



Town of North Canaan

Board of Finance

March 11, 2026

Present: Chairman Doug Humes, John Jacquier, Chris Sorrell, Bryan Johnson, Emily Bottum, Christian Allyn

Chairman Humes called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

Agenda: **Mr. Allyn moved to amend the agenda adding Kathryn Boughton, History Center to speak under item 3A requesting funds from the town for community plans. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

Ms. Bottum moved to amend the agenda to add Executive Session under item 11A after public comment to discuss a personnel matter. Mr. Sorrell seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Kathryn Boughton of the History Center handed out a document detailing what they are doing for 250th celebration events. The next big event on June 13 in conjunction with the flagpole raising ceremony will also include a community picnic with re-enactments. After that there are several other events planned. All of this costs money. The George Washington Ball was a success and they were able to break even. The History center is requesting a one-time grant for up to \$5000. They will continue to look at other funding streams, but this would give them a cushion. They may use some, all or nothing depending on what other funding they are able to get. There were no questions from the board. **Mr. Jacquier moved to approve a one-time grant of \$5000. Mr. Allyn seconded the motion. Motion carried.** This will come out of surplus.

Chairman Humes explained the process for reviewing the budgets at this meeting. The high school budget will have to be voted on. The NCES and town budgets are just overviews. There will be workshops to get more in depth with those in the near future.

Beth Johnson, NCES Principal, spoke regarding the budget. They are looking at an overall increase of 7.65% this year mostly due to insurance and salaries. She has been working with the Board of Education and was able to drop it from a larger increase. Mr. Allyn asked if there was a way to forecast what the insurance side may look like in the future. Ms. Johnson stated that it is a hard prediction to make. Things can change at any time.

Sam Herrick presented the high school budget. The hearing is April 9 at 6:30 at the high school and the referendum is scheduled for May 5. North Canaan's enrollment percentage increased over 2%. Last year there had been a reduction. Now we are back where we were a couple years ago. Encourage people to go to the hearing. North Canaan pays a large portion of the Region 1 budget.

Selectman's budget overview: First Selectman Bunce did a high-level overview of the budget with some increases and decreases of the departments. Town council has an increase of \$15,000 because beginning 2027 union contract negotiations will be beginning with a labor attorney who specializes in these contracts. Mr. Humes pointed out that elected officials need to come to workshops to justify any increases in their department's budgets. There was a discussion regarding the fire department and the

need for a new ladder truck. In order for town properties not to be affected by possible large insurance increases the fire department must maintain a certain IOS rating. The current ladder truck is 30 years old so in order to keep up the rating a new one is necessary.

Kate Light spoke regarding the transfer station budget. She tried to stay close to where they were last year. There were a few increases. There have been discussions regarding going to a system of self-hauling but it is going to take a lot of time and will be expensive to get there. But this might be better than just going with whatever contract is the easiest. Selectman Bunce received an email last week from the State regarding MIRA. Their contract was supposed to run to June 2027. It is now going to expire June 2026. The Northwest COG is working on this issue but is unsure what will happen. Trying to go with a way that is sustainable to the town.

Budget workshop: Mr. Allyn moved to hold the budget workshops at 6pm on April 1. Ms. Bottum seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Public Hearing: Mr. Allyn moved to hold a public hearing April 20 at 7:00pm. Mr. Jacquier seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Treasurer report: There were no questions on the report. The treasurer has appointed Teri Aiken as the deputy treasurer.

Selectman's Time: First Selectman Bunce is looking at a possible solar project at the school. Representative from Evolution Energy gave out packets of information and gave a brief presentation. Discussion of safeguards. This is preliminary.

There is a building committee. Beth explained process and the finance department would need specific verbiage. Roof has become a pressing issue – project couldn't get off the ground until next summer in order to get the proper reimbursement. Looking at grant options as well.

Board member concerns: none.

Public Comment: Selectwoman Melissa Pinardi spoke regarding comments about the dog park and the Lawrence Field usage from last meeting. She explained the dog park was not a factor in the decision to move rec sports to the Segalla Field. The Rec commission budget was not covering maintenance for both fields, so as a commission that chose to put their money into the Segalla Field. Mr. Humes explained he had made the comments as he feels the dog park is in the wrong place and it prohibits teams from playing on the field. He also stated the Segalla Field is held under a lease from the State and they can take it away at any time. There was a comment from the audience that the dog park was measured out to ensure the field would still be usable. Selectman Bunce stated that the adults don't want to play on Segalla Field.

The recording secretary read into record comments on the zoom board. The recreation chairperson encouraged people to come to the rec meetings to discuss this. There was a comment regarding the amount of softball players dwindling over the years. And there was a question asking if they could play at the school.

Mr. Allyn moved to enter into executive session. Mr. Sorrell seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Entered into executive session at 8:36pm

The Board returned from executive session. **Mr. Allyn move to reopen the meeting. Mr. Jacquier seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting resumed at 9:37pm.**

Mr. Sorrell moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Mr. Allyn seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mr. Allyn moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:38pm

Respectfully submitted,

Ayrslea A Odell

Recording Secretary