

**Town Council Virtual Meeting  
March 2, 2021 at 6 p.m.  
Unapproved Minutes**

Chairman Slapikas called to order the regular meeting of the Prospect Town Council @ 6:01 p.m. The meeting was a Virtual Meeting by video conference via GoToMeeting as authorized by Executive Orders 7B and 7I. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Organizer of Virtual Meeting Present:** J. Slapikas. A roll call for attendance was taken by Chairman Slapikas.

**Council Members Present via online:** J. Slapikas, R. Blanc, P. Geary, S. Pilat (6:35 p.m.), S. Lusas-Kolodziej, T. Graveline L. Fitzgerald (6:30 p.m.) K. O'Leary & M. Patchkofsky

**Council Members Absent:** none

**Guests:** Mayor Chatfield and David Cappelletti (Clermont Associates)

### **Mayor's Report**

#### ***Clermont Associates, David Cappelletti:***

Presentation of Year End Audit-David Cappelletti-David explained that this is an unmodified opinion of the Towns financial statements. David reviewed some key areas of the audit.

- Page 10 Exhibit F: This shows the General Fund Operations for 2019-2020. Revenue and expenses were favorable this year. \$5047 was added to revenue over expenses. The General Fund balance increased to \$942,000. There were special appropriations with a total change \$440,000 in fund balance. The unassigned fund balance is \$3,996,000. T. Graveline asked for clarification on the two columns. David explained that the original budget is the first column, and the final budget is with all the budget amendments. The Actual Amount Budgetary Basis is the total amount incurred. The final line item is the difference between final budget and actual expenditures. This final column does include all transfers from one account to another.
- David briefly mentioned Exhibit C & D Capital Non-Recurring. The Housing Rehabilitation Program is a Town sponsored federal program to loan funds to eligible recipients. There has not been much activity other than outstanding loans that need to be paid back to the Town once a house is sold. This is federal money.
- P. Geary questioned the notes at the bottom of each page "financial notes are an integral part of this statement". She suggested that the next time the audit is done either the exhibit or statement refers to a specific note that applies to that page. Its difficult to match notes to a particular exhibit. P. Geary also mentioned pages 3F and 3G. Under the management's discussion of the financial statements the Program Expenses- Public Safety is up \$245,000. She asked if this includes the Fire & Police Depts. Dave referred to Schedule 2 where it shows detail on what is included in Public Safety. P. Geary mentioned that Special Duty Revenue was up \$73,000 which is a 22% increase. P. Geary referred to page 3h, the last paragraph the General Funds Balance amount is incorrect. Page 3h also talks about the revenues. It says \$175,000 decrease in sales and recycling due to sale of fire truck in 2019. Dave clarified that the Town prepares this portion of the audit not the auditor. The Mayor stated that in 2019 we received less than anticipated for the sale of the "Old#5" Fire Truck. P. Geary asked what Expenses vs Indirect Allocation means on page 5. Dave explained that the Indirect Cost Allocation is reallocating some of the Towns costs that are indirect in nature into different areas. For example: Fringe benefits for employees. They are segregated in multiple areas. The Gatsby makes the rules on writing these financial statements. These are government auditing standards with very difficult requirements.
- David further explained Exhibit A & B is the Economic Model compared to the Resource Model. These make more sense if you look at a 10-year analysis instead of a 1 year analysis. Exhibit C&D are really the old fashioned governmental financial statements. These make a lot more sense as you read through them. He can break them down a little bit more without a lot of complications. Dave recommended focusing on Exhibit C&D.
- P. Geary referred to page 13 in the third paragraph "Reporting Entity". The Town of Prospect elects they do not appoint members on the Region 16 Board of Education. Page 14 under "Liens" the third from the bottom paragraph in the middle. question-says liens third from bottom paragraph in middle. It stated liens are filed on delinquent real estate taxes within one year. She asked if this is done. J. Slapikas stated the Town does not typically pursue a foreclosure on a property but they do a put a on the property to protect the Town. Page 15 on the second line the "Morris Public Library" needs to be change to the "Prospect Public Library". additional the town reports the following fund type-second line example includes the "Morris Public Library" should say Prospect Public Library. Page 17 Pensions: It talks about the net pension liability. It referred to an approx. \$3,388,000. Dave explained that this refers to three areas explained on page 25 "Long Term Liabilities". This is the amount people have earned towards their future benefits as of June 30<sup>th</sup>. That portion is amortized over many years; it is not an expense. The Mayor asked if this is part of the \$7000, we have to pay each year. Dave stated that is only the administrative costs for the Mers. Dave stated the Town also pays on a quarterly basis. The Mayor stated that when they signed up it was 3% and now its 11%. Dave stated the state expects that to grow. P. Geary also questioned what "Opeb" in the amount of 2.5 million is. Dave explained this is a number that is determined by the actuaries. There was an increase to it based on their figures. They try to get the future cost of the program and they bring it back to date for todays number. It is an estimate of what the Town may have to pay to cover employees benefits in the future. This amount will change quite a bit.

