

Town of Brunswick, Maine

**Finance Committee Meeting
Thursday, March 31, 2022 at 5:00 PM
(Rescheduled from Thursday, March 17, 2022)
85 Union Street – Council Chambers
and by electronic devices**

Meeting Minutes (Approved 5/19/2022)

Elected Officials: Councilor Christopher Watkinson
Councilor Kathy Wilson
Councilor Sande Updegraph

Staff: Julia Henze
John Eldridge
Branden Perreault (remote)

1. Acknowledgement that meeting was properly noticed

CW called meeting to order. JH confirmed the meeting was properly noticed.

2. Adjustments to agenda / Public comment

None.

3. Review of meeting minutes from 2/17/22

SU moved to accept minutes from 2/17/22. Seconded by KW.

Unanimous approval by FC.

4. Brunswick Tax Acquired Property

a. Review Tax Acquired Real Property Policy

JH presented the Town's Policy for annual review. Outlined the purpose of the policy and the procedures that are followed by the Town. Emphasized that the Town's goal is to return tax acquired properties to the original owners. FC asked about situations where owner wants to give property to the Town. JE stated that the Town can choose not to accept, but if the taxes aren't paid the only option is to waive foreclosure and attempt to collect taxes through another means. JE explained the situation of the Crestview Lane.

b. Tax foreclosure/sale history

Director Henze reviewed the foreclosure process with the FC. For the three properties currently being considered, outstanding tax liens on unpaid 2018 taxes automatically foreclosed in February, 2021.

c. Town Manager's recommendation on certain tax acquired properties

Town Manager recommends selling Madeline Dr and Old Bath Road properties by auction and retaining ownership of Crestview Lane property. FC discussed the properties and the situation for each. JH described the steps of the sealed bid auction process. SU asked about the sale by auction and JE confirmed that the proceeds from the sale will be retained by the Town.

CW moved for FC to recommend to the TC to sell Madeline Dr and Old Bath Road properties at auction with the final re-acquisition date to be set at June 15, 2022 (auction date to be set at August 1, 2022) and to retain ownership of Crestview Lane property. Seconded by KW. Unanimous approval by FC.

5. ARPA – State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF)

- a. JH presented a list of SLFRF distributions to Maine counties and municipalities. FC discussed entitlement vs. non-entitlement communities, qualified census tracts, reviewed list of amounts distributed.
- b. Eligible uses and expenditure categories; reporting requirements
JH used a PowerPoint presentation to review the SLFRF Final Rule, outlining the four statutory eligible uses and seven expenditure categories within those. JH described the four uses and went over each one as relevant to Brunswick.
 - i. Public health & negative economic impacts – most easily applicable and useful for communities with qualified census tracts (not Brunswick), as requires evidenced based programs and reporting
 - ii. Premium pay for eligible workers – this category has been used by many Maine municipalities to provide stipends to ‘essential workers’ who worked during the COVID-19 pandemic
 - iii. Government services to the extent of revenue loss – the Final Rule provides the option to use a standard allowance of up to \$10 million rather than calculating actual (total) revenue loss. This provides the best option for Brunswick to utilize SLFRF monies for services traditionally provided by government
 - iv. Investment in water, sewer & broadband infrastructure – Construction projects aligned with Clean Water State Revolving Fund and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs. JH pointed out that construction projects must follow typical federal funding guidelines. Broadband projects will be most helpful to rural municipalities across the US.
- c. Proposed Brunswick SLFRF Plan
JH presented the FC with a proposal for how to utilize Brunswick’s SLFRF total allocation, detailed in a matrix of allowed uses and expenditure categories, and proposed a strategy for management and use of funds based on principles:
 - i. As with other ‘one-time’ monies, use the funds for ‘one-time’ expenditures

- ii. Distribute benefits to a broad range of governmental functions
- iii. Respond to current socio-economic climate
- iv. Anticipate future needs and spread expenditure/use over several years

Committee discussed the process for planning the use of funds, recommending that the plan be managed much like the Capital Improvement Program, with Council appropriation of funds for projects/uses individually.

KW moved to recommend the proposed strategy and matrix/eligible use schedule to the council for further review and adoption. CW seconded. Unanimous approval by FC.

6. Adjourn