

**Finance Committee Meeting
March 13, 2024**

Attendees

Committee: Art Merrill, Wayland Gladstone, Wayne Marshfield, George Haynes, John Kosier,
Joe Cetta, Eric Wilson, Tina Molé

Staff: Beverly Shields, Penny Bishop, Kathy Preston

Mr. Merrill called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

On a motion by Mr. Cetta, seconded by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Marshfield, the minutes of the February 28 committee meeting were approved as corrected concerning the Town of Colchester reserve account for FEMA funds.

The January 31, 2024, Bank Balance report was reviewed. The March 6 Sales Tax report was reviewed which indicates a decrease in sales tax revenue of 5.2767% compared to the same time period last year. A report listing the 2023 encumbrances was reviewed. The final Contingency report was discussed. Mrs. Bishop explained that although the county received \$53,741.11 state reimbursement for increased legal aid to indigent costs, a transfer from contingency was still necessary to cover an additional \$12,404.48 in 18B attorney fees. The contingency balance is \$66,980.22.

Fiscal Affairs – Kathy Preston

Mrs. Preston informed the committee that two CDs for the DSS capital projects are up for renewal. She concurred with Mr. Marshfield that the investments are for all three capital projects—homeless shelter, visitation center, and DSS South. She relayed that Buildings Superintendent Pete Montgomery is working on the homeless shelter timeline for building construction. Mr. Marshfield noted they project to have the homeless shelter completed by the end of this year. Mrs. Preston noted DSS has indicated there are a few loose ends to complete at the visitation center such as the sidewalk, ramps, and parking lot. Ms. Molé remarked that DSS South is almost completed; the staff is waiting to be moved into those offices. In reply to Mr. Merrill, Mrs. Preston said there is approximately \$350,000 in the account for ongoing work on these projects. The committee recommended renewing the full balance of the CD which is due May 14 at the best available rate. They will discuss renewal of the second CD which is due April 13 once they have the construction timeline for the homeless shelter.

Regarding the bond payment on the communication towers, Mrs. Preston noted payments are due until 2033 with the first call date of April 1, 2026. The balance to pay in full would be \$3,140,000. The bond interest rate is lower than the current investment rate. Mr. Merrill advised checking rates again in 2025.

Mrs. Preston reported the auditors will be here the week of June 10.

Clerk of the Board – Penny Bishop

Mrs. Bishop expressed that ARPA funds for the ambulance service have been exhausted and the Department of Emergency Services is now paying for the service from the county budget. As this is the first time funds are being paid from the budget for the ambulance contract, there were questions if there is a special oversight committee to be listed on the audit report. Currently the budget line is

listed under other health services. Ms. Molé explained that many years ago, emergency services was under the oversight of the public health committee. Mr. Merrill stated it would make sense to move the ambulance service contract under public safety committee oversight starting with the 2025 Budget.

Mr. Kosier shared that response times are down significantly with the new Headwaters ambulance service: Stamford's response time is 4 minutes, Harpersfield's time is 5 minutes, and Kortright is 10 minutes. Previous response times have been up to 45 minutes. He noted there have been over 600 calls since Headwaters began service in May last year.

Treasurer's Office – Beverly Shields

In response to Mr. Marshfield, Mrs. Shields said the next tax sale would most likely be held in the fall. She noted the new foreclosure law was incorporated into the New York State budget. She stated the 2019 foreclosures are ready for auction. In answer to Mr. Cetta, Mrs. Shields said when a taxpayer owes three years of property tax, they are required to pay the oldest tax bill before they can pay the current tax bill. She stated some members of the State Legislature want to change the way of paying taxes from paying the most current taxes to paying the oldest tax first.

Mr. Marshfield inquired as to who oversees security at the courthouse. Ms. Molé said court security is not part of the county and advised Mr. Marshfield to reach out to Josh Shapiro of the Sixth Judicial District.

The audit was the only not-prefiled resolution.

Travel, equipment, and fill vacancy requests were approved as presented.

Upon a motion the meeting adjourned at 11:06 a.m.