- T. Graveline referred to page 30 under “Net Pension Liability” of approx. 36 million dollars. She asked how this number calculated. She thinks that number seems humongous. Dave stated that is the total liability in pension not including any assets. This is for retirees for the rest of their lives, not just in one year. T. Graveline asked if this includes the Opeb, as well or just the retirement funds. Dave stated that is the States liability. The Town of Prospects liability is only 4.7% of that. MERS is sponsored by the State of CT and it includes several municipalities.

L. Fitzgerald arrived at 6:30.

- T. Graveline asked who is considered our “service employees”. Dave stated whoever is in the MERS Program. The Mayor stated this includes only Public Works employees. T. Graveline asked if the Prospect Police and Fire Depts. Are involved in MERS. Dave will look into this.

S. Pilat arrived at 6:35 p.m.

- T. Graveline referred to page 25. It states “excluding union employees” which is incorrect it should state “excluding Public Works employees”. The Mayor stated that some of the Public Works employees do have both pensions but nothing is being put into the first pension. T. Graveline referred to Exhibit H-“administrative deduction” in the amount of \$309,000 plus. She asked who receives that payment. Dave will look into this. T. Graveline mentioned under “Contributions”-“employee and employer contributions”. She asked if any of the Towns employees are contributing to their retirement. She was under the impression none of them are. Dave stated it is a defined compensation plan equivalent to a 401K. People are voluntary putting their own money in. P. Geary asked if Dave has detailed information about this. Dave explained this would be withheld in their payroll.
- Dave mentioned there are 2 major things he wants to bring up. The Treasurers duties and also the theft this year, although the Town did catch it. An individual tested the system and exploited the system. The Town should depend on the Treasurer to be the oversight and ensure that things are done timely. Dave discussed the State Statutes referring to the “General Fund” and the “Capital Non-Recurring Fund”. The Town is very organized, and they keep projects current.
- T. Graveline referred to page 32 under “discount rate for total pension liability”. She asked why this number is so high. Dave explained that the Actuaries determine that number based on information provided by the Town. T. Graveline also asked why payroll is not considered a major fund. Dave stated it is an *account* not a *fund*.
- J. Slapikas mentioned that he talked to a few different Towns and Cities. Their budgets are not as detailed as ours and their populations are much more than ours. He likes the budget details as is.
- Dave explained that regarding the “Capital Non-Recurring” account-once the monies go to this account it is dedicated for “Capital Non-Recurring” ONLY. This is according to State Statute.
- J. Slapikas asked how the Town stands with everything. Dave stated that the Town is at 10%. The General Fund balance is lower than other towns our size. The Town is also very organized in “Capital Non-Recurring”, there tends to be a lot of surplus.
- M. Patchkofsky asked what the difference is between “unrestricted net portion” and “restricted portion”. Dave explained that “unassigned” is the amount available to appropriate. The “assigned fund balance” is management of the Town. These are funds set aside for this purpose. A Committee/Board appropriated these funds for a specific service.
- J. Slapikas stated he is happy with Dave’s presentation. Other than the few corrections discussed tonight, he would like to thank Dave for all his time. He likes all the recommendations he gave the Town.

**Motion** made by T. Graveline, seconded by M. Patchkofsky to place “Acceptance of the Auditors Report” on the agenda.

**Unanimous.**

- T. Graveline stated she would like to see the audit once its corrected. P. Geary also wants to see changes before they vote to accept.

**Motion** made by R. Blanc, seconded by S. Pilat to approve the auditors yearend report. After discussion R. Blanc and S. Pilat amended their motion to “accept but not approve the yearend report from Clermont Associates until the Council receives the updated one with changes discussed. **Unanimous.**

Dave will send the final report. J. Slapikas thanked him for his time.

