1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.
   Present: Carolyn Arabolos, Mike Sobol, Lisa Conant, Joan Lewis
   Also present: John Elsesser, Town Manager; Amanda Backhaus, Finance Director

2. Acceptance of Minutes:
   Mike Sobol moved to accept the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting on March 11, 2019.
   The motion was seconded by Lisa Conant and carried on unanimous vote.

3. Reports:
   A. Committee Chair – Carolyn Arabolos:
   Carolyn said we are still in budget season. She thinks as a Council we did a great job working collaboratively on the budget. The School agreed to some cuts and we were able to get the mil rate lower than if we just took the State cuts into account. She thinks we are in a good position to go to the townspeople, and perhaps the State cuts won’t be as bad as projected and we can lower the mil rate further. Mike Sobol agreed. Budget season has been very contentious in years past and this wasn’t like that at all. He thinks all the committees, departments and school board came in with their best budgets, and we were able to make some modest reductions.

   B. Committee Members: No reports.

   C. Finance Director – Amanda Backhaus:
   Amanda reported that by the end of March we met the 100% mark for property tax collections. Last year’s number was based on what was needed to balance the budget. We are actually down slightly if we compare. We are hoping to get some additional revenues in before the end of the year. General fund revenues are in line with what they should be. Expenditures are at 79.4% compared to 75% last year. A breakout was done by department that identifies some lines where transfers will be requested. The bottom section shows additional areas where we have negatives right now, including snow overtime, but we are hoping to be able to address them within departments. Amanda will continue to monitor these areas. Mike Sobol asked how much of an impact the Saturday 10” snowstorm had. Amanda replied about $11,000. We are not anticipating the need to order more sand and salt. There are also different lines in the Registrars of Voters section that appear to be over. We are still monitoring.

   The Board of Education has spent 67.6% of their approved budget, which is in line with last year. John said that our contract with Charter is up. We believe they are going to charge us for dark fiber. Through a Federal act to subsidize school internet connectivity we were able to get various bids in to run fiber to Robertson School and CGS. We haven’t heard anything further but long term it is the right thing to do. We were very advanced when we got internet for our schools 22 years ago. This would take care of the two remote schools, and we might be able to get fiber up to our Public Works garage, the Senior Center and Patriots Park. It also might give us an opportunity to do a digital divide community project. Joan asked about the food service budget, noting that there is one balance plus is there also a student balance? Mike said that is money the parents have paid in for their kids. The Schools can’t use it. If it is not used it is reimbursed to the parent. Mike asked if the partnership to provide lunches to the Senior Center is working out. Amanda said we haven’t heard any strong negatives but think we will run into problems over the
summer when school is not in session.

COVRRA is at a comfortable level. Joan Lewis asked if it will continue to go down due to recycling. John Elsesser replied that we are locked in at 10 right now, but we are paying a penalty due to contaminated recyclables. Mike said he would like more details. Amanda will send them. The balance projection is $277,000 but we expect it to go up. We are not expecting any significant losses. Mike asked if the $200,000 amount is annual or one time. John replied one time. At some point we will have to reimburse COVRRA $60,000 if we don’t build the new transfer station. We are still negotiating about the Stewart property. A decision needs to be reached by the end of the fiscal year.

Sewer fund collections are a little over 100%, which is in line with last year. Mike asked if there has been an increase in fees. Amanda said no. Projections were distorted in the previous year. Now the percentages are looking smaller but are more in line with what fees should be. The fund helps to pay for the sewer debt. The assessments were paid off and there was a gap. Also some major repairs are coming up. WPCA did not raise their rates this year. Plant capacity is about 90%. That is enough for people who paid assessments but not much beyond that.

The Recreation fund balance went down a little due to extra projects. We are expecting revenues to keep climbing through the end of the year. They are doing interior painting at the community center over school vacation.

The Tax Collector sent intent to lien notices and tax sale notifications. Two potential tax sale properties were paid off and three have indicated they will be paying soon. We may not get a tax sale in before the end of the fiscal year but those that are being paid off will generate revenue this year.

The Board of Assessment Appeals met. There were 15 appeals with six changes made for a total reduction of $235,170 in assessments. The Assessor’s reports are up to date and filed. Revaluation inspections and reviews of properties will begin in April/May of 2019.

