

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE

The Board of Finance held a special meeting on Monday, January 7, 2019 in the Council Chamber in the Municipal Building, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT. Vice Chair Roussas called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**Present:** Sandy Roussas, Steve Hinden, Mark Boland, Keith Alexander, Ned Simpson

**Absent:** Jim Gaston

**Also Present:** First Selectman Dan Rosenthal, Finance Director Bob Tait, Ed Marks, Carl Samuelson, Paul Lundquist, 3 members of the public and 1 member of the press

**Voter Comment** – Ed Miklaszewski, Chimney Swift – He is representing 22 pickleball players who have been playing for a few years. They started at Treadwell Park and Park & Rec also set up temporary courts in FFH which worked out nicely. They are not real courts, they are practice courts; they are not the flat and they are not fenced. They have had a number of people that are more professional than they are and they don't play there because of the condition. If you want to retrain seniors you need to consider pickleball courts. A lot of seniors are playing pickleball in Heritage Village, not in Newtown.

Ryan Knapp, 11 Jeremiah Road – Mr. Knapp clarified that this is his personal feeling; he is not representing the Legislative Council. The biggest argument for pickleball courts, from a BOF standpoint, is a donor willing to fund 8.6% of the project if this is moved up. This town has benefited from contributions in the past and it makes financial sense to move that forward. Sandy Hook Memorial is an incredibly sensible project which still needs to be clarified as to what the project will be and the cost. It is not ready to go to referendum in April. If it is a project that is ready in November, then they can have the discussion.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

*Capital Improvement Plan: Review of the Legislative Council Changes and Recommendation of Board of Finance to Legislative Council* – Paul Lundquist, Chair of the Legislative Council explained the changes they are proposing (Attachment A). One change is the timeline of the Sandy Hook Memorial project; moving it from years 1 and 2 to 2 and 3. The basic reason for this is if it was in year 1 it would have to go to referendum. They wanted to be proactive and show respect for the project and make sure they are putting up the numbers before they ask voters to support it. The council spoke to taking this to referendum in November if they had a budget. It would allow them to break ground next spring which is not much different than if they stayed in year one.

The second change is the pickleball project which is in year 3 for \$290,000. Ed Marks, the Chair of the Park & Rec Commission brought to their attention that there is a donation of \$25,000 to move the project up. The LC is proposing moving it up to year 1 for \$265,000 plus the \$25,000 grant.

Construction of a pickleball court is approximately 6 to 8 weeks. They came up with the cost from courts built in the past. The type of court they are proposing is 15-18% more expensive up front but last twice as long with low maintenance.

N. Simpson explained that he is part of the pickleball population but is very uncomfortable of the optics of a wealthy person moving an object up on the CIP. For that reason, he would like to move the pickleball item to year 2 for \$265,000 and the \$25,000 grant.

First Selectman Rosenthal explained that he had this in year 3 because years 1 and 2 were focused on a number of infrastructure and public safety issues.

K. Alexander moved to accept the Legislative Council recommended changes to the 2019-2020 to 2023-2024 CIP, M. Boland seconded. N. Simpson moved amend the motion and put the pickleball courts in year 2 with the same recommended funding. K. Alexander seconded. N. Simpson explained that items in year 3 through 10 don't get the scrutiny that items in year 1 and 2 have. There are questions regarding pickleball court costs and hopes there will be the opportunity in next years CIP framing up what that project would be. K. Alexander explained that he fully trusts the P&R to prioritize their projects. The point that is being made is that someone can put up money and get an item changed. Ed Marks clarified that this project was originally a year one project for P&R but was moved by the Selectman to year 3. S. Hinden articulated that he is torn and uncomfortable that the grant is not iron clad and doesn't know if there is flexibility. However, if we know this is something we are going to do eventually, we would be leaving this money on the table; having a visible project completed which benefits our seniors.

Vote on the amended motion – motion passes 4 Yes (Roussas, Alexander, Boland, Simpson), 1 No (Hinden)

Vote on overall LC recommendation – motion unanimously approved.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Arlene Miles, Clerk

# Attachment A

## Board of Finance Special Meeting Monday, January 7 at 7:00pm

Per CIP Regulation, Chapter 310-6 (I), the Legislative Council is referring two changes made to the 2019-2020 to 2023-2024 CIP back to the Board of Finance for review and recommendation. Specifically:

- On 12/19/18 the LC took the following action: MR. KNAPP MOVED TO AMEND THE CIP TO MOVE THE SANDY HOOK PERMANENT MEMORIAL IN YEAR ONE AND YEAR TWO TO YEAR TWO AND YEAR THREE. SECOND BY MR. CARROLL. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION PASSES. (12-0)
  - Prior to this change, the Permanent Memorial project had \$2,000,000 designated in Yr 1 and \$2,000,000 designated in Yr 2, for a total of \$4,000,000. This would require that the Yr 1 request be put forward for voter approval at April's referendum.
  - However, at this time there is no clear indication as to what the actual project costs might be. SWA's design was selected by the Permanent Memorial Commission in July '18, but no budget has been considered yet. The First Selectman has met with SWA, and they are beginning the process of creating budget scenarios. This will not be ready for April '19.
  - The LC's intent was to act proactively to protect and show appropriate respect for this project by getting a clear idea of actual project costs before we put it out to referendum for tax payers. There is unanimous agreement among the LC and the First Selectman, reflecting an eagerness to support the work of the Permanent Memorial Commission, and sensitivity toward the interests of affected families supporting this project and the Newtown community as a whole.
  - Moreover, we believe this action may have little impact on the actual timing of the project. The LC has expressed openness to putting this project out to public referendum on the November ballot if costs have been finalized by then, resulting in potentially breaking ground early spring of 2020.
- On 1/2/19: MS. JOHNSON MOVED TO AMEND THE CIP AND MOVE THE PICKLEBALL ITEM FROM YEAR 3 TO YEAR 1 USING \$265,000 IN BONDING AND \$25,000 IN GRANTS. SECOND BY MS. DESTAFANO. MOTION PASSES. (9-2) (Mr. Carroll, Mr. Mattegat)
  - Ed Marks, Chairman of Parks & Recreation Commission, made the LC aware that an anonymous donor was offering to provide a grant/donation of \$25,000 toward the pickle ball courts project, with the stipulation that the project be completed in Yr 1 (not Yr 3).
  - Primary rationale to support this amendment: the \$25K private contribution (nearly 10% of the project cost) is an important element to consider, as it would provide notable savings to tax payers. This action also shows support for the senior community who are primary users of this highly in-demand activity.