- The Mayor mentioned the Budget Workshop dates that were submitted to the Council. He also included a copy of the bid notice for the Fire Dept. roof. Tomorrow is the site walk and the bid is opening on March 1<sup>st</sup>. The Mayor also submitted the “Computer Use and Information Security Policy” that was recently adopted. The December Mayors Report was also submitted. The Mayor also discussed Covid-19 monies that the Town will be receiving. The State of CT will be giving the Town of

Prospect \$80,000 and the Federal Government will be giving \$900,000 for COVID-19 use. The Mayor also explained that Prospect is still a “red” town as far as the increase in Covid cases. The Town is up to over 500 cases. The Mayor will be emailing to the Council the Police Contract first thing tomorrow. He stated the “Policy and Procedures” were given to our new auditor and he made some recommendations. The Treasurer, the Bonadio Group and the Town Atty. Made these changes. The Mayor also stated he will hand deliver the budget to the Council Members.

- M. Patchkofsky asked for clarification on the Covid funds in the amount of \$957,906. Is the Town of Prospect receiving this entire amount? The Mayor stated yes, this is for Covid relief as well as Covid prevention in the future. T. Graveline asked if the Town needs to show where they are spending this money.
- T. Graveline stated she is very sad to learn of Dave Youngs passing. She is also very dismayed that the Council was not informed of it directly. She asked what the plan is forward for the Treasurer position. Who is functioning in that roll now? The Mayor stated the Republican Town Committee meets next week They will appoint a Treasurer and hopefully it will be discussed at the next regular Town Council meeting. Christine Carasone is the Asst. Treasurer. Dave Young appointed an Asst. Treasurer in January. T. Graveline stated she and the Council were not aware that the Town had a Deputy Treasurer. She finds that unacceptable. The impression was that the Treasurer was performing his full duties. She is very disappointed at that.

#### **Budget Meeting Dates:**

- T. Graveline stated that she wants to make sure prior to every single Budget Workshop the Council knows who or what will be presented. This should be on the website as well, so the public is made aware. She also mentioned the Town Website. She feels the Town needs do something major. There have been complaints of not being able to find things at all; it is hard to search. She asked if this is currently being worked on without the Council knowing. The Mayor stated they will ask at next meeting for funds for this. He will find out an approximate cost and will look into that. The Mayor stated that currently someone is volunteering to work on the website for the Town. He will make a proposal for the next regular meeting. T. Graveline stated that she has some suggestions for possible website builders.
- T. Graveline mentioned the Computer Information Policy that was worked on by the Town Attorneys. She asked who *Eric* is. The Mayor stated Eric is a point person the Town is in contact with on a regular basis from Bonadio Group. T. Graveline asked if this is going to be part of the employee handbook. The Mayor will put it on everyone’s desk, they will sign it and then it will go into each individual’s personnel file. T. Graveline also mentioned implementing digital payroll instead of timecards. She also asked the Mayor to share the letter of engagement he wrote for the new Assistant to the Treasurer. And asked if they received an employee handbook. The Mayor stated he will give the handbook to them when they are officially sworn in.
- P. Geary stated she is thrilled to hear that we are going to get the Policy and Procedures Handbook. She feels its important to spell out the duties for each position.
- T. Graveline asked if there is any update on the progress of the missing \$250,000. The Mayor stated not as of right now. She asked if there has been any discussion of the insurance possibly paying our claim and then they look into getting their money later. The Mayor stated he can’t discuss that at this time.
- L. Fitzgerald asked if we are going to have Dept. Heads at the Budget Workshops. The Mayor stated the person in charge will be there for larger budgets, not the smaller ones. L. Fitzgerald thinks it would be nice to have people at the workshop to discuss their section of the budget.
- T. Graveline asked about the General Fund Expenditures on page 2 of the expenditure sheet The Town Clerks numbers from the original budget are exactly the same as the column with transfers. The expended budget column is correct.

#### **Public Participation: (5 Minute Time Limit)**

- Catherine Zandri - Sycamore Drive, Prospect: She asked if we have any uncollectable accounts on personal property for the Town. The Council stated that the Tax Collector would have that. Catherine also asked if any Council Members (other than Theresa” were aware that someone was sworn in as Deputy Treasurer. J. Slapikas stated the Council approved the Asst. to the Treasurer, not the Deputy Treasurer. Catherine also asked if the Council received the Freedom of Information Commission ruling. J. Slapikas stated this will be on the agenda for discussion at the next regular meeting. Catherine explained the importance of commission and council members of town boards attending FOI Training Sessions. Catherine also explained that as a taxpayer she feels that one time a year Dept. Heads should show up and be available to present their budget and answer any questions.
- T. Graveline asked for clarification regarding the “Deputy Treasurer”. J. Slapikas explained his understanding that the Council approved an Asst. to the Treasurer. T. Graveline asked if anyone has been signing checks as the Treasurer since Dave Youngs passing. The Mayor stated the Asst. to the Treasurer signed them in once instance so far. He did as the Town Attorney and they okayed it. T. Graveline stated she doesn’t under how that can happen. P. Geary stated their job description does not include signing checks. If the treasurer is not able to sign the checks the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Town Council can do so. P. Geary does not agree with the Asst. signing the checks. That is not proper and there are other alternatives. She requested th at the

