

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

**MINUTES
Board of Finance Regular Meeting
Wednesday, December 13, 2023
7:30 PM
via Zoom**

<u>Board of Finance members present:</u> Wes Marsh, Chairman Mark Beninson Doug Jendras Thora Perkins Cheryl Reedy Claudia Willard Eric Huff, Alternate Peggy Katkocin, Alternate Greg Williams, Alternate	<u>Other Town officials and Educators present:</u> Melissa Lindsey, First Selectman Pat Del Monaco, Selectman Tom Perkins, Selectman Olga Melnikov, Finance Director Terry Friedman, Town Treasurer Shareen Langdon, Tax Collector Holly Smith, Town Clerk Elisa Beckett-Flores, Registrar of Voters Tim Blair, BOE member Amy Johnson, BOE member Ed Sbordone, BOE member/PBC member
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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 announced the following:

- The BOS appointed Eric Huff to serve as an alternate to the BOF. He welcomed Mr. Huff to the BOF.
- The Town's IT Department has sent up government email addresses for all town employees and Board members. Information on how to set up this email address was sent in a recent email. Board members are encouraged to set up this email as soon as possible and use this email for BOF business.
- Wes Marsh noted that gave a presentation to the Planning Commission regarding plans and ideas for the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Public Comment

Rick Regan encouraged the BOF to have more in-person meetings and to appoint a liaison from the BOF to attend the BOE meetings.

Approval of Minutes

Cheryl Reedy made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2023 meeting as presented. Thora Perkins seconded the motion.

Claudia Willard made a motion to amend the minutes of the November 15, 2023 meeting to include the following paragraph: "Ms. Willard asked what Mr. Regan's party affiliation was and when he changed it. He answered that he had changed his affiliation to Unaffiliated in the last couple of days. Ms. Willard read into the record the CT statute, section 9-167a. Minority representation.

She noted that anyone who transfers from one party to another shall be considered a member of that party from which he transferred for 3 months. In this case Mr. Regan is still considered to be a democrat.

Ms. Perkins also raised the fact that the BOF members had received an email, dated November 9, 2023, from the Chairman. He noted that the third alternate position was vacant and "will be filled by the Board of Selectman after that board is sworn in." Thora Perkins seconded the motion.

Vote to amend motion: 4-2-0 (Motion approved- Mark Beninson, Doug Jendras, Thora Perkins and Claudia Willard in favor, Wes Marsh and Cheryl Reedy opposed)

Vote on motion as amended: 5-1-0 (Motion approved- Mark Beninson, Doug Jendras, Thora Perkins, Cheryl Reedy and Claudia Willard in favor, Wes Marsh opposed)

Appointment of Board of Finance Chairman

Mark Beninson nominated Doug Jendras to serve as Chairman of the BOF.

Thora Perkins made a motion to close nominations. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion.

Vote to close nominations: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Doug Jendras was approved as the Chairman of the BOF.

Appointment of Board of Finance Clerk

Claudia Willard nominated Thora Perkins to serve as Clerk of the BOF.

Mark Beninson made a motion to close nominations. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion.

Vote to close nominations: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Thora Perkins was approved as the Clerk of the BOF.

Doug Jendras thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve as Chairman. He further thanked outgoing Chairman Wes Marsh for all his hard work and expertise as his many years as Chairman. Thora Perkins thanked Wes Marsh for all his work as Chairman. She congratulated Doug Jendras for becoming the new Chairman.

Subcommittee Membership

Doug Jendras, Cheryl Reedy and Claudia Willard will serve on the Audit subcommittee.

Thora Perkins and Claudia Willard will serve on the Medical subcommittee.

Liaison Membership

Mark Beninson will serve as the BOF liaison to the New Fairfield Volunteer Fire Department.

Mark Beninson will serve as the BOF liaison to the School Safety and Security Committee.

Doug Jendras and Thora Perkins will serve as BOF liaisons to the Board of Education.

Budget Transfers

Wes Marsh explained that the BOF approves Inter-Departmental transfers but not Intra-Departmental transfers. The Intra-Departmental transfers are solely for informational purposes.

Cheryl Reedy asked about an additional appropriation that was tabled at the last BOF meeting. Finance Director Olga Melnikov noted that the grant paperwork is still being reviewed so the town still has time to provide matching funds for the grant if necessary.

Olga Melnikov spoke of the transfer to LOSIP (Local Capital Improvement program). The reason for this transfer was due to the town changing the allocation of funds between the town and the state.

