

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

**MINUTES**

**Board of Finance Regular Meeting**

**Wednesday, March 29, 2023**

**7:30 PM**

**via Zoom**

<p><b><u>Board of Finance members present:</u></b> Wes Marsh, Chairman Mark Beninson Kim Hanson Thora Perkins Claudia Willard Dave Coleman, Alternate Chris D’Esposito, Alternate Greg Williams, Alternate <b><u>Board of Finance members not present:</u></b> Cheryl Reedy</p>	<p><b><u>Other Town officials and Educators present:</u></b> Pat Del Monaco, First Selectman Lori-Ann Beninson, Selectman Khris Hall, Selectman Olga Melnikov, Finance Director Terry Friedman, Town Treasurer Dr. Ken Craw, Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby, Ass’t Superintendent of Schools Scott Rohwedder, High School Ass’t Principal Karen Gruetzner, Middle School Principal Cheryl Milo, Middle School Assistant Principal Allyson Story, Elementary School Principal Jennifer Hilderbrand, Elementary School Ass’t Principal Rob Spino, Elementary School Ass’t Principal Katherine Matz, Pupil Personnel Director Melissa Busnel, Special Education Supervisor Phil Ross, Director of Buildings and Grounds Holly Smith, Town Clerk Paul Gouveia, Director of Technology Mark Ottusch, Athletic Director Bruce Taylor, Fire Chief</p>
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Quintin Flower gave a brief overview of the rules and procedures for a virtual meeting.

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

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Appointments**

Cheryl Reedy was not able to attend this meeting and asked that Greg Williams serve in her absence.

**Correspondence and Announcements**

Wes Marsh noted that the BOF received 25 emails since the last BOF meeting. These emails expressed opinions regarding the budget with 15 residents encouraging the BOF not to cut the education budget. Five residents encouraged the BOF not to cut either the BOF or BOS budget. Four residents encouraged the Board to cut the budget and one email spoke in favor of the BOF to continue to hold meetings via Zoom.

**Public Comment**

Approximately 47 members of the public spoke in favor of the proposed budget and encouraged the BOF to send the budget to the taxpayers without any further cuts.

Two members of the public expressed concerns regarding the proposed budget and potential tax increases.

**Approval of Minutes**

Greg Williams made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 22, 2023 regular meeting as presented. Thora Perkins seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

**Budget Transfers**

Wes Marsh made a motion to make an Inter-Departmental transfer in the amount of \$9,000 from General Insurance to Tax Collector supplies. Greg Williams seconded the motion.

There was a discussion about the need for \$9,000.00 for training for the new Tax Department. Finance Director Olga Melnikov asked the BOF to confirm that they are in agreement to extend the offer to the new hire to have overlap in the Tax Collector department. There was a consensus among the Board members that whatever the overage it may result in in the account, will be dealt with at year-end. The Board unanimously voted to approve the transfer as amended.

Kim Hanson made a motion to amend the previous motion to change the amount from \$9,000 to \$5,600. Claudia Willard seconded the motion.

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

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

\$	Transfer From		\$	Transfer To	
\$5,600.00	001-4163-0000-000/520.01	General Insurance (Additional costs due to turnover)	\$5,600.00	001-4154-0000/000/110.00	Tax Collector Salaries
<b>\$5,600.00</b>			<b>\$5,600.00</b>		

**Discussion of fiscal year 2023/2024 Budget planning**

**Bonding-** Town Treasurer Terry Friedman noted that the fourth round of bonding was completed on Monday, March 27<sup>th</sup>. This represents that last \$12 million of the \$80 million. The lowest rate for this is 3.357%. The premium for the bond is \$806,714.15 which is more than was expected. The total premium is \$3,042,955.48. It was noted that next year’s debt service will go down.

**Medical**

Wes Marsh showed a chart outlining the projected medical expenditures and compared it to the projected contributions, rebates OPEB transfer and discounts. He noted that by using all of the contributions, it may be possible to save approximately \$400,000 for medical. There was a discussion of the OPEB numbers.

Tom Kowalchik from USI gave a breakdown of claims between the Town and the BOE from March 1, 2022 to February 28, 2023. There was a discussion of how much was budgeted vs. how much was actually spent in previous years. There was a brief discussion of the extra cost for the Town to be fully insured.

The Board discussed how much to contribute to the medical fund. It was decided to ask the BOS whether they would support a mid-year appropriation into medical from unanticipated state revenue and interest income for a designated amount. Wes Marsh will ask the BOS to put this on their next agenda.

### Budget Discussion

There was a discussion of the extra bond premium and the possibility of putting it towards the debt service for the 2023-2024 budget in order to reduce the debt service. Members of the board asked for information regarding future debt service payments. Thora Perkins asked if there was a possibility of drawing from money from the COVID vaccination fund.

Wes Marsh made a motion to put \$1,750,000 of the bond premium towards the debt service for the 2023/2024 budget. Greg Williams seconded the motion.

Thora Perkins made a motion to call the question after much discussion. Claudia Willard seconded the motion.

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

**Vote on motion: 2-4-0 (Motion denied- Wes Marsh and Greg Williams in favor, Mark Beninson, Kim Hanson, Thora Perkins, and Claudia Willard opposed)**

**Discussion of In-person vs. Zoom meetings-** The April 12<sup>th</sup> meeting will be held via Zoom.

### Public Comment

Over a dozen members of the public including First Selectman Pat Del Monaco spoke in favor of sending the budget to the taxpayers without any cuts.

One member of the public spoke against budget increases and the challenges of sending a 7 or 8% budget increase to the taxpayers.

There was a discussion as whether someone making a public comment is required to give their name before speaking under the Freedom of Information laws. Recording Secretary Suzanne Kloos will check with the Town Clerk before the next meeting.

**Future Agenda items-** Budget

### Board Member Comments

Kim Hanson thanked the members of the public for their comments.

Claudia Willard thanked the public for their comments.

Greg Williams spoke in support of getting the budget resolved ASAP.

### Adjournment

Thora Perkins made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:04 am. Claudia Willard seconded the motion.

**Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**