

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

MINUTES

**Board of Finance Regular Meeting
Wednesday, March 24, 2021
7:30 PM
Virtual meeting via Zoom**

Members present via Zoom

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

Members not present

Tom Garben

Other Town Officials Present via Zoom

Ed Sbordone, Finance Director and Town Treasurer
Pat Del Monaco, First Selectman
Kim Hanson, Selectman
Khris Hall, Selectman
Dr. Pat Cosentino, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Rich Sanzo, BOE Director of Business and Operations
Julie Luby, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
James D'Amico, High School Principal
Cheryl Milo, Middle School Assistant Principal
Alyce Misuraca, BOE Director of Curriculum
Peggy Katkocin, BOE Chairman
Kathy Baker, BOE member
Dominic Cipollone, 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 7:30pm.

Paul Gouveia gave a brief overview of the rules and procedures for having a virtual meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

Appointments

Cheryl Reedy made a motion to elevate Mark Werner to a full voting member in Tom Garben's absence until such time as Mr Garben arrives at the meeting. Jane Landers seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0-0 (Motion approved)

Correspondence and Announcements- None

Public Comment- None

Approval of Minutes

Anthony Yorio made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 17, 2021 regular meeting as presented. Michael Cammarota seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Budget Transfers- None

Fiscal year 2021/2022 Budget planning

The Board discussed the following topics regarding the 2021/2022 budget:

- Medical- Tom Kowalchik will present at the next BOF meeting of March 31st. The drug rebate is expected to be approximately \$200,000. Claims are lower than expected. Individual Stop Loss premiums and Aggregate Stop Loss premiums will be discussed at the March 31st meeting. There was a brief discussion of the number of people trending towards the stop loss.
- Finance Director Ed Sbordone spoke factors that affect the requested budgets. They include a capital reduction for the Fire Department in the amount of \$62,985. The BOE voted to reduce their requested operating budget by \$294,000 in anticipation of money to be received from the ESSER II grant. The PILOT revenue was increased by \$17,500. These three changes brings the requested increase of 5.98% down to 5.26%.
- Mr. Sbordone spoke further about debt service in the amount of \$25 million for the school projects and specifically a 25 year bond vs. a 20 year bond and how that would affect the overall interest that will be paid for these project. He spoke of an alternative that defers the principal payment for the first year in the amount of \$228,000. This would cause the budget percentage increase from 5.26% to 4.81%.
- Wes Marsh spoke of the timeline for the budget and noted that the BOF will discuss the budget at their March 31st meeting and do the final mark up on April 7th. There was a brief discussion of waiting until more information about the state budget is received. It was noted that the Town referendum must be done in May and there is no indication that the State will allow for this to be deferred due to Coronavirus.
- First Selectman Pat Del Monaco spoke of prohibitions of uses for COVID grant funds. It was noted that States and Territories cannot use the grant funds to offset tax cuts. Ms. Del Monaco is waiting for clarification as to whether or not local governments can use the grant money for one time capital items.
- Cheryl Reedy showed the budget projections and possible cuts to both the BOE and BOS budgets. There was a brief discussion of grant money and the concerns of not creating a hole for future budgets. Members expressed concern with the parameters of the possible grants and would like to get a more definitive answer as to how much grant money will be received.
- Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino noted that she needs to make a budget and cannot rely on grant money for the BOE operating budget.
- Cheryl Reedy spoke of the possibility of the following cuts- \$350,000 for Education, \$150,000 for the Town and \$275,000 for Medical.

Cheryl Reedy made a motion that the BOF ask the BOE show a \$350,000 cut to their requested operating budget and the BOS to show a \$150,000 cut to their requested operating budget. Anthony Yorio seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Ed Sbordone noted that these cuts will result in an overall increase of 3.83%.

ONGOING UPDATES

Legal- No discussion

Expenditures- Ed Sbordone noted that there will be some transfers for Police overtime, Communications Dispatchers and Public Works overtime.

Revenue- Ed Sbordone noted that this report does not include February tax collections. Including February collections, the collection rate for New Fairfield is 98.64%. Special Education revenue has been received. LOSIP in the amount of \$79,000 will be received soon. Another two quarters of revenue for student tuition will be received.

Capital and Nonrecurring- No discussion

Public Comment

Selectman Kim Hanson asked about the possibility of an additional appropriation for police cameras in the amount of \$100,000. There was a brief discussion as to whether or not this will be in the budget

Future Agenda items

- Budget
- Audit subcommittee recommendations
- Fraud policy subcommittee
- Budget Transfers

Board Member Comments

Jane Landers thanked Ed Sbordone for finding a creative solution for the bonding of the school projects. She thanked everyone involved in the budget process

Michael Cammarota noted that he would like more feedback from the public regarding the budget.

Cheryl Reedy thanked Ed Sbordone and the BOF members for their hard work in the budget process.

Anthony Yorio thanked Ed Sbordone for the bonding solution. He thanked his fellow BOF members for working together well.

Mark Werner thanked Ed Sbordone. He further thanked Michael Cammarota for mentoring High School Senior Andrew Tompkins with his SEE project.

Greg Williams noted that he appreciates being able to participate in the a budget process that will go to a referendum.

Terry Friedman thanked Ed for his bonding solution and noted that it is a much better solution. She thanked Cheryl for putting together numbers to find out the results of potential cuts.

Wes Marsh thanked fellow board members for the spirited discussion.

Adjournment

Michael Cammarota made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 pm. Jane Landers seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Received by Email on 3/30/2021 @ 9:13 am
by Holly Z Smith, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield