

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

MINUTES
Board of Finance Regular Meeting
Wednesday, September 21, 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

Pat Del Monaco, First Selectman
Lori- Ann Beninson, Selectman
Khris Hall, Selectman
Olga Melnikov, Finance Director
Terry Friedman, Town Treasurer

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

Network Administrator Quintin Flower gave a brief overview of the rules and procedures for a virtual meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

Appointments- None

Correspondence and Announcements

Chairman Wes Marsh announced that the BOF and the BOE will have a joint in-person meeting on Wednesday, October 12th at 7:00 pm in the Community Room. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss Special Education and how it affects the budget.

Wes Marsh noted that Director of Technology Karen Fildes has left the district and Paul Gouveia has been promoted to this position. He wished Paul well in this new position.

Public Comment

A resident spoke of concerns regarding the Board's proposed draft regarding possible changes to the public comment policy and asked the Board to consider not restricting Public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Michael Cammarota made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 20, 2022 regular meeting as presented. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Budget Transfers

Finance Director Olga Melnikov noted that an Intra-Departmental transfer was needed for year-end true-ups for salaries.

Wes Marsh made a motion to approve the following Intra-Departmental transfers in the amount of \$17,868.00. Michael Cammarota seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

\$	Transfer From		\$	Transfer To	
\$17,868.00	001-4160-0000-000/140.00	Unclassified P&B-Salary and Adjustment	\$851.00	001-4120-0000-00/110.00	Town Clerk-Salaries
			\$4,970.00	001-4120-0000-00/110.00	Finance-Salaries
			\$148.00	001-4150-0000-00/110.00	BOF- Salaries
			\$1.00	001-4151-0000-00/110.00	Treasurer-Elected Salaries
			\$4320.00	001-4152-0000-00/110.00	Tax Collector-Salaries
			\$1165.00	001-4154-0000-00/110.00	Health-Salaries
			\$1273.00	001-4410-0000-00/110.00	Parks and Rec-Salaries
			\$258.00	001-4510-0000-00/110.00	OEM- Salaries
			\$3236.00	001-4290-0000-00/110.00	Comm. Center-Salaries
			\$177.00	001-4215-0000-00/110.00	Comm. Center PT-Salaries
			\$1,469.00	001-4215-0000-00/112.00	Comm.Center-Overtime
\$17,868.00			\$17,868.00	001-4125-0000-00/130.00	

Wes Marsh made a motion to approve the following Inter-Departmental transfers in the amount of \$5,000.00. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

\$	Transfer From		\$	Transfer To	
\$5,000.00	001-4160-0000-000/250.00	Unclassified P&B Unemployment	\$5,000.00	001-4154-0000-000/105.00	Tax Collector- Elected Salaries
\$5,000.00			\$5,000.00		

Olga Melnikov spoke of the year-end surplus for 2021-2022 and noted that the preliminary numbers are approximately \$424,000 for Expenditures and \$874,173 for Revenue which includes both the BOE and Town. She noted that the BOE usually asks that their surplus to be transferred put into their non-lapsing account. The primary reasons for the revenue surplus were supplemental motor vehicle income and prior year taxes due to a tax sale in the month of June. The primary reasons for expenditure surplus were salary savings for the State Trooper line, SRO overtime and reduction in salaries for the Library staff due to a change in hours.

There was a discussion among the members of the BOF regarding the surplus. Cheryl Reedy suggested transferring some of the surplus to the Medical Reserve Fund and unappropriated Capital and Nonrecurring items. She asked Finance Director Olga Melnikov to prepare a chart outlining the amount of surpluses for the last ten years.

Long-term capital planning recommendations

Cheryl Reedy noted that she and Town Treasurer Terry Friedman worked up a ten-year model for long-term capital planning that will serve as a guide for the Ad Hoc Capital Planning Committee. These goals would allow the Town to have modest operating increases, modest medical insurance premiums, bonding for the two new schools, significant amount in capital to maintain and improve town and school infrastructure, opportunities for additional bonding for large capital projects, and modest mil rates that consistently trend downward.

Cheryl Reedy spoke of some assumptions with the model that include that operating budgets, medical insurance budgets and adjustments to property taxes will increase at a rate of 2% per year. It assumes that the Grand List will increase .35% per year and that non-tax revenue will increase by approximately 1% per year. She further noted that this model include only the cap and non numbers to be taxed and not the amount to be taxed and does not include the use of surplus. The final tranche of bonding will be in the year 2024-2025 but the numbers at this point are very tentative. It was noted that there is a five-year capital plan available on the Town's website.

Town Treasurer Terry Friedman noted that bonding information for future years is tentative.

The Board reviewed a chart of capital projects from fiscal year 2020-2021 to date and then projections for until the year fiscal year 2033-2034. This will be discussed at the Ad Hoc Capital Planning meeting tomorrow at 1:00pm.

Discussion of Public Comment policy

Claudia Willard noted that she and Michael Cammarota worked collaboratively on possible changes to the Public Comment policy. They noted that the object of the policy would be to make sure that the policy is fair and appreciates everyone's perspective. He suggested including this draft in the minutes of this meeting. There was a discussion of the role of the chairman in regard to ruling participants out of order and whether or not there should be limitations on Public Comment.

Cheryl Reedy made a motion to table any votes regarding the Public Comment policy until the October regular meeting to allow for updating drafts that will be sent out with the agenda. Mark Beninson seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

ONGOING UPDATES

Medical update- There was a discussion of the need to build up the Medical Insurance fund. It was noted that the current balance is currently \$914,606 and ideally should be approximately \$1.2 million or at least 20% of forecasted claims.

