

Town of New Fairfield
Board of Finance
4 Brush Hill Road
New Fairfield, CT 06812

MINUTES (REVISED)
Board of Finance Budget Workshop
Saturday, March 6, 2021
9:00 AM Via Zoom

Members present:

Wes Marsh, Chairman
Michael Cammarota
Tom Garben
Jane Landers
Cheryl Reedy
Anthony Yorio
Mark Werner, Alternate
Greg Williams, Alternate

Other Town Officials Present:

First Session (9am)

Ed Sbordone, Finance Director and Town Treasurer
Pat Del Monaco, First Selectman
Khris Hall, Selectman
Kim Hanson, Selectman
Dr. Pat Cosentino, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Rich Sanzo, Director of Business and Operations
Kerrie Greening, Tax Collector
Dr. Karen Fildes, Director of Technology and Communications
Greg Flanagan, BOE member
Kimberly LaTourette, BOE member
Rick Regan, BOE member

Second Session (10:45 am)

Ed Sbordone, Finance Director and Town Treasurer
Pat Del Monaco, First Selectman
Khris Hall, Selectman
Kim Hanson, Selectman
Kerrie Greening, Tax Collector
Dr. Pat Cosentino, Superintendent of Schools
Julie Luby, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Rich Sanzo, Director of Business and Operations
Kerrie Greening, Tax Collector
Dr. Karen Fildes, Director of Technology and Communications
Michael Chapleu, High School Assistant Principal
Scott Rohwedder, High School Assistant Principal
Christine Baldelli, Middle School Principal
Cheryl Milo, Middle School Principal
James Mandracchia, Meeting House Hill School Principal
Allyson Story, Meeting House Hill School Assistant Principal
Rob Spino, Consolidated School Principal
Karen Gruetzner, Consolidated School Assistant Principal
Katherine Matz, Pupil Personnel Director
Alyce Misuraca, Director of Curriculum
Peggy Katkocin, BOE Chairman
Dominic Cipollone, BOE Vice Chairman
Greg Flanagan, BOE member
Kimberly LaTourette, BOE member
Samantha Mannion, BOE member
Rick Regan, BOE member
Stephanie Strazza, BOE member

Call To Order Chairman Wes Marsh called the meeting to order at 9:04am

Dr. Rich Sanzo gave a brief overview of the rules and procedures for having a virtual meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

Appointments- None

Presentation of the Board of Selectmen Requested Budget 2021/2022

Wes Marsh explained the budget process and noted that the role of the Board of Finance is to balance the needs of the town with the taxpayers ability to pay. The BOF will meet every Wednesday in March to discuss the budget.

First Selectman Pat Del Monaco spoke of the BOS budget for 2021/2022 and spoke of budget priorities including the budgetary effect of the school projects, economic development, Infrastructure and Long-term capital planning. She spoke of adjustments made to the department's requested budget for both the operating budget and the Capital and Nonrecurring budget. The total requested municipal budget for 2021-2022 is \$12,943,101 which represents an increase of \$666,381 or 5.43% over the 2020-2021 budget. It was noted that this budget includes the effects of filling the holes from last year. She noted that if these holes were excluded the total BOS recommended budget would be \$12,387,270 which represents an increase of .90% from 2020-2021.

The presentation included the effects of certain reductions specifically to road repair, Body and Dash cameras for the Police Department, vinyl siding for Company A Fire Department and the sewer study for bridge and drainage. First Selectman Del Monaco noted that these items would be a priority for the surplus for 2020-2021. It was noted that there has been a significant increase in revenue for Real Estate Conveyance Tax.

Other budget topics discussed were payroll, unemployment in New Fairfield and long term capital plan including bridge and drainage.

Public Comment

Selectman Kim Hanson noted that he did not vote for the BOS budget and expressed his concerns that this budget reflects a trend in under funding capital and nonrecurring projects and increases payroll with both head count and increasing hours.

Review of Budget by Board of Finance members

Anthony Yorio asked about the logistics of purchasing the Body and Dash cameras for the Police Department as well as money in the Boat Dock replacement fund. He asked Selectman Hanson to send a list of specific objections to payroll and deficiencies in capital and nonrecurring projects.

Jane Landers asked about the sewer study and how having sewers affects economic development. First Selectman Del Monaco noted that many businesses that may want to come to town need sewers and a reliable water supply.

Tom Garben asked about the Senior Center dam and pond. Pat Del Monaco gave an update on this. It was noted that the state has authority over this dam and information regarding this should be available soon.

Other topics discussed were town pensions, police officer salaries, salary for the Town Engineer, ventilation for Town Hall and the Ball Pond watershed project.

Finance Director and Town Treasurer Ed Sbordone spoke of the bonding for the school project and the possibility of borrowing for 20 years vs. 25 years.

There was a brief discussion of the COVID vaccination clinic in New Fairfield. It was noted that \$220,000 has been budgeted for the clinic. Currently, there is \$165,000 left in this fund. Selectman Khris Hall noted that costs have been kept low due to the many volunteers that have helped with this clinic. Selectman Kim Hanson thanked Selectman Khris Hall, Health Director Tim Simpkins and everyone involved with the vaccine clinic.

Recess

The board went into recess at 10:11 am.

The board came back from recess at 10:45 am.

Presentation of Board of Education Requested Budget 2021/2022

BOE Chairman Peggy Katkocin gave a presentation regarding the requested budget for the Board of Education. She spoke of Points or Pride and reasons to invest in the education of the children of New Fairfield. She spoke of the incredible pride that the district has for all the school employees during the most difficult times during COVID and noted the strides that the district has made despite COVID.

There was a discussion of the post COVID planning and noted that this budget is set up with the assumption that school will be fully in-person during the 2021-2022 school year. It was noted that New Fairfield will receive an ESSER grant (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds) to help with post COVID expenses.

BOE Vice Chairman Dominic Cipollone spoke of goals for the district and specifically the Math Curriculum and specific uses for the ESSER grant. He spoke of cost savings that can be realized through the Transition program for Special Needs students. He further spoke of staffing changes and how the pandemic may affect enrollment.

The total requested BOE budget for 2021-2022 equals \$42,229,700 which is a \$1,021,185 increase from the 2020-2021 budget which represents a 2.48% increase. The increase is 6.18% once debt service is included.

Public Comment- Board of Education Budget

Amanda Lombard thanked the Board of Education for putting together a comprehensive budget that services the needs of all students in the district.

Don Kellogg spoke in support of the BOE budget as presented and his specific support of the Gifted and Talented program.

Stefanie Marlow spoke of possible changes to the enrollment projections and the possibility of more students attending next year.

Review- Board of Education Requested Budget

The Board reviewed the BOE proposed budget and spoke of the following topics:

- Post recovery investments
- Bonding for the school projects specifically 20 year bonding vs. 25 year bonding.
- Maintaining of programs along with the building projects.
- Math Interventionists vs. Math coaches
- Capital Improvement plans
- Enrollment projections
- Transition program

Anthony Yorio thanked the entire school district for all their hard work during the pandemic and praised the teachers, administrators and all staff for making New Fairfield such a wonderful school district.

These topics will be discussed further at the Board of Finance budget meetings which will be held every Wednesday in the month of March at 7:30 pm via Zoom.

Adjournment

Wes Marsh made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:26 pm. Jane Landers seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Received by email on 3/11/2021 @ 1:56 p.m.
By: Holly Z Smith, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield