

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

MINUTES

Board of Finance Regular Meeting

Wednesday, April 6, 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
Dr. Pat Cosentino, Superintendent of Schools
Pat Del Monaco, First Selectman
Lori Beninson, Selectman
Khris Hall, Selectman
Dr. Rich Sanzo, BOE Director of Business and Operations
Terry Friedman, Town Treasurer
Holly Smith, Town Clerk
Dr. Karen Fildes, Director of Technology
Julie Luby, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Katherine Matz, Pupil Personnel Director
James D'Amico, High School Principal
Christine Baldelli, Middle School Principal
Cheryl Milo, Middle School Assistant Principal
James Mandracchia, MHHS Principal
Rob Spino, Consolidated School Principal
Karen Gruetzner, Consolidated School Assistant Principal
Phil Ross, Director of Buildings and Grounds
Dominic Cipollone, BOE Chairman
Greg Flanagan, BOE member
Kimberly LaTourette, BOE member
Ed Sbordone, BOE member
Stephanie Strazza, BOE member

Call To Order Chairman Wes Marsh called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Appointments- None

Correspondence and Announcements

Wes Marsh noted that the BOF received 27 emails regarding the budget since the last BOF meeting of March 30th. Cheryl Reedy noted that of these 27 emails, 25 were in favor of sending the budget to the voters without any cuts. Two of the emails requested a zero percent increase in the budget.

Public Comment

Many members of the public spoke in support of both the Education and the Town budgets and asked the BOF to send the proposed budget to the taxpayers without any further cuts.

Approval of Minutes

Michael Cammarota made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 30, 2022 regular meeting as presented. Mark Beninson seconded the motion.

Cheryl Reedy made a motion to amend the previous motion to have the minutes of the March 30, 2022 meeting reflect the fact that Claudia Willard returned to the meeting after technical difficulties at approximately 9:15pm.

Vote to amend: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Thora Perkins made a motion to amend the previous motion to include that she asked for 10 years of test scores because they were not provided as requested at the March 9th meeting.

Vote to amend: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

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

Budget Transfers- None

Medical

Wes Marsh noted that Tom Kowalchik was unable to attend this meeting due to a family emergency.

Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget planning

Wes Marsh spoke of the process for the budget and noted that once the BOF approves the final mark-up, it will go to a Town Meeting which is then adjourned to a referendum vote by the taxpayers. He spoke of how current events that have happened since the budgets were put together may affect the budgets and gave an example of the amount of increased taxes for the median homeowners. He further noted that both the BOE and BOS budget passed unanimously by their respective boards.

Michael Cammarota made a motion to approve both the BOE and BOS budgets as presented and to use \$1,200,000 from the bond premium which would yield a Mill Rate increase of 3.68%. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion. **Vote: 3-3-0 (Motion denied- Michael Cammarota, Wes Marsh and Cheryl Reedy in favor, Mark Beninson, Thora Perkins and Claudia Willard opposed)**

There was a discussion of the optimal increase for this budget and what will be passed by the taxpayers.

Thora Perkins made a motion to approve the budgets with a reduction of \$25,000 for the BOS budget and a reduction of \$400,000 from the BOE budget and using an additional \$600,000 from the bond premium which would yield a Mill Rate increase of 2.89%. Mark Beninson seconded the motion.

After much much discussion, Cheryl Reedy made a motion to call the question on the previous motion. Michael Cammarota seconded the motion.

Vote to call the question: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Vote on motion after the question was called: 3-3-0 (Motion denied- Mark Beninson, Thora Perkins and Claudia Willard in favor, Michael Cammarota, Wes Marsh and Cheryl Reedy opposed).

It was decided to have a special meeting on Wednesday, April 13th to further discuss the budget and to hopefully come to a consensus with a number to bring to the taxpayers. It will be decided at the April 13th meeting whether or not to cancel the April 20th meeting.

Public Comment

Several members of the public spoke of their disappointment that the motion to send the budget to the voters without any cuts did not pass. They encouraged the dissenting members to reevaluate their position and to listen to the taxpayers that have spoken at this and previous meetings.

Future Agenda items

- Budget Mark Up
- Ongoing updates

Board Member Comments

Members of the BOF thanked everyone that participated in Public Comment. There was an explanation of statistics and comments hoping for the members to come up with a compromise that will be will be passed by the taxpayers.

Wes Marsh explained Roberts Rules and why a tie vote does not pass.

Adjournment

Mark Beninson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 pm. Claudia Willard seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Received by email on 04/11/2022 @ 8:44 a.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield