

2020 MAY 22 AM 9:14



*Patrick S. O'Sullivan*  
TOWN CLERK

## **Board of Finance Regular Budget Hearing**

(Virtual Meeting)

Monday, May 18, 2020 7:00 p.m.

*(Unapproved)*

### **Attendance**

**Board Members Present:** Chairman Kevin Houlihan, Vice Chairman James Leahy, Kevin Moffett, Patricia Romano, P. J. Shanley, and Joseph Nuzzo

**Staff:** John Cifarelli, Finance Director; Audrey Geer, Assistant Finance Director; Deborah Satonick, Recording Secretary

### **1. Call to Order**

- Chairman Houlihan called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. and introduced all in attendance. He began by reviewing Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7B, advising that the Board of Finance meeting is being held remotely with no in-person attendance. The meeting is being broadcast live on OGAT, Channel 79, and Frontier, Channel 6063. Public participation has been made available by emailing the Finance Director at [jcifarelli@orange-ct.gov](mailto:jcifarelli@orange-ct.gov) with questions and/or comments. Emails from residents were welcomed until 4:00 p.m. on May eighteenth, 2020 and they will be addressed at the end of the meeting. Participants were asked to include their name, address, and telephone number in the email.

### **2. Review 2020-2021 budget for Any Possible Changes**

- Chairman Houlihan and Vice Chairman Leahy gave a joint budget overview that included the Budget Development Process and the three budget components: Amity, Orange Board of Education, and the Town of Orange. The 2020-2021 proposed budget was unanimously approved by a bipartisan vote of 6-0.
- Chairman Houlihan acknowledged some of the key people involved in the budget process, including First Selectman Zeoli, Finance Director Mr. Cifarelli, Assistant Finance Director Ms. Geer, Mr. Kraut and the Orange Board of Education Finance Committee, and Mr. Belfonti and the Amity Finance Committee.

- The Board of Finance members discussed the eight factors contributing to the AAA Credit rating for the Town of Orange. The Town has a healthy Fund Balance and there was a 1.64% Grand List growth this year. With an increase of 2.21% in spending this year, there will be a 0.46% tax impact to residents in the proposed budget.
- Unfortunately, the pandemic brought an economic shutdown and Mr. Leahy proceeded to explain the unemployment rate and its impact on Orange residents. Using graphs and other illustrations, Mr. Leahy noted that the unemployment for the Town of Orange has had a similar Bell Curve profile when compared to the State of Connecticut. Mr. Shanley noted that this is the highest unemployment since the Great Depression and he is hopeful that it will be temporary in nature.
- Chairman Houlihan expressed major uncertainty about the amount of revenue to be received from the State of Connecticut, as ECS money is not a guarantee. In looking at the 2020-2021 budget, the Board members have assumed this revenue from the State, \$300k returned surplus from Amity, and \$300k from the Fund Balance to be used for next year. Chairman Houlihan noted that additional Fund Balance may be needed depending on any shortfall from the State.
- The 2020-2021 proposed budget is as follows:

Town of Orange	\$24,343,060
OBOE	\$21,414,585
Amity	\$25,003,802
Capital	\$2,993,859
Total Budget	\$73,755,306

- Vice Chairman Leahy pointed to the response of the Town of Orange, Amity, and the Orange Board of Education in light of the pandemic. The Town of Orange reduced their budget \$625k and then an additional \$135k. Amity proposed a 2.73% increase in response to the pandemic and the Orange Board of Education reduced their budget from a 7% increase to a 2.45% increase. The total 2020-2021 proposed budget has a 2.21% increase.
- Vice Chairman Leahy pointed out that the Orange Board of Finance did not agree nor approve the Amity budget increase, particularly in light of their continually high surpluses year after year. The Board did not feel that with huge unemployment records that this was the right time for Amity to hire new staff, particularly a Senior Administrative position. In fact, they made numerous recommendations to Amity in order to reduce future budgets. Ms. Romano posed several questions/suggestions to Amity about realized savings from remote learning over the last four months that might have been carried over to next year's budget.
- Vice Chairman Leahy discussed the economic development within the Town of Orange, mentioning Homewood Suites, Urban Air, U-Haul, the Home Depot Plaza, VA Outpatient, Firelight Plaza, Lowes, and the sale of the Trailer Park. Other sites were included in this discussion.

- Chairman Houlihan addressed two emails from residents. The first email was in response to the tax office position. He noted that a tax office position was eliminated and he justified the reasoning for this decision. He mentioned that other positions have also been eliminated within the Town of Orange. He addressed a second email from Mr. Whitaker, 597 Ridge Road, and read the entire email into the record. Mr. Whitaker protested the decision to remove the voting rights of the citizens of Orange and felt that this is “taxation without representation.” He suggested the following: sixty to ninety day delay on budget voting, allowing citizens to vote by absentee ballot under the extraordinary circumstances of a pandemic, or allowing voting under proper CDC distancing guidelines.
- In response to this email, Mr. Shanley noted that neither the Orange Board of Finance nor the First Selectman made this decision. Rather, this was an order dictated to them by the State of Connecticut. The Governor gave the Orange Board of Finance the directive to approve the budget without a referendum. Ms. Romano noted that the Orange Board of Finance has attempted full transparency in their decision making. Chairman Houlihan also added that Amity should not have been allowed to approve their own budget.
- In light of the fact that the Orange Fireman’s Carnival has been canceled due to the virus, Mr. Shanley suggested that residents make donations and gave the mailing address. PayPal is also available on their website and they will be selling raffle tickets. Mr. Leahy suggested a GoFundMe account. To date, the Orange Country Fair has not been cancelled.

## **7. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Deborah Satonick  
Recording Secretary



ORANGE, CONN  
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE  
RECEIVED FOR RECORDS  
2020 MAY 22 AM 9:14

*Patrick B. O'Sullivan*  
TOWN CLERK

## **Board of Finance Special Meeting**

(Virtual Meeting)

Monday, May 18, 2020

8:00 p.m.

*(Unapproved)*

### **Attendance**

**Board Members Present:** Chairman Kevin Houlihan, Vice Chairman James Leahy, Kevin Moffett, Patricia Romano, P. J. Shanley, and Joseph Nuzzo

**Staff:** John Cifarelli, Finance Director; Audrey Geer, Assistant Finance Director; Deborah Satonick, Recording Secretary

### **1. Call to Order**

- Chairman Houlihan called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m. and introduced all in attendance. (Per Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7B, the Board of Finance meeting is being held remotely with no in-person attendance. The meeting is being broadcast live on OGAT, Channel 79, and Frontier, Channel 6063.

### **2. Review and Vote on 2020-2021 Budget & Mill Rate**

- In accordance with Executive Order No. 71, Section 13, the Board of Finance will consider and act on approving the 2020-2021 budget.

*Ms. Romano made a motion to approve \$73,755,306 for the 2020-2021 budget, seconded by Mr. Moffett. All were in favor and the motion PASSED.*

- In accordance with Executive Order No. 71, Section 13, the Board of Finance will determine and approve the mill rate of 32.64 for the new budget. Last year's mill rate was 32.59.

*Mr. Shanley moved to approve the new mill rate of 32.74, seconded by Ms. Romano. All were in favor and the motion PASSED.*

**3. Consider & Act to Allow OBOE to Purchase Following Items from Capital Fund**

- Chairman Houlihan requested a motion to approve to allow the Orange Board of Education to purchase the following items from the Capital Fund:

Copiers \$8,500  
School Security \$8,800  
Software Smart Boards \$25,250  
Hardware –Teachers Laptops \$26,180  
Hardware – Student Chromebooks \$37,400  
Curriculum Software – Star \$52,593

Total Amount \$158,723

*Mr. Leahy made a motion to approve to allow the Orange Board of Education to use \$158,7223 from the Capital Fund to purchase the above listed items. Mr. Nuzzo seconded the motion and all were in favor. The motion PASSED.*

**7. Adjournment**

*Mr. Shanley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m., seconded by Mr. Moffett. All were in favor and the motion PASSED.*

Respectfully Submitted,

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Deborah Satonick  
Recording Secretary