

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

MINUTES

Board of Finance Regular Meeting
Wednesday, March 9, 2022
7:30 PM
Virtual meeting via Zoom

Members present via Zoom

Wes Marsh, Chairman
Mark Beninson
Michael Cammarota
Thora Perkins
Cheryl Reedy
Claudia Willard
Dave Coleman, Alternate
Chris D'Esposito, Alternate
Greg Williams, Alternate

Other Town Officials Present via Zoom

Olga Melnikov, Finance Director
Terry Friedman, Town Treasurer
Dr. Pat Cosentino, Superintendent of Schools
Pat Del Monaco, First Selectman
Khris Hall, Selectman
Dr. Rich Sanzo, BOE Director of Business and Operations
Dr. Karen Fildes, Director of Technology
Julie Luby, Ass't Superintendent of Schools
Kerrie Greening, Tax Collector
Dominic Cipollone, BOE Chairman
Amy Johnson, BOE member
Ed Sbordone, 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- None

Correspondence and Announcements

Wes Marsh noted that the BOF has received some emails regarding opinions about the budget. He has forwarded these emails to the BOF members.

Public Comment- None

Approval of Minutes

Cheryl Reedy made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2022 regular meeting as presented. Michael Cammarota seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Cheryl Reedy made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 1, 2022 special meeting as presented. Michael Cammarota seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Cheryl Reedy made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2022 Budget Public Hearing as presented. Michael Cammarota seconded the motion.

Wes Marsh made a motion to amend the minutes of the March 5, 2022 Public Hearing to correct the title to read Fiscal year 2022-2023 Town and Education Budget Public Hearings instead of Budget Workshop. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion.

Vote on amendment: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Vote on motion as amended: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Discussion of the BOE and BOS Fiscal year 2022-2023 budgets

Use of Premium from Bonding

Town Treasurer Terry Friedman noted that the \$35 million bonding closed with a \$2.4 million premium that needs to be spread over a 20 year time frame. She noted that based on the advice of the auditors and legal counsel, the Town has a lot of flexibility regarding this. Her recommendation was to use \$599,000 of the \$2.4 million this year and to spread the remainder over the rest of the bond life. It was noted that this is ultimately the decision of the BOF and does not have to be decided at this meeting.

Wes Marsh noted that Medical consultant Tom Kowalchik will be at the March 16th meeting to present final numbers on claims.

The Board discussed the other three pieces of the budget that include payroll, non-payroll and capital and nonrecurring. There was a discussion of the challenges for this year's budget. Suggestions to mitigate the budget increases include the possibility of eliminating non-union salary increases. There was a brief discussion of the ARPA funds and uses and/or restrictions for these funds. It noted that ARPA funds cannot be used for operating costs or to reduce taxes. Anyone interested in learning more about the ARPA funds are encouraged to review the workshops held by the BOS specifically to discuss the uses of the funds.

There was a discussion of BOE budget and metrics for improvements. Dr. Pat Cosentino spoke of the pandemic and how it affected growth. She spoke of the many achievements made by students in the district despite the pandemic and noted that the district was open the whole time during the pandemic. There were some questions about class sizes and technology in the schools. Dave Coleman will send a list of questions to BOF Chairman Wes Marsh about BOE budget.

There was a suggestion of the impact of cutting the BOE and BOS operating budgets by \$150,000 and \$50,000 respectively and to use \$600,000 from the bond premium. Assuming that nothing changes with the medical fund, this would yield an increase of 3.32%.

BOF members each gave their preliminary opinions on the optimum increase for the 2022-2023 and the general consensus was to hold the increase to no more than 3.00% to 3.5%.

There was a suggestion of having the Budget binder available in the public library for reference use by taxpayers. The budget will also be available on the town's website.

Public Comment- None

Future Agenda items

- The BOE and BOS requested budgets
- Medical Consultant

Board Member Comments

Members of the BOF thanked everyone for a good discussion and wished everyone well.

Adjournment

Michael Cammarota made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:14 pm. Mark Bennison seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)