

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

**REVISED MINUTES
Board of Finance Regular Meeting
Wednesday, June 21, 2023
7:30 PM
via Zoom**

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| <u>Board of Finance members present:</u> Wes Marsh, Chairman Mark Beninson Kim Hanson Thora Perkins Cheryl Reedy Claudia Willard Dave Coleman, Alternate Chris D'Esposito, Alternate <u>Board of Finance not members present:</u> Greg Williams, Alternate | <u>Other Town officials and Educators present:</u> Pat Del Monaco, First Selectman Khris Hall, Selectman Olga Melnikov, Finance Director Terry Friedman, Town Treasurer Elisa Beckett-Flores, Registrar of Voters |
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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- None

Correspondence and Announcements

Wes Marsh noted that the BOF received 5 emails since the last meeting broken down as follows:

- Three to increase both budgets
- Two to increase the Education budget
- Received an email from Tax Collector Shareen Langdon asking how soon the BOF can meet if the budget passes to vote to set the Mil Rate. It was decided that a meeting will be called on Monday, June 26th at 9:00 am to set the Mil Rate.

Public Comment

Rick Regan asked the BOF that in the event they limit the total time for Public Comment to consider cutting the time limit for each speaker in order to give more residents the opportunity to speak.

Olivia Micca spoke of her disappointment with budget that was proposed at the May 31st BOF meeting and specifically the cutting of \$100,000 from the Police Overtime budget.

Elisa Beckett-Flores noted that she is available if the Board has any questions regarding the budget transfer for the Registrar of Voters.

Approval of Minutes

Cheryl Reedy made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2023 regular meeting, May 31, 2023 special meeting and April 11, 2023 audit subcommittee meeting as presented. Kim Hanson seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Budget Transfers

Registrar of Voters Elisa Beckett-Flores spoke of the need for an Intra-Departmental transfer to the Materials and Supplies and salaries for Registrar of Voters due to extra Town Meetings and referendums in this fiscal year. There was a brief discussion of using the BOF contingency for this expense.

Wes Marsh made a motion to approve the following transfer in the amount of \$5,800.00. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

| \$ | Transfer From | | \$ | Transfer To | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| \$1,800.00 | 001-4197-0000-000/110.00 | BOF-Contingency | \$1,800.00 | 001-4140-0000-000/610.00 | Registrar of Voters M&S |
| \$3,000.00 | 001-4197-0000-000/110.00 | BOF Contingency | \$3,000.00 | 001-4140-0000-000/110.00 | Registrar of Voters-Salaries |
| \$1,000.00 | 001-4197-0000-000/110.00 | BOF-Contingency | \$1,000.00 | 001-4140-0000-000/105.00 | Registrar of Voters-Elected Salaries |
| \$5,800.00 | | | \$5,800.00 | | |

Finance Director Olga Melnikov spoke of an unanticipated overage in the Resident State Trooper line due to a reduction in the fringe benefit rate and hiring of troopers at a lower pay rate. There was a discussion about the need to transfer \$40,000 into the Legal budget.

Wes Marsh made a motion to approve the following transfer in the amount of \$73,200.00. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion.

Kim Hanson made a motion to call the question regarding this motion. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion.

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

Vote on motion after question is called: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

| \$ | Transfer From | | \$ | Transfer to | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| \$4,200.00 | 001-4210-00002-000/317.02 | PD-Other Resident Troopers | \$4,200.00 | 001-4195-0004-000/620.02 | Utilities-Telephone |
| \$7,000.00 | 001-4210-00002-000/317.02 | PD-Other Resident Troopers | \$7,000.00 | 001-4195-0005-000/620.03 | Utilities-Fuel Oil |
| \$3,000.00 | 001-4210-00002-000/317.02 | PD-Other Resident Troopers | \$3,000.00 | 001-4195-0002-000/620.08 | Utilities-Fire Companies |
| \$12,000.00 | 001-4210-00002-000/317.02 | PD-Other Resident Troopers | \$12,000.00 | 001-4195-0000-000/626.00 | Utilities-Gas & Diesel |
| \$7,000.00 | 001-4210-00002-000/317.02 | PD-Other Resident Troopers | \$7,000.00 | 001-4161-0000-000/334.01 | Professional Services-Consulting |
| \$10,000.00 | 001-4210-00002-000/317.02 | PD-Other Resident Troopers | \$10,000.00 | 001-4161-0000-003/332.01 | Legal Labor |
| \$10,000.00 | 001-4210-00002-000/317.02 | PD-Other Resident Troopers | \$10,000.00 | 001-4161-0000-004/332.01 | Legal General |
| \$20,000.00 | 001-4210-00002-000/317.02 | PD-Other Resident Troopers | \$20,000.00 | 001-4161-0000-007/332.01 | Legal Zoning |
| \$73,200.00 | | | \$73,200.00 | | |

Discussion and vote to approve medical plan for 2023/2024 fiscal year

Wes Marsh noted that the Medical Plan for 2022/2023 has a Stop Loss of \$250,000 with a 120% aggregate stop loss. He spoke of the comparisons in premiums for a Stop Loss of \$225,000, \$200,000, \$175,000 and \$150,000. There was a discussion of the optimal Stop Loss and Aggregate Stop Loss for the fiscal year 2023/2024. It was noted that the consultant has recommended a Stop Loss of \$225,000 but \$200,000 would also be feasible.