Approval of Calendar of Meetings for 2024

Cheryl Reedy made a motion to approve the calendar of meetings for 2024 as presented. Wes Marsh seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Discussion of the Public Comment Policy

The Board discussed the Public Comment policy and specifically limiting the time to 45 minutes for the first session and 15 minutes for the second session. There was a discussion as to whether or not a policy was necessary since the chairman has discretion to limit public comment.

Thora Perkins made a motion to accept the Public Comment policy as presented. Claudia Willard seconded the motion. **Vote: 4-2-0 (Motion approved- Mark Beninson, Doug Jendras, Thora Perkins and Claudia Willard in favor, Wes Marsh and Cheryl Reedy opposed)**

Medical subcommittee meeting update

Thora Perkins noted that this subcommittee met on November 14th. Insurance consultant Tom Kowalchik from USI gave a presentation and noted that claims are looking much better than previous reports. He noted that New Fairfield is in good shape in comparison to other municipalities in Connecticut. Finance Director Olga Melnikov presented the subcommittee with a year to date report of the Insurance Reserve Fund. The subcommittee will meet again on Tuesday, December 19th.

2024-2025 Budget Planning

The BOF discussed budget planning for the 2024-2025 budget specifically payroll, non payroll and capital projects. There was a discussion of giving direction to the BOE and BOS regarding their respective budgets and the optimal percentage increase. It was decided that Chairman Doug Jendras will send the following to the BOS and BOE:

“The Board of Finance would like to work with the Board of Selectman and Board of Education in a positive manner. We would like the budgets to be reviewed for essential needs with a frugal outlook.

We request that you smooth out the 10 year capital plan spending evenly over ten years and limit the payroll and non-payroll budget increases to 2% or less.

We would like to strike the right balance of need with affordability, as a team that is working for the people of New Fairfield.”

Board of Finance Budget for 2024-2025

The board reviewed the BOF departmental requested budget for 2024-2025. This includes secretary salaries, the Town audit, the BOF contingency and materials and supplies. This will be presented to the BOS in January.

Mark Beninson made a motion to approve the BOF departmental requested budget for 2024-2025 in the amount of \$94,833.00 as presented. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

ONGOING UPDATES

Medical update- Olga Melnikov spoke of the favorable trend in claims as of November 30th. If the trend continues at the same rate, the year end balance could be over \$1 million. She cautioned that Medical claims are very fluid and may change at any time.

Legal update- Olga Melnikov noted that legal is currently under budget at this point. Thora Perkins asked about an update for legal expenses for the court action regarding the bus lot. Olga Melnikov gave a brief update on this lawsuit.

Year to date expenses update- The Board reviewed expenditures as of November 30, 2023 specifically the transfer in Communications Center overtime, police overtime and the dispatch contract and the School Resource Officer overtime.

There was a discussion of the need to review elected officials salaries.

Current year revenue update- Olga Melnikov noted that the town received unanticipated State revenue of approximately \$340 from the municipal revenue sharing account due to more tax revenue being collected. Finance Director Terry Friedman spoke of interest rates and noted that she expects the next two quarters to still be strong but interest rates will most likely drop soon.

Capital and Nonrecurring update- Cheryl Reedy noted that the Cap and Non document that was presented is preliminary and noted that there is a more comprehensive report that is used for long-term planning purposes.

Public Comment

Selectman Tom Perkins asked the BOF to appoint a liaison to the Board of Education that would encourage the BOE to negotiate their budget with the BOF.

Registrar of Voters Elisa Beckett-Flores spoke of a deficit to the ROV budget due to the change of the Presidential preference primaries date and the additional budget referendum that took place in July 2023. She noted that a supplemental budget was submitted to the BOS and the Finance Director. More updates regarding early voting and state mandates and how they affect that budget will be discussed in the near future.

Future Agenda items

Elected Official Salaries will be discussed at the January meeting.

Year-end numbers for the BOE will be discussed at a future meeting.

Cheryl Reedy and Peggy Katkocin work on the public comment policy.

Board Member Comments

Cheryl Reedy congratulated Doug Jendras and Thora Perkins for their election to chairman and clerk respectively. She further wished all residents Happy Holidays.

Mark Beninson also congratulated Doug Jendras and Thora Perkins and wished everyone Happy Holidays.

Thora Perkins thanked everyone for a good meeting.

Doug Jendras thanked everyone for their confidence in electing him chairman.

Claudia Willard wished everyone Happy Holidays.

Adjournment

Mark Beninson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:14 pm. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Received by email on 12/20/2023 @ 8:30 a.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield