



# Town of Griswold

Board of Finance  
Regular Meeting  
September 21, 2021  
7:00 PM

Town Hall Meeting Room  
MINUTES



1. **Roll Call/Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM**

**Board of Finance Members Present:**

Scott Davis – Chairman  
Amanda Brycki  
Valerie Grills  
Gail Rooke-Norman

**Board of Finance Members Absent:**

Alex Grzelak – Vice Chairman  
Steve Mikutel  
Daniel Webster

**Also Present:**

Erik Christensen, Director of Finance  
Todd Babbitt, First Selectman  
Rob Parrette, Chairman, Senior Center Building Committee  
Mary-Beth Malin, Chairman of Board of Education  
Tina Falck, Senior Center Director  
Karen B. LaFreniere, Recording Secretary  
8 Other People

2. **Public Forum**

No one wished to speak.

3. **Approval of minutes**

**a. August 17, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes.**

**MOTION:** V. Grills made a **motion** to approve the August 17, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes as presented that was seconded by A. Brycki. All in favor except for G. Rooke-Norman who abstained; **motion carried.**

4. **New Business**

**a. Finance Director Monthly Report.**

The revenues recorded to date for FY2022 are \$12,653,490.84 or 33.51% of budgeted revenues. E. Christensen states the only real concern is the Distressed Municipality Grant. He still hasn't heard anything about the amount included in the bond funding. We are at a standstill on all major capital projects. The expenditures recorded to date are \$3,458,537.81 or 9.16% of budgeted expenditures. The one-line item overspent for this fiscal year is

*Ann P. Minors*  
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advertising for the Tax Collector. The amount is \$109.94. The reason for this is the increase in rates for advertising. People are not buying newspapers anymore. They take it out on us and we have no option because by state statute we must advertise in the newspaper. Also, due to covid the advertisements are long because extra things must be added to advertisement. Nothing can be done so we will use other line items to cover the extra cost.

**b. Discussion and possible action on setting 2022 regular meeting schedule.**

Every board member present at the Board of Finance meeting agreed the regular meeting schedule should stay the same the third Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall meeting room. G. Rooke-Norman made a **motion** that was seconded by V. Grills. All in favor; **motion carried**.

**c. Discussion and possible action regarding upcoming budget cycle.**

S. Davis stated historically the Board of Finance has had several workshops and then go to public hearing and listen to what the people have to say on a budget that has hardly been touched. Then the board meets and make all sorts of cuts. S. Davis wondered if it doesn't make more sense to align the schedule so in their workshops, they would make the cuts to the budget they feel are necessary. Then go to a public hearing. Then the public can weigh in on what the final proposed budget is. That way if there is an outcry the Board of Finance would be able to meet and rework the budget before it goes to town meeting and referendum.

G. Rooke-Norman agrees with this because it not only gives the departments heads an idea of where the board is headed but also the residents who log in or attend the meetings. This way if they completely disagree, they can prepare and have a stronger voice at the public hearing. Also, if they think line items need more funding or need to be trimmed back, they can way in.

A. Brycki feels this would give a more realistic view of where the board is headed and what's on the table which will lead to a more meaningful participation and discussion regarding the budget.

V. Grills likes this idea but her only concern is the town and the schools have been for the past couple of years listening to the board about where the board wants the figures to come and for the most part, they are achieving this. V. Grills hopes they don't feel like they are listening giving us what we want, and we are going to cut them some more.

S. Davis said he would bring this topic back up at the next meeting in October 2021 so A. Grzelak, S. Mikutel & D. Webster can be brought up to speed and further discussion can take place.

S. Davis would like to start receiving information on all the different unions and personnel that are contracted that aren't covered by any bargaining agreement to get an idea where salaries are and where they are going to be in the future. Also, anything not included in salaries such as insurance payment, educational incentives anything that is going to be a cost. This way the board can have a clear picture where things stand. The board does not negotiate, nor ratify agreements but they are charged with figuring out how to fund those agreements. S. Davis has had brief discussions with E. Christensen & the Superintendent regarding this

request. S. Davis will follow up with the First Selectman & the Superintendent to request that information be provided to the board.