Legal update- There was a discussion of the legal expenses and a possible change in format to the Legal Report.

Year to date expenses review-The Board reviewed expenditures and specifically the Communications Center overtime and salaries. It was noted that two part-time dispatchers have been hired which should help reduce the amount of overtime at the Communication Center.

Year to date revenue update- The Board reviewed revenue and noted that interest income is higher than it was a year ago.

Capital and Nonrecurring update- Finance Director Olga Melnikov noted that since this is a multi-year fund, there is already a balance in this fund.

Public Comment

First Selectman Pat Del Monaco asked the Board to reconsider possible changes to the Public Comment policy and spoke of concerns regarding possible restrictions.

Board Member Comments

Claudia Willard asked for a more specific reason for the special joint BOF/BOE meeting to be held on October 12th. Chairman Wes Marsh noted that this meeting came about after a conversation with the BOE Chairman Dominic Cipollone. It was decided that it would be beneficial for all members.

Future Agenda items

Long-term capital projects review
Discussion of the Public Comment policy

Thora Perkins asked about adding a question to the next meeting regarding data on the BOE Expenditure report and adding a discussion of getting BOE Expenditure reports. It was noted that this was discussed at a previous meeting and it was decided that only Thora Perkins and Mark Beninson were interested in receiving this report.

Adjournment

Michael Cammarota made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 pm. Wes Marsh seconded the motion. **Vote: 4-1-0 (Motion approved Thora Perkins opposed and Claudia Willard left the meeting before the vote)**

Received by email on 09/28/2022 @ 11:16 a.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield

ROUGH DRAFT (version 4) for the purpose of discussion, 9/16/22

**New Fairfield Board of Finance
Public Comment Policy**

Under Connecticut state law, municipal boards and commissions are public agencies under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and therefore must comply with FOIA requirements. Along with other factors, this means that local board and commission meetings must be open to the public, except for closed sessions, as allowed by law, for specified purposes.

FOIA does not explicitly require meetings to allow for public participation. The State's Freedom of Information Commission (FOIC) has consistently held that this decision is within the discretion of each agency. However, the Commission endorses public participation at agency meetings, to whatever extent it is possible. (See Advisory Opinion #35 (1978) and Final Decision, Docket #FIC 2009-254 (2010)).

Additionally, The Commission believes that it is within the spirit of the Freedom of Information Act for public agencies to be open to the expressed concerns and opinions of their constituents, as well as, providing the disclosure of their records and public access to their meetings. (<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2017/rpt/pdf/2017-R-0232.pdf>).

It is a core democratic value that everyone has a right to express their opinions and views, and for these views to be heard. The purpose of the public comment period is to inform the board and committees of the views of the public. Public comment is encouraged. Elected officials are to be open to hearing these views and to consider them, as well as, other factors during board deliberations.

Public comment does not necessarily warrant a reply, since it is to provide information to the board or committee. However, if the Chairperson, or board member, deems an immediate reply is in order, the Chairperson, or board member, may reply, or the Chairperson may select an appropriate board member or personnel, who is present, to reply.

In order for the entire meeting agenda to proceed on schedule and to accomplish the purpose of the meeting, the board reserves the right to limit the duration of public comment.

Public Comment Period

The board strives to create a culture of tolerance for differing points of view that credits everyone with having the best interests of the community in mind. It is hoped that the public's comments will assist the board in focusing on the strength and weakness of proposed solutions about community problems and issues.

The board members are also expected to treat other board members with courtesy and respect at all times, and in a manner deemed appropriate to conduct the commission's business and to comply with the statutes governing Connecticut municipalities.

All participants shall be treated with respect and courtesy. It is important that the public feel that the board meetings will be conducted in an orderly way, and that the public's views can be expressed to the board and committees, without fear of inappropriate recrimination, criticism, intimidation or comment by the board members or other participants.

The manner of speech in meetings is important. Participants will be encouraged to refrain from personal attacks and ridicule, which can be perceived to be questioning the integrity and motives of board members, employees, presenters, and other public participants.

Incivility such as making attempts to drown out other's perspectives in an aggressive, slanderous, and/or physically intimidating manner will be noted and discouraged.

The Chairperson may, or on the motion of another board member, rule any public speaker out of order, should his/her comments be considered personal, rude or slanderous, and that person does not adjust their tone after warnings of the board.

Members of the public who wish to speak are allotted three (3) minutes time or less, depending on the number of requests and the time available. This should allow time for other persons to speak, who wish to do so.

The board requests that the public refrain from repeating their own same comments at a given meeting or at multiple meetings. All comments will be duly noted at the time they are expressed to the board or committee members.

If your views have already been expressed during the public comment period, it is suggested that you may simply indicate that you agree with the previous speaker.

A spokesperson may present the views of a given group.

Public Comment Procedures

- **Requesting to speak at in-person meetings:** Persons requesting to speak in an in-person meeting are requested to give their name or organization before speaking.

The Board of Finance currently meets regularly, once a month, on Wednesdays at 7:30 PM. The schedule and agendas for all of these meetings can be found on the town website at newfairfield.org.

- **Requesting to speak at Zoom meetings:** The procedures will be announced at the beginning of the meeting.

The zoom link is listed on the agenda for each meeting, which can be found at the town website at newfairfield.org.

- **Submitting written comments:** Members of the public may submit comments and questions in writing to the board by email at BOF@newfairfield.org.

The public is also free to use other means of communications to voice their opinions (e.g. social media, local newspapers).

The mailing address for other correspondence is **Board of Finance, 4 Brush Hill Road, New Fairfield, CT 06812.**

These emails and letters are forwarded to every member of the Board of Finance and are acknowledged at the next scheduled board meeting.