



BOARD OF FINANCE

LYME TOWN HALL  
480 HAMBURG ROAD  
LYME, CT 06371

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Virtual Special Meeting

The Lyme Board of Finance held a virtual Special Meeting on Thursday April 29, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dan Hagan Chair, Judith Duran, Jarrod Leonardo, Peter Evankow, seated alternates Bruce Anderson and Susan Tyler, and unseated alternate Bob House, ex-officio Steven Mattson, and Jennifer Thomas Secretary.

Absent Members: Kathryn Wayland and David Brown

Members of the public also present

**Special Meeting**

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

**Seat Alternate Member**

Hagan stated that Anderson will be seated for absent regular member Brown at Brown's request.

Hagan stated that Wayland is absent because of the verbal attacks she received at the last meeting. She felt intimidated, threatened, and fears for herself, her family, and her business. Hagan asked the First Selectman to work to resolve the issue so that Wayland will return for future meetings.

Hagan stated that Wayland asked that no one be seated on her behalf.

Mattson made a point of order that you cannot choose to have no one seated and that the board members should vote to fill the seat.

Hagan called for a motion to seat an alternate member in place of Wayland. Duran motioned to seat Tyler, seconded by Leonardo, and the motion carried with a vote of 4-1, Hagan opposed. Hagan stated that Tyler is seated under the objection of the chair because he does not believe that it states in the rules that an alternate has to be seated and he thinks the First Selectman is pulling stuff out of the air.

**Final discussion of FY 2021/2022 Proposed Budget**

Hagan stated that he will give each board member two minutes to respond to how they felt after the public hearing and share their thoughts.

Duran stated that she supports Open Space and views it as a part of Lyme. It is one of the reasons she moved into town. She believes it sends the wrong message to cut the goal back and would like to see the goal restored to \$1 million for the Open Space Fund.

Tyler stated that all nine board members and alternates care deeply about the town and try to make decisions that are in the best interest of the town. She believes no one should be villainized for a decision that they made. Her takeaway from the public hearing was that the board misread the depth of commitment of the community to continue to preserve open space. Several statements from the board during the vote to lower the goal included 50% open space is sufficient, taxpayer money would be better spent providing a tax cut, open space acquisitions could be handled by the land trust, and that acquisitions could still be made by the town by transferring money from one account to another. She believes the decision to reduce the goal was not in the best interest of the town and would support a return to the \$1 million target fund for the Open Space Fund.

Leonardo agrees with reinstating the \$1 million reserve. The town cannot rely on one nonprofit to support the open space in the town.

Evankow stated that he does support open space. He is happy that there is \$75,000 in the budget for open space in the current proposed budget. He felt the \$470,000 amount presented at a past meeting was excessive for a one-year contribution. He does not know what the cap should be, or if there should be a cap. He stated that the board of finance has a planned meeting in August where goals for specific funds would be discussed and he believes that is the time to make changes to the goal.

Anderson agrees with Evankow. The town feels that it is important to fully fund Open Space, but it is unclear what that means. A broader review of the budget, including capital accounts, in August, would provide a time to review facts and evidence with more rigor to come up with an educated goal. Consider what properties may be desirable for purchase, and existing funding sources when trying to quantify a goal.

Hagan stated that he feels that this is not about open space, but about how much money the town wants to take from taxpayers and hold in accounts for the what-ifs of the world, similar to a household emergency fund. The town has \$4.5 million in various accounts now and some of the board members felt that is excessive. In lieu of making another knee jerk decision about the goal now, he supports deferring the decision until the August meeting, when the board can come up with some basis for what the numbers should be rather than an arbitrary goal.

**Motion to forward budget to Town Meeting for final approval on May 19, 2021**

Duran made a motion to set a target for the Open Space Fund at \$750,000 for the coming fiscal year and adjust the budget accordingly to reach this target with the further intent to discuss the target at the previously scheduled August Board of Finance meeting for a final determination.

Tyler seconded the motion. Evankow clarified that this would make the yearly contribution \$227,000 instead of \$75,000 for the upcoming fiscal year. Duran, Tyler, and Leonardo voted in favor. Hagan, Evankow, and Anderson opposed. The motion is defeated.

Hagan called for a motion to forward the existing budget to the town meeting for final approval on May 19<sup>th</sup>. Evankow made the motion, seconded by Anderson, and the motion carried with Hagan, Anderson, and Evankow in favor and Duran, Tyler, and Leonardo abstaining.

**Adjournment**

Hagan called for a motion to adjourn. Evankow made the motion, seconded by Duran and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Thomas, Secretary