**d. Update on ARP ESSER Grant for Alternative School re-location.**

G. LaBossiere stated they applied for this grant back in August 2021 and they were approved. Inside this grant comes \$300,000 to use for the move and renovations. They are hopeful this money will be able to cover all the costs required to have the Alternative School re-locate to the Senior Center. They are still waiting on some work that is coming in from Fred Marzec regarding cost.

**5. Old Business**

**a. Discussion and possible action on report from Senior Center Building Committee Chairman.**

R. Parrette reported not much has changed since the last Board of Finance meeting. Pac Group lost their superintendent and are bringing in a new superintendent who is finishing up on a project, so he won't be available for another couple weeks maybe up to a month. This is putting the Senior Center project behind schedule about a month. They are still moving forward. The electrical fixtures have been delivered to the new Senior Center and are in storage. The paint has been procured by the painter they are keeping the paint so they can control the temperature. The operating partition has been ordered. A couple of modifications need to be made to the steel for the operating partition and that expense is coming out of the USDA funds. The landscaper is out there doing some landscaping and doing some tree replacement. The suspended ceilings are all being delivered next week. R. Parrette stated if they get some real coordination going and really time it well, they could get it done before Christmas 2021 but, it will probably be done in first couple weeks in January 2022. The deck is the only thing in question regarding prices. R. Parrette said the prices are coming down. The deck was the one thing that was over budget from the start. To the best of R. Parrette's knowledge all the money from the grant will be spent on the appropriate items. The generator is giving them a little trouble, but it is nothing to worry about now. They don't need to order generator yet. G. Rooke-Norman questioned if there was a line item to budget the storage and moving the existing Senior Center to the new location. R. Parrette said he does not recall if there is one, but he would investigate it and get to the Board of Finance at next meeting in October 2021. G. Rooke-Norman stated we should explore this because it is too much to expect the staff at the Senior Center to move everything to the new location and it is a liability on the town. We must have professionals do it.

**b. Update and discussion on bonding projects.**

For the sewer and water, Fuss & O'Neil are working on the design. There is a meeting here next Thursday with Fuss & O'Neil and USDA regarding the sewer and water project. Things are moving along, and we are still hoping to start construction in the Spring.

**c. Update on audit management letter items.**

Todd Babbitt has been working on getting policies in place for the Building Department because that is where the management letter item was from. E. Christensen put a few things in the back of the Board of Finance package to show what we are doing to clear up some of the concerns from the auditors. First, there is a memo showing what happens when building

permit fees are waived. Usually, these fees are only waived for town properties or on occasions non-profits. The Board of Selectmen vote to waive permits fees. It doesn't make any sense for the town to pay ourselves the fees. We still have to pay the state fees. When the auditors chose a couple of selections from the last audit some of the town projects the fees had been waived but nothing was in the file to support that. We now have a policy that has the minutes and memo from the Board of Selectmen put in the file just to show it was approved by the Town Selectmen and the fees were waived. Second, there is a lack of information in the file about how building permit fees are being calculated. Carl Brown who is filling in as the Building Official gave us a copy of his excel spreadsheet that calculates the building permit fees, he uses where he works at the Town of Lisbon. With this spreadsheet you enter the square footage and fees automatically calculate. This should clear up any confusion of fees being calculated because the formula is based on what our permit schedule is. The auditors will be here next week and will be given these new policies to review and approve.

**6. Any Other Business**

None.

**7. Public Forum**

No one wished to speak.

**8. Adjournment**

V. Grills made a **motion** that was seconded by G. Rooke-Norman to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 PM. All in favor; **motion carried.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Karen B. LaFreniere,  
Recording Secretary