Asst. does not sign anymore checks. The Mayor stated that he understands and agrees. Catherine asked the problem with ADP with payroll. Mayor stated errors mistakes-had to call to get straightened out.

### Chair's Report:

- Community Wellness Update-J. Slapikas stated a meeting was held last week and the Council appointed two Co-Chairs and two Vice Chairs. The Council will hopefully have an update next week.
- Bonadio Group-J. Slapikas mentioned the letter that was sent to the Council members today. Bonadio Group is up to having 85-90% of all the info. they need. J. Slapikas stated he is disappointed that the preliminary report was not done by the end of December & the final report will not be completed by the end of March as previously discussed. He did not have a meeting with Bonadio Group this week other than his discussion last week when he was on vacation via email. He will follow-up by the end of this week. He is also going to include S. Pilat in the meetings as well. P. Geary asked if Bonadio Group will be at the March 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. J. Slapikas is not sure since he doesn't have all the info.
- The Council recognized Kathryn Zandri to make a comment. She asked about a member of the minority being at the Bonadio Group meeting. J. Slapikas stated he is not hiding anything from anybody. Kathryn feels he should extend the invitation to make everyone comfortable.

**Motion** made by M. Patchkofsky, seconded by S. Lusas Kolodziej to approve the Budget Workshop dates removing March 16<sup>th</sup>. This is with the understanding they can add or subtract dates if needed. **Unanimous.**

### Approval of Minutes:

- February 16, 2021 – **Motion** made by S. Pilat, seconded by R. Blanc to approve the February 16, 2021 minutes. Action was tabled.
- February 23, 2021-**Motion** made by S. Lusas Kolodziej seconded by R. Blanc to approve the February 23, 2021 minutes. **Unanimous.**

### New Business:

- Refunds-**Motion** made by L. Fitzgerald, seconded by P. Geary to approve the refunds in the amount of \$7,670.20. **Unanimous.**
- Transfers-none
- Resignations-none
- Appointments-none
- Bids/Grants-none (other than the info. for the firehouse rebid for the roof)

### Correspondence

- |   |                                      |  |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Agenda                                     | 6. FOIA Hearing Results              | 12. Financial Report from<br>Clermont Associates             |
| 2. Tax refunds                                | 7. General Fund<br>Expenditures      | 13. Request from Firehouse<br>for bid for two bunk<br>rooms. |
| 3. Employment acceptance-<br>Tax Collector    | 8. Budget Meeting Dates              |  |
| 4. Unapproved Minutes<br>2/16/21 and /2/23/21 | 9. Bid Notice for Fire Dept.<br>roof |  |
| 5. Ad. For Town Council<br>Clerk              | 10. Computer use policy              |  |
|   | 11. Tom Galvin letter                |  |

**Motion** made by T. Graveline, seconded by S. Pilat to accept and place the correspondence on file. T. Graveline & S. Pilat amended the motion with a change on the Ad. for Clerk. The compensation should be \$175 not \$200. J. Slapikas thought we changed the amount to \$200. The Council discussed \$175 for regular meetings and \$200 for Budget Workshops. They will look into this further. **Motion unanimous.**

Bill Lauber, Fire Chief and Mike Gustiferri Assistant Chief are on the call.

**Motion** made by T. Graveline, seconded by P. Geary to add to the agenda discussion of the potential bunk rooms at the firehouse. **Unanimous.**

