BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a regular meeting of the above referenced subcommittee held on Monday, April 18, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom remote meeting.

Committee Members present were: Councilor Kenneth McClary, Chair, Deputy Mayor Gregory Davis, Councilors Anthony Harrington, C.F. Politis and Joseph Merritt

Also present were: Stanley D. Hawthorne, Town Manager, Keri Rowley, Finance Director, Sharon Gentles-Harris, Deputy Finance Director

Guest were: James Nytko, Local Government Solutions – ARPA Consultant, Robert Ike, Republican Registrar, Troy Mitchell, Democratic Registrar

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion and Possible Action regarding the Registrar of Voters Stipend

The FY 22 payment was resolved totaling $1000 stipend for each Democratic and Republican Registrar. In the past, it was noted that both Registrars signed each other’s stipend request. It was suggested that a set stipend amount be determined going forward based on Council’s recommendation.

Discussion

Deputy Mayor Davis inquired about other comparable stipend figures from surrounding towns.

Councilor McClary asked about the current agreement between the Council and the Registrars.

Mrs. Keri Rowley, Finance Director noted that there was no Council vote in 2019 when this initial inquiry was made. At the time, Council leadership determined salary and stipend amount.

Robert Ike thanked the Council for honoring the negotiated settlement amount of $1000 for each Registrar. Mr. Ike stated that he was unaware that there was a cap on stipend amounts for elections. He noted that this reduction is a serious detriment to the Registrars $800(Presidential)/$500(Municipal), they are requesting $1500 for each election.

Councilor McClary recommended to obtain surrounding Town data, have the Town Attorney render his opinion. He asked if the current agreement is a binding document by offering $800 or $1500.

Ms. Rowley stated that she wants to ensure transparency in the budget detail.
Councilor Politis is in disagreement with allowing Council leadership to set a stipend amount. He suggested the development a complete plan with proposals to decide a set stipend amount.

Deputy Mayor Davis made a recommendation to leave this decision to the full Town Council. He suggested tabling this agenda item. Deputy Mayor Davis also recommended to keep the current stipend agreement as is until more information is gathered.

**It was moved by Deputy Mayor Davis, seconded by Councilor Politis and voted unanimously to table this agenda item.**

Councilor McClary reiterated the set stipend amount as its stands, $800/$500 per election. He also briefly explained the process of further review by the full Council.

Mr. Stanley D. Hawthorne, Town Manager suggested to follow current practice of payment until further review of the full Council is completed.

Councilor Politis inquired about the differences in pay for the various elections positions. He suggested to create a hierarchy of pay moving forward, for a clear and concise pay scale for these positions.

**Discussion and Possible Action regarding the American Rescue Plan Act – Standard Allowance**

The Town of Bloomfield received $6.28 million in funding through the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) as part of the American Rescue Plan Act.

The Town of Bloomfield is a non-entitlement unit with the first reporting to the government due April 30, 2022. At this time, town staff recommended to elect the eligible use category of “Replace lost public sector revenue” and utilize the standard allowance option for the full $6.28 million as recommended by the ARPA Consultant, Local Government Solutions.

It was moved by Councilor Politis, seconded by Deputy Mayor Davis and voted unanimously to elect the standard allowance option under the “Replace lost public sector revenue” category of eligible uses as outlined by the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Final Rule for all funds received through the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds.

**Discussion regarding the March 2022 Financials**

Mrs. Keri Rowley, Finance Director presented the detailed report on the March 2022 financials.

**Revenues**

The Revenues and Expenditures through the month ended March 31, 2022 in the 2022 fiscal year. Total revenue received is at 98.3% which is lower than the 104.1% for the same time period a year ago. This is due to tax appeal settlements resulting in a few large scale refunds that decreases the total collection rate for the year. As of the end of March, the prior year tax revenue is still running a deficit of ($1.675 million) which is impacting the collection rate.
Adjustments of the taxes and assessment were made to the projection by $609,000 to account for the projected shortfall in the prior year tax revenue account. The open tax appeal cases has decreased drastically in the current fiscal year, so this account should level out towards the end of the fiscal year or beginning of 2023. All grant payments are expected to be received at this time, although no payments were received in March 2022. The second payment of the Educational Cost Sharing grant is anticipated to be received in April.

Building/Demolitions Permit revenues continues to be strong in the month of March and collected over $100,000. The revenue in this account has surpassed the anticipated budget by $84,000 and collected $884,000 to date. This surplus will help mitigate the shortcomings in the prior year tax collection as described.

**Expenditures**

Overall, expenditures for the month of March are about 70.6% of the year’s total budget, which is slightly under 75% that should be expended by the end of nine months.

Expenditures include $1.6 million in encumbrances, i.e. purchase orders that have been taken out for various accounts but for which funds have not yet been expended. Discounting the encumbrances, we have only actually expended 69.2% of the budget.

Expenditure projections are left at the amount budgeted. Therefore, as presented, the Town’s fund balance would absorb the variance between budgeted revenue and expenditures, which was anticipated during the budget process to be $2.75 million. If all projected revenues are received, the Town will utilize the $2.75 million to balance the budget on the assigned fund balance. This amount was already budgeted in the FY 2022 budget, with no impact on the unassigned fund balance.

Ms. Rowley projected the below variances in departmental budgets:

- Town Manager – increase of $20,000, from $642,000 to $692,000
- Finance Admin – decrease from $188,000 to $183,000
- Finance Assessor – decrease of $25,000, from $511,000 to $536,000
- Registrar of Voters – increase from $106,000 to $131,000, up $25,000
- Other Boards and Agencies – increase from $77,000 to $80,000 or $3,000
- Fixed Costs – Projected savings of $47,000, overall decrease from $13.38 million to $13.33 million

**OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business for discussion.

**Public Comments**

There were no public comments.
Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Councilor Harrington, seconded by Deputy Mayor Davis and voted unanimously to approve the special minutes of April 7, 2022.

Adjournment

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Davis, seconded by Councilor Harrington and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m.