

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

MINUTES

Ad Hoc Capital Projects Planning Committee meeting
Thursday, July 14, 2022
1:00 PM
Via Zoom

Town Officials Present:

Cheryl Reedy, BOF member
Pat Del Monaco, First Selectman
Lori Beninson, Selectman
Terry Friedman, Town Treasurer
Olga Melnikov, Finance Director
Carrie DePuy, BOE Director of Business and Operations
Dominic Cipollone, BOE Chairman
Ed Sbordone, BOE/PBC member
Phil Ross, Director of Buildings and Grounds
Cynthia Ross Zweig, Planning Commission Chair

Call To Order Cheryl Reedy called the meeting to order at 1:04 pm

Cheryl Reedy gave a brief overview of the rules and procedures for having a virtual meeting.

Purpose and Scope of work for Ad Hoc Committee

Cheryl Reedy spoke of the purpose of the subcommittee to be to make sure funding is available for necessary capital projects while making sure costs are consistent across the years as revenue becomes available to limit spikes in the mil rate for taxpayers. She suggested that the town and the schools update their capital plans submitted at budget time each year and update any estimated costs as well as the town to expand its plan to 10 years like the schools. Olga Melnikov suggested another way of proceeding was for the Board of Finance to plan how much funding it could make available for capital projects each year and then have the BOS and BOE fit their plans into available funding.

First Selectman Pat Del Monaco said that was a better way to proceed as it is discouraging to put together a long-term capital plan each year only to have it cut and have to start all over again. Phil Ross said it was better from his perspective as well. He also noted that he was too busy over the summer with moving to a new school to be able to devote much time to updating the current plan mid-year. Cheryl Reedy agreed that Olga's suggested scope was a better way to go and said she would ask the BOF to work on coming up with the needed target spending for capital projects within the next 2-3 months prior to the start of the budget process for next year.

Dates for future meetings

The members of the committee discussed how often the committee should meet. There was a consensus to meet next in September after school starts and then quarterly after that. The majority of

members preferred to meet during the day on Zoom. Cheryl Reedy will send out a Doodle poll to set up the next meeting ASAP while calendars are still clear.

Review existing town/school plans

Olga Melnikov spoke of the capital needs of the town vs. the funding for these projects.

First Selectman Pat Del Monaco spoke of a possible schedule for capital projects. She noted that the department head five-year schedules are usually pretty accurate. She suggested that capital projects for buildings should be reviewed as well.

Phil Ross spoke about the relationship between sufficient operating budget funding for repairs and maintenance every year and the need for capital projects. The more that capital assets can be properly repaired and maintained on a regular basis then the more likely those assets are to last until the end or even past the end of their useful life. He also noted the need for a schedule of items that should be planned for bonding rather than payment out of the capital fund each year, items that are too expensive for a 10-year capital plan, e.g. roofs on all schools and town buildings. He also noted that the town should consider planning for a renovate as new project on the Middle School in ten years or so – again a project that would need to be bonded but which would be due at that time in order to get the most life out of the existing infrastructure.

Cheryl Reedy suggested that Olga Melnikov gave a presentation to the Board of Finance giving specifics of how the Capital and Nonrecurring funding works and how it is currently funded each year.

BOE Chair Dom Cipollone noted that the NFPS PPS Administrator is scheduled to make a presentation to the BOF at its next meeting and that she may have suggestions about how some capital spending might help to exacerbate the need for increased operating costs for special education students by leading to fewer outplacements.

Pat Del Monaco spoke of the equipment for the Communications Center and noted that the current equipment was paid for with a grant. She spoke of upgrading the equipment and noted that if the town decides to keep the Center in Town, then the new equipment could be paid for with ARPA funds.

Review existing Debt Service plan

Terry Friedman showed a chart of debt service for the Town and BOE for the next twenty years. She explained the chart that shows the debt service from older debt from before the school projects and then the pay back of the bonding for the school building projects. She noted that debt for the school projects will significantly increase over the next year. Ed Sbordone spoke of the debt service schedule and noted that the 2023-2024 budget will have an approximately 4% increase due to the debt service for the school buildings projects.

Summary of Meeting

It was decided to have the next meeting for the Capital Projects Planning Committee towards the end of September. Cheryl Reedy will relay information to the BOF and ask them to give parameters for capital projects before the budgets are compiled and to look into increased funding possibilities for the capital fund. She asked members to bring any pertinent information regarding capital projects to

the next meeting. She asked Finance Director Olga Melnikov to give a presentation to the BOF regarding funding of capital projects. She thanked everyone involved with this committee for all their hard work and dedication.

Member comments

Ed Sbordone asked Cheryl Reedy if she would talk to the BOF about appointing a BOF member as a liaison to the Board of Education.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:16 pm.
