student ratio of around 8 to 1. This year the BOE added a social worker.

Over the last ten years, what could the town have done with the \$20 million? Streets repaired, town buildings up-dated, mill rate reduced. Money and opportunity are gone. Gone to pay for empty seats.

Cornwall, CT. this year acquired 28 new families and their children for their school this fall. Why? Their mill rate is low and they have a school that is right-sized for the town. Those families also brought their businesses with them.

Has our First Selectman tried for years to reduce the BOE budget and fund the Water and Sewer System? Sorry, that's not our selectman. Now you have to wonder why a Republican politician would not want to reduce taxes or spend the tax money on town improvements. You have to understand that when a politician gets a paid

position, it is likely that he or she will never get a better job. It is no longer what is good for his constituents. It's what is good for him to get reelected.

So, I ask the question again. What is the role and purpose of the Board of Finance? Is it to watch over the finances of our town? To say no, when no is the correct response? To demand data to support the needs of the various boards asking for taxpayer money and to prove the needs?

As a citizen of this town would please tell me what your role and purpose is.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aulay Carlson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "A".

Aulay Carlson