Thora Perkins spoke of possible increases in medical claims and the need to limit risk for the upcoming year.

Thora Perkins made a motion to approve a medical plan with a \$200,000 stop loss. Mark Beninson seconded the motion.

Thora Perkins made a motion to amend the motion to include 120% Aggregate Stop Loss. Mark Beninson seconded the motion.

Vote to amend motion: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

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

Vote to accept fiscal year 2021/2022 audit

Wes Marsh spoke of the highlights of the audit report for the 2021/2022 fiscal year and noted that the auditor referred to it as a “clean” audit. He clarified that the funding of \$8.6 million for the school project was available but was referred to as a “deficit” due to the timing of the accounting and reimbursement from the State. The unassigned fund balance is over the recommended amount and the tax collection rate was 99.57%. It was noted that there were no deficiencies, no material inconsistencies or significant difficulties with management. The Town still maintains the AAA rating from Standard and Poor’s. There was a brief discussion of the audit.

Wes Marsh made a motion to accept the audit for the 2021/2022 fiscal year as prepared by the audit firm O’Connor Davies. Thora Perkins seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Discussion and vote on Public Comment requirements

There was a discussion of the possibility of changing the Public Comment policy in order to limit the total time for each Public Comment session as well as the amount of time allotted for each speaker.

Kim Hanson made a motion to limit the amount of Public Comment to a total of 45 minutes for the first session and a total of 15 minutes for the second session with a limit of three minutes per speaker. Claudia Willard seconded the motion.

Kim Hanson made a motion to amend the previous motion to allow for the chairman to have the discretion to change the three minutes limit per person rule. Thora Perkins seconded the motion.

Vote to amend motion: 5-1-0 (Motion approved-Wes Marsh opposed)

Vote on motion as amended: 4-2-0 (Motion approved- Wes Marsh and Cheryl Reedy opposed)

ONGOING UPDATES

Medical update

The Board reviewed the Medical Fund balance as of May 31, 2023. The fund balance is \$579,757. This include \$650,000 of excess interest income that was put into this fund pending Town Meeting approval on June 22nd.

Legal update

There was a discussion of the legal budget for the Town. Thora Perkins inquired about the increase in legal expenses and specifically the cost for the Zoning Board/Permanent Building Committee. There was a brief discussion of the unpredictability of legal needs from year to year.

Year to date expenses review

The Board reviewed the expenditures as of May 31st. Olga Melnikov noted that everything is on budget and there will be a year-end surplus.

Current year revenue update

The tax collection rate is 99.62%. Olga Melnikov noted that there will be a significant surplus in revenue primarily due to increases in interest income.

Capital and Nonrecurring update

The Board reviewed town projects including the Bridge and Drainage project.

Public Comment

Rick Regan spoke of the new Public Comment policy and noted that although the BOE also has a time limit to their public comment sessions, they rarely adhere to it.

Terra Volpe spoke of her disappointment with the adoption of the Public Comment policy. She spoke of her concerns with potential legal costs for the Board of Education if the budget is cut and cannot provide necessary services.

John McCartney spoke of his disappointment with the adoption of the Public Comment policy. He compared this policy to the Public Comment of the BOE but noted that the BOE listens to the comments of the residents and acts accordingly.

Future Agenda items

If the budget passes at the June 24th referendum, there will be a special BOF meeting to set the Mil Rate on Monday, June 26th at 9:00am via Zoom. If the budget fails at the June 24th referendum, the BOF will hold a special meeting on Wednesday, June 28th at 7:30pm via Zoom.

The Board will discuss the ARPA report and audit recommendations at the July BOF regular meeting.

Board Member Comments

Cheryl Reedy encouraged everyone to vote at the budget referendum this Saturday, June 24th.

Thora Perkins thanked everyone that participated in tonight's meeting. She spoke in support of the new Public Comment policy.

Kim Hanson encouraged the Town to observe Juneteeth celebrations in the future.

Adjournment

Kim Hanson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:53pm. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Received by email on 06/26/2023 @ 12:40 p.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield