

**Litchfield Board of Finance
Regular Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2022 ~ 7:00 p.m.
Town Hall Annex, 80 Doyle Rd., Bantam**

Call to Order: Chairman Erich Marriott called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Members Present: Erich Marriott, Elliot Fuessenich, Pat Donovan, Patty Dauten, Richard Quay, Jim Stedronsky, Matthew Tobin, Sam Olmstead

Members Absent: None

Others Present: First Selectman Denise Raap, Finance Director Amaechi Obi, and members of the Town Facilities Review Committee

Discussion on the Appointment of Recorder of Minutes: Chairman Marriott announced that Ann Combs will take the minutes tonight and will be considered as a permanent recording secretary.

Approval of the 10/17/22 Regular Meeting Minutes: Motion: E. Fuessenich moved and P. Dauten seconded a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of 10/17/22. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Public Comment: Carol Powers, Town Facilities Review Committee, spoke in favor of approval of the funding for the first phase, planning, for the renovation of the Bantam Annex. She encouraged the Boards of Finance and Selectmen to treat the building renovation as an investment that will be attractive to young families.

Burke Gibney, Town Facilities Review Committee, reiterated Ms Powers' words and said the results of the survey shows that the community wants to keep this building for the community.

ARPA Funds Distribution Update: E. Fuessenich reported on the second meeting for the second round of applications for local businesses, with \$45,000 still left unallocated. There have been no more applications from businesses. D. Raap said there is another ARPA group meeting tomorrow, and she will ask what they prefer doing with the money. She then spoke about the second tranche of \$911,000 that they are now considering, and said that some of the businesses that did not qualify before are qualifying now.

Facilities Review Committee Presentation: Chairman Sam Olmstead presented an overall review and recommendations of its final report that was presented in June to the Board of Selectmen. The results of the survey showed that more than a majority were interested in repurposing the Bantam Annex. Study of the Town Hall showed there is not much that can be done with it. Additionally, the new owners of the former Union Wealth Management building may play a role in offering space for front facing Town offices. The Committee did not study the schools, as the school district is planning to use all schools.

With the Town offices and Post Office only using 50% of the space at the Annex, income is \$63,000 and expenses \$175,000 per year. The core infrastructure is old, so the recommendation is to keep this building and renovate it, beginning with the core infrastructure and a second phase of programming and interior space fit-out. Their estimate of \$350 per sq. ft. for a \$10 million project cost from a year ago is no longer achievable.

Mr. Olmstead said they have prepared an RFP for \$200,000 - \$300,000 for an Architect/Engineering firm to first prepare an engineering study, space planning, narrative and sketches of the building. Many questions and discussion followed on ways to repair the building, the cost, the value of it as a Breuer design, building new and the need for the A&E study. Mr. Olmstead said the study is valuable, and Jeff Zullo, Selectman and TFRC member, added that efficiencies made to the envelope will prevent the need for a larger system of HVAC and boilers.

Since there is still the problem of the outdated Town Hall, an option was suggested to include all Town offices at the Annex. A second option was suggested for a new build for Town Offices. With inclusion of these options, Sam Olmstead estimated the cost of the A&E study at \$500,000. He also noted the TFRC did not recommend Option 2.

Board members still had many questions and concerns, and Chairman Marriott thought that spending \$500,000 on an engineering study was a lot. He felt that putting all Town offices in one building was wise, but he was afraid it may not go anywhere. He did say that any approval of the RFP work will not happen tonight. The Board of Selectmen had not approved the proposal in June, pending Board of Finance input. Mr. Marriott suggested a package be presented in consideration of both the Town Hall and the Annex.

Jeff Zullo suggested the TFRC be reconstituted as a committee to facilitate the study and to also get an estimate on a new plan for a Town Hall. J. Stedronsky and E. Marriott thought it wise to send this back to the Selectmen to decide the scope of the study for the RFP and a dollar amount. P. Dauten thought the study should be done first. It was finally agreed to add the additional scope options, send it to Raz Alexe and then send out the RFP to see what it costs. The Board thanked Sam Olmstead for all work done by the TFRC.

Finance Director's Monthly Report: Under revenue, Amaechi Obi reported 57.6% collected, better than last year at 55.7%. Prior year taxes collected are good. The State sent us \$46,905 for the Municipal Stabilization Grant. They also sent us \$160,666 from the Municipal Revenue Sharing Act sales tax. ECS has been received and will appear in the December report. Investments are doing well. The bottom line is that we have collected 54.7% compared to 54.1% at this time last year. D. Raap pointed out that building inspection fees total over \$104,000 in the first four months, and with the new hotel and the Belden House, we will go way over the \$160,000 budget. Under expenses, we have spent 33% of the budget compared to 43% last year.

Motion: R. Quay moved to approve the Finance Director's report, and E. Fuessenich seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

New Business

a. Financial Transfers: None

b. Correspondence: None

c. Payment of Bills: None

d. Future Agenda Items: Looking for a dollar amount from the RFP

Adjourn: Motion: J. Stedronsky moved to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. and E. Fuessenich seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.



Ann Combs, Recording Secretary