

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

MINUTES
Board of Finance Regular Meeting
Wednesday, January 15, 2014
7:30 PM
New Fairfield Community Room

Members present:

Wes Marsh, Chairman
Don Blackwell
Michael Cammarota
John Hodge
Jane Landers
Steve Brown, Alternate
Cheryl Reedy, Alternate
Brian Shea, Alternate

Members not present:

Tom Edwards

Other Town Officials Present:

Susan Chapman, First Selectman
Mike Gill, Selectman
Evelyn Abraham, Finance Director
Scott Akam, BOE Chairman

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Appointments-None

Correspondence and Announcements- Chairman Wes Marsh introduced Evelyn Abraham as the new Finance Director

Public Comment-None

Approval of Minutes

John Hodge made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2013 regular meeting as presented. Don Blackwell seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0-0 (Motion approved)

Budget Transfer

Mike Cammarota made a motion to approve the following Inter-Departmental transfer in the amount of \$774.00. John Hodge seconded the motion. (Such document to be attached to the minutes of this meeting.) **Vote: 5-0-0 (Motion approved)**

\$	Transfer To		\$	Transfer From	
\$650.00	4215-110	Comm. Center-Salaries	\$774.00	4160-140	Unclass. P & B –Salary Adj.
\$124.00	4215-130	Comm. Center-Overtime			
\$774.00			\$774.00		

Discuss and approval of the 2012-2013 Audit for the Town of New Fairfield

Wes Marsh noted that the audit subcommittee met with the auditor from O'Connor Davies on January 13th and discussed the audit for the fiscal year 2012-2013. Main points of discussion included the town's long-term financial health which increased by \$4.1 million due mostly to increased capital investments in school construction projects and the fact that the town decreased its outstanding bond indebtedness by \$2.0 million and continues to carry an AAA rating from Standard & Poors. There was a discussion of the differences between deficiencies and material weaknesses.

Wes Marsh spoke of the overall financial health of the town and spoke of the Statement of Net Position and the Statement of Activities that report information about the town as a whole. He noted that other factors to consider when reviewing the financial health of the town include the town's property tax base, and conditions the of the town's roads.

Actions to take as recommended by the audit firm of O'Connor Davies

There was a discussion of recommendations given by the auditor and it was noted one way to improve the town's overall financial health is to increase internal controls. Wes Marsh noted that at the audit subcommittee meeting, the auditors provided the town with ideas and suggestions of ways to improve internal controls and reduce risk. Some of these suggestions have already been implemented by the town. The BOF will discuss these suggestions in greater detail at a future BOF meeting.

Wes Marsh made a motion to accept the 2012/2013 audit for the Town of New Fairfield as prepared by O'Connor Davies LLP. Don Blackwell seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0-0 (Motion approved)

Acceptance of the audit firm for the 2013-2014 audit for the Town of New Fairfield

Members of the BOF especially the members of the audit subcommittee noted that they were very happy with the performance of the auditors to date. It was noted that the price for the audit for 2013-2014 will remain the same as 2012-2013 at \$50,000.

Wes Marsh made a motion to hire the firm of O'Connor Davies as auditor for the Town of New Fairfield for the fiscal year 2013-2014. Jane Landers seconded the motion.

John Hodge made a motion to amend the previous motion to include a baseline cost not to exceed \$50,000. Jane Landers seconded the motion.

Vote to amend motion: 5-0-0 (Motion approved)

Vote on motion as amended: 5-0-0 (Motion approved)

Discussion of Senior Citizen Tax Relief programs

John Hodge spoke of the possibility of expanding tax relief programs for senior citizens in town. Currently, programs available to homeowners in New Fairfield include an abatement of taxes in the amount of \$1,332 for residents over 65 that have income of less than \$33,500 for unmarried individuals and \$40,900 for married couples. A second program gives homeowners a benefit of \$200 off their taxes if their income is less than \$36,000 per year (unmarried or married). Approximately 158 households participate in these programs with a cost of \$216,592 to the town for the first program and \$31,468 for the second program. Blind taxpayers and veterans also qualify for certain programs for tax abatement.

There was a discussion of the income limits and number of households that would be affected if the income limits were increased. It was noted that a Town Meeting must be held to change the income amounts. The board discussed meeting with the Assessor at a future meeting and the possibility of having a Public Hearing to get feedback from town residents regarding senior citizen tax relief.

Discussion of law enforcement overtime

Wes Marsh spoke of State Trooper overtime and sick time for officers. There was a discussion of the hybrid police force and the optimal number of officers for straight time vs. overtime. Currently the town has six local officers, six state troopers and one resident state trooper officer. The board discussed the Redding Police department and compared it to New Fairfield's Police Dept.

First Selectman Susan Chapman will check with Sergeant Wagnblas to determine how much overtime pay would go down if another officer was hired.

Discussion of the 2014-2015 budget

The board discussed the budget for the 2014-2015 fiscal year and specifically the BOF budget. Budgeted and actual numbers for the 2012-2013 fiscal year were reviewed. The BOF contingency of \$33,000 was discussed and it was noted that this contingency is for the entire town but is put into the BOF budget. It was decided to have a 0% increase to the BOF budget for the 2014-2015 fiscal year.

ONGOING UPDATES

Medical update- The board discussed actual budget vs. projected for medical.

Legal update- The legal balance as of January 7, 2014 is \$44,955.

Year to date expenses review- The board reviewed expenses to date.

Current year revenue update- The board discussed revenue accounts especially goals for departments. Finance Director Evelyn Abraham will get an update on the Drop-off center and an update on Sherman tuition.

Cap & Non review- The board discussed money encumbered for East Lake Brook Box Culverts that has not been completed yet.

Public Comment- None

Future agenda items- Items to be brought up in the near future include: Senior Citizen Tax relief and meeting with the Assessor, Law enforcement overtime, Budget planning and review of the Medical accounts.

Board member comments- None

Adjournment

John Hodge made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:13 pm. Mike Cammarota seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0-0 (Motion approved)