- Chief Lauber explained that this was mentioned last year with the previous Asst. Fire Chief, Jeff Goletz. During large storms there are personnel that stay at the firehouse. They are looking for \$13,482 for the entire project. They currently have \$10,000 in their budget that has not been used; so they would need \$3482. Chief Lauber stated they are looking to remove half their lockers and convert that area into two smaller bunk rooms. Their intention is to replace the lockers but shrink the size of them to make more use of the same space. T. Graveline asked if the goal is to have two bunk rooms. Chief Lauber stated they are looking to do

two bunkrooms this year. The amount discussed is covering making two small rooms. They will also have more storage space when the Emergency Management storage closet is moved to the Community Center. T. Graveline asked how many beds there will be. They are looking for 3 beds in each room. L. Fitzgerald commented that he has been at the firehouse where there were a lot more people than 6 people staying there. He is wondering if this will be enough bunk space for their needs. Chief Lauber stated they will most likely need other space down the road. P. Geary asked how many times per year do they have people stay overnight. The Chief stated it is typically only during major storms/events; approx. 0-12 times per year estimate. R. Blanc mentioned the large room where voting and other events take place. He cannot see why they just can't put cots up in that room when needed. Chief Lauber explained that the public has access to that room. The locker room area is for members only and has more privacy. J. Slapikas discussed that the Town of Prospect is growing and the need for full time services is growing larger. It may not be in the near future, but eventually the Town will need a full time Fire Dept. and full time Police Dept. This is a good start for what is going to happen. He can't see putting cots up in the middle of the dining hall. L. Fitzgerald asked to add this transfer to the March 10<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda. J. Slapikas will check with the Mayor. S. Lusas Kolodziej that members are sometimes on multiple night standbys; to sleep in cot in a pinch is fine. As a female in a primarily male environment, it is difficult to find one spot for privacy. It would be nice to have a separate locked room. It does make a huge difference for those people who are responding literally around the clock. M. Patchkofsky stated she appreciates the Chief and Fire Dept. going through the proper process. She knows of instances where members were on standby during Covid where they could be exposed. They are traveling in the middle of the night to help someone else. Knowing they are comfortable and can get as much rest as possible will give them some comfort. In the grand scheme they aren't asking for a lot of money.

**Motion** made by L. Fitzgerald to approve the bunk rooms with the transfer request from the Mayor to come in for March 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. P. Geary stated she would like to read the information that was given to them and asked that the vote be done on the March 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. M. Patchkofsky agrees. **Action tabled** for vote on March 10<sup>th</sup>.

### Old Business

- M. Patchkofsky mentioned Rosalyn's resignation. She is sad to hear she is leaving, and she will be missed. She asked if the Council should send something as a thanks for her many years as clerk and all her service. She has gone above and beyond. T. Graveline agrees; everyone should chip in personally. The Council discussed and agreed upon \$15 per person. M. Patchkofsky will look into ideas of what to send her. M. Patchkofsky also mentioned that the Agenda should be on town letterhead like in the past.
- L. Fitzgerald asked who decides on the clerk. J. Slapikas stated he was going to decide after posting the ad and going through the correct process since he deals with them most of the time. L. Fitzgerald agreed. P. Geary mentioned FOIA training sessions. New members and elected officials should attend. T. Graveline mentioned more detailed agendas as to what to expect. Anything that is discussed at one meeting and is going to the next should be on the agenda. Example: reports requested etc. She feels this keeps them organized, focused and it also gives information to the public. She would be happy to help prepare the agenda.

### Subcommittees

- *Land Use & Acquisition*-T. Graveline stated the Land Use Committee did meet to discuss 15 acres of water company property-reviewing info. in process.
- *Public Works Maintenance*-none
- *Sidewalk Task Force*-T. Graveline stated that Phase 1 is stuck at the State level. They are now taking 2 plus months instead of 2 weeks. They still have no approval from the State to go out to bid. Phase 2 application has been submitted. There is a big question mark as to what exactly the State is doing with that grant money.
- *Pension*-none
- *Ordinance*-none
- *Salary Review*-M. Patchkofsky stated they met today. They discussed job descriptions for elected officials being added to the book. They will work with those Dept. Heads so they can be involved in listing their roles and responsibilities. They will submit report after budget season. Not much has changed. The roll of the Treasurer should be spelled out so everyone's aware.
- *Town Buildings*-M. Patchkofsky stated they had a meeting yesterday. They welcomed K. O'Leary and brought him up to speed. They discussed what is going on with the Grange. The Board of Rec. are looking into doing a covered pavilion at Hotchkiss field. They will discuss during the budget presentation. They discussed facilities management plan; the Mayor has been working on that. They will hopefully get that together. It will give the Town a heads up when building needs new roof for example.

**Adjournment**

**Motion** made by S. Lusas Kolodziej, seconded by R. Blanc to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 p.m. **Unanimous.**

*Jeff Slapikas, Chairman*

PROSPECT, CONN  
TOWN CLERKS OFFICE  
RECEIVED FOR RECORD

2021 MAR -4 AM 9:21

*Thompson L. Anderson*  
TOWN CLERK