Amanda attended the Public Finance Outlook Conference. She goes every year. She received a good set of slides that she will email out. Their pension plans did poorly last year. They have lowered their expected rates of return and are expecting everyone to contribute more. John Elsesser noted that we are not in the State pension plan system. They lowered their expected rates of return to 6.9% and as a result towns’ contributions went up 8%. Towns are asking for that to be phased in. Amanda said we use 7.5% for ours now. John had recommended lowering it to 7% and the Pension Committee said no. The committee had recommended differing from what the actuary recommended and John said no. This group meets on the 4th Wednesday of every quarter. Their next meeting is April 24th. John said they want low taxes, but there is an issue of low taxes today vs. doing what’s right in the long term.

Cash management RFPS are under review. We hope to get an RFP out next week for banking services.

We are working to remove items from the caretakers house prior to demolition. We are also looking at improvements to the parking lot at Miller Richardson and the bathrooms at Town Hall.

The dependent insurance coverage survey is underway. The deadline to respond is 4/23.
We are working to get new IT staff with Roston’s departure. Mike Sobol asked if South Windsor accepted the modifications the Council made to the agreement. Amanda will follow up.

Carolyn asked if the work on the DPW truck would invalidate the warranty. John replied we are not doing the work until we know.

Mike asked if we have heard anything about irrigation needs at the high school football field. John replied this was not discussed with us during budget planning meetings but we heard they contacted a contractor. Todd Penney inquired where the water would come from. If they want to take it from the pond they would need a diversion permit from CT DEEP. If they take it from their water system, then treatment might be an issue. We need a better system for dialogue. That type of track can’t be repaired if it is damaged to install water lines.

Carolyn asked for an update on custodial services. Amanda said we have nothing yet. We are considering a time clock system. Mike asked if any thought has been given to modernizing Town Hall. John and Amanda replied there are no funds for this. Mike replied that Town Hall is the heartbeat of town and it is visually lacking. He feels like there should be a way to freshen it up. John said we’re trying to set aside some LOCIP money every year. Joan said it seems to make sense to have a plan because if we do little things we’d never catch up. Mike said he would like to modernize it and have it be something that creates a good impression.

4. FY 2018/19 Budget Transfers:
A list of potential budget transfers was reviewed. Amanda said there is $10,000 left in contingency and we are asking to transfer $16,400 from the Public Works line. The budget was adopted with one long-term person there and we had two people leave. There are two longevity lines that need to be covered. Joan noted that the “from” subhead on the right side of the document should be “to.” Amanda said that additional items to be covered include repairs to the Visitors Center and Mill Brook Place, public relations for the Town Council and street light repairs. Mike asked how monitoring of equipment in town hall is handled in terms of filter replacements, etc. John replied that our vendor, Mechanical Maintenance, does that for us. Mike noted it’s not just service contracts, it’s also life expectancy of equipment. John replied that our equipment is relatively new and the building is not that complicated. Our contractor will begin to give us a heads-up as equipment ages. Mike said then it would be wise to have a plan that identifies when things were purchased and when they might need to be replaced. Amanda said that the bigger items go on our fixed asset inventory where they are tracked, but smaller items don’t. Joan also mentioned roofs. John said that those things we will see visually before work needs to be done. Over the years we have been constantly reducing staff to keep costs low. We no longer have one person for facilities and one person for roads. There is a consequence to that. Mike said looking long term he thinks there needs to be some sort of plan. The Town side of the budget is proportionate. John said that rolling stock is our lifeblood. It takes a long time to get a truck ordered. If we had to replace a roof, we could get it done in a week.

Mike asked if there is any update on a replacement for Meg Schiebel at the Library. John said we heard that the Library extended the application deadline. They have about 18 applicants. Mike asked if the salary was increased. John replied that we don’t know - we don’t do their payroll. Carolyn said that the Library is a hot topic right now. Is there an opportunity to take over their financial process? Amanda replied that they would be reluctant to give up that independence. John said we have worked on the areas of big money like plowing their parking lot etc.

Mike Sobol moved to recommend FY 2018/2019 budget transfers to the Town Council as
amended. The motion was seconded by Lisa Conant and carried on unanimous vote.

5. **Regional Assessors Meeting: Crumbling Concrete Foundations Assessment Reductions:**
   John Elsesser said that Assessor Michael D’Amicol hosted a regional meeting of town assessors and we wanted to share the order of magnitude of the reductions in assessment due to crumbling concrete foundations. Of the 26 towns that attended, reductions to date total $81,734,753.

6. **Adjournment:**
   The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 PM on a motion by Mike Sobol, seconded by Lisa Conant and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Stone
Town Council Clerk