

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

MINUTES

**Board of Finance Special Meeting
Wednesday, June 28, 2023
7:30 PM
via Zoom**

<p><u>Board of Finance members present:</u> Wes Marsh, Chairman Mark Beninson Kim Hanson Cheryl Reedy Claudia Willard Dave Coleman, Alternate Chris D’Esposito, Alternate Greg Williams, Alternate</p> <p><u>Board of Finance members not present:</u> Thora Perkins</p>	<p><u>Other Town officials and Educators present:</u> Pat Del Monaco, First Selectman Khris Hall, Selectman Lori-Ann Beninson, Selectman Olga Melnikov, Finance Director Terry Friedman, Town Treasurer Carrie DePuy, Director of Business and Operations Elisa Beckett-Flores, Registrar of Voters Shareen Langdon, Tax Collector Holly Smith, Town Clerk Paul Gouveia, Director of Technology Allyson Story, Elementary School Principal Dominic Cipollone, BOE Chairman Kathy Baker, BOE member Greg Flanagan, BOE member Amy Johnson, BOE member Kimberly LaTourette, BOE member Samantha Mannion, BOE Ed Sbordone, BOE member/PBC member Stephanie Strazza, BOE member</p>
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Call To Order Chairman Wes Marsh called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Appointments- Wes Marsh noted that Thora Perkins was unable to attend tonight's meeting and has requested that Dave Coleman serve in her place.

Correspondence and Announcements

Wes Marsh noted that the BOF received 41 emails since the last meeting. He broke them down in the following categories:

- 31 emails said that both budget were too low.
- Eight emails requested that the BOE budget be increased

- One email requested that the budgets be reduced but asked that money be put in Police Overtime

Wes Marsh read a petition signed by over 390 residents sent via email to the BOF stating that they voted “no” at the June 24th Budget referendum because the proposed budget does not provide for adequate funding.

Public Comment

Wes Marsh spoke of the changes to the Public Comment policy that was approved at the June 21st BOF meeting. This policy limits the time for Public Comment to a total of 45 minutes for the first session and 15 minutes for the second session. Both of the sessions set a time limit of three minutes per speaker.

Over 20 residents gave their opinions that the budget presented at the June 24th referendum was too low. They asked that the BOF consider increasing the both budgets.

Discussion and vote on revised final markup of the BOF recommended budget for 2023-2024

Cheryl Reedy read a proposal to make the following changes to the budget. She showed a spreadsheet that compared the new proposal to the budget that was defeated at the June 24, 2023 referendum. There was a discussion of this proposal including the medical fund, use of bond premium, police overtime and the optimal amount to put in the Fire Department apparatus fund. These changes would yield an increase of 7.47% for Personal Property and Real Estate taxes. There will be no percentage increase to Motor Vehicle Tax due to the Mil Rate cap by the State.

Cheryl Reedy made a motion to approve the following change to the proposed budget:

- Add \$195,900 to the BOE operating budget.
- Add \$100,000 to the police overtime line in the town operating budget
- Add \$7100 to the BOE capital budget.
- Reduce \$25,000 from the BOS capital budget from FD Apparatus Reserve Fund
- Reduce by \$150,000 the contribution to the Medical Fund
- Reduce by \$400,000 the use of debt premium
- Add \$203,456 to ECS revenue and \$37,730 to LOCIP revenue for a grand total of \$241,186 net increase in revenue

Kim Hanson seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-1-0 (Motion approved- Dave Coleman opposed)

Cheryl Reedy reminded everyone of tax abatement and tax deferral programs for taxpayers over the age of 65. She spoke of the tax credit for the members of the volunteer Fire Department and noted that the Fire Department is in need of volunteers with all skill sets.

Vote to bring BOF recommended budget to a Town Meeting

Wes Marsh made a motion to recommend to a Town Meeting the following expenditures for the Board of Selectmen: Town government expenditures totaling \$13,675,500 from the General Fund and \$797,070 from the Capital and Nonrecurring funds and \$2,691,605 from other governmental funds for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024. Claudia Willard seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0-1 (Motion approved- Dave Coleman abstained)

Wes Marsh made a motion to recommend to a Town Meeting Education expenditures for the Board of Education: Education expenditures totaling \$52,785,168 from the General Fund and \$155,675 from the Capital and Nonrecurring fund for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 202 and ending June 30, 2024. Kim Hanson seconded the motion. **Vote: 5-0-1 (Motion approved- Dave Coleman abstained)**

Public Comment

Approximately seven members of the public thanked the BOF for their work in the budget process and for going in the right direction. Some residents spoke of their frustration that more money was not put back into the budget.

Registrar of Voters Elisa Beckett-Flores reminded everyone that the next budget referendum will be held at the Senior Center due to the construction at the high school.

Board Member Comments

Kim Hanson thanked his fellow BOF members for compromising on the budget. He reminded everyone of possible cuts from the State if the operating budget is increased.

Cheryl Reedy encouraged resident to vote for this budget. She thanked fellow BOF members for their hard work and further thanked the public for their opinions. She encouraged members of the public to continue to give their opinions in future years.

Wes Marsh thanked the residents for their comments and for the record number of voters at the referendum. He thanked the BOF members for their willingness to compromise.

Adjournment

Kim Hanson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 pm. Mark Beninson seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Received by email on 7/5/2023 @ 8:48 a.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield