

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

MINUTES

**Board of Finance Budget Workshop
Saturday, March 4, 2023
9:00 AM
Community Room at 33 Route 37**

Members present:

Wes Marsh, Chairman
Mark Bennison
Kim Hanson
Thora Perkins
Cheryl Reedy
Claudia Willard
Dave Coleman, Alternate

Members not present:

Chris D'Esposito, Alternate

Other Town Officials Present- First Session

Pat Del Monaco, First Selectman
Khris Hall, Selectman
Lori-Ann Beninson, Selectman
Olga Melnikov, Finance Director
Dr. Kenneth Craw, Superintendent of Schools
Don Kellogg, PBC Chairman
Cynthia Ross-Zweig, Planning Commission Chairman
Amy Johnson, BOE member
Ed Sbordone, BOE/PBC member

Other Town Officials Present- Second Session

Pat Del Monaco, First Selectman
Khris Hall, Selectman
Lori-Ann Beninson, Selectman
Olga Melnikov, Finance Director
Dr. Kenneth Craw, Superintendent of Schools
Julie Luby, Ass't Superintendent of Schools
Carrie DePuy, Director of Business and Operations
Katherine Matz, Pupil Personnel Director
Paul Gouveia, Director of Technology
Don Kellogg, PBC Chairman
Cynthia Ross-Zweig, Planning Commission Chairman
Dominic Cipollone, BOE Chairman
Tim Blair, BOE member
Greg Flanagan, BOE member
Amy Johnson, BOE member
Kim LaTourette, BOE member
Samantha Mannion, BOE member
Ed Sbordone, BOE/PBC member
Stephanie Strazza, BOE member

Call To Order Chairman Wes Marsh called the meeting to order at 9:04am

Pledge of Allegiance

Appointments- None

Presentation of the Selectmen Requested Budget 2023/2024

First Selectman Pat Del Monaco presented the BOS budget for 2023-2024 fiscal year. She spoke of the process for putting together the budget and the components that make up the budget. She described services that are paid for with the Town budget and spoke of budget pressures for this year which include inflation, medical fund shortfall, paramedic contract and the school building projects. It was noted that interest income is higher than in recent years.

The total requested municipal budget for 2023-2024 is \$13,776,024 which represents an increase of \$510,435 or 3.85% over the 2022-2023 budget.

Public Comment

Millie Kellogg spoke in the support of the proposed budget for the town.

Don Kellogg spoke in support of the proposed budget and encouraged the BOF members to listen to the taxpayers and noted that it is ultimately the decision of the taxpayers.

Review of BOS Budget by Board of Finance members

Members of the Board of Finance asked questions of the BOS regarding the proposed budget. Specific questions included the options for paramedic services and inquiries about the new staffing model for the Communications Center. There was a request for an overview of the 5-year capital plan proposed before cuts were made. There was a request for information on Town personnel including total head count, This request asked for data from 2012-2013, 2015-2017 and the current year.

It was decided that any questions from members of the BOF will be sent to Chairman Wes Marsh for forwarding to the BOS.

Recess

The board went into recess at 10:24 am.

The board came back from recess at 10:51 am.

Presentation of Board of Education Requested Budget 2023/2024

BOE Chairman Dominic Cipollone gave a Power Point presentation for the 2023-2024 budget for the Board of Education. He spoke of how the pandemic has affected education and praised New Fairfield for its many accomplishments. He thanked the teachers, administrators, school staff, teachers and students for their dedication to the education system in New Fairfield.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Crow spoke of the many accomplishments throughout the district and noted that recovery is almost at per-pandemic levels. It was noted that New Fairfield has grown substantially more than surrounding districts since the pandemic. He noted that enrollment throughout the district has remained steady and may have a slight uptick. Factors that affect the budget include contractual increases, learning recovery and staffing that was previously funded through ARPA funds.

The total requested operating BOE budget for 2023-2024 equals \$45,551,674 which is a \$2,573,922 increase from the 2022-2023 budget which represents a 5.99% increase.

The capital budget request consists of \$543,575 which includes Middle School Oil Tank replacement, Middle School Cafeteria and Lobby Flooring, Dump Truck, Replacement van for student transportation, MHHS Air-conditioning units, and Middle School Exterior Masonry updates. The existing capital and non-recurring account will contribute \$200,000 to these projects thus reducing the capital request to \$343,575.

It was noted that all information regarding this budget is available on the district website. It was decided that any questions from members of the BOF will be sent to Chairman Wes Marsh for forwarding to the BOE.

Public Comment

Middle School Student Emily Savino spoke in support of the String Program at the Middle School. She spoke of a petition that she circulated among students showing support and interest in this program.

Don Kellogg spoke in support of the budget.

Diane Persis Desanto spoke in support of the budget and the need to support students especially in light of everything that was taken away due to the pandemic.

Joshua Beckett-Flores thanked Dr. Crow and staff for the one-to-one instruction for the students in the wake of the pandemic. He encouraged everyone to support the budget.

Review of the BOE Budget by Board of Finance members

Members of the BOF asked questions regarding the proposed budget. Specific questions included the salaries of administrators compared to past years, how much is expected to be gained through attrition and the amount of money collected by the Field Fees committee for the replacement of Rebel Turf.

Other questions asked from BOF members included the size of the new high school regarding the capacity when the project was first approved and what it actually is. The Board asked for statistics of how many college bound graduates actually graduate from

college within six years. There was also a brief discussion of capital projects within the schools specifically the Middle School roof, the cafeteria flooring and the Middle School oil tank.

Future Meetings

The Board of Finance will have budget meetings every Wednesday in the month at 7:30pm. The March 8th and 15th meetings will be held virtually. The Board will determine if the March 22nd and March 29th will be in person or virtual at a later date.

Adjournment

Cheryl Reedy made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:37 pm. Mark Beninson seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Received by email on 03/09/2023 @ 11:08 a.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield