

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

MINUTES
Board of Finance Regular Meeting
Wednesday, January 17, 2024
7:30 PM
via Zoom

<u>Board of Finance members present:</u> Doug Jendras, Chairman Mark Beninson Wes Marsh 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 Carrie DePuy, BOE Director of Business and Operations Olga Melnikov, Finance Director Terry Friedman, Town Treasurer Shareen Langdon, Tax Collector Holly Smith, Town Clerk Elisa Beckett-Flores, Registrar of Voters Dr. Ken Craw, Superintendent of Schools Phil Ross, BOE Director of Buildings and Grounds Dominic Cipollone, BOE Chairman Greg Flanagan, BOE member Kimberly LaTourette, BOE member Samantha Mannion, 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 Doug Jendras called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Appointments- None

Correspondence and Announcements

Doug Jendras read responses from First Selectman Melissa Lindsey and BOE Chairman Dominic Cipollone regarding the direction given to their respective boards from the BOF for the upcoming budget.

Public Comment- None

Addition to the Agenda

Wes Marsh made a motion to add agenda item #8A “BOS request for surplus funds”. Thora Perkins seconded the motion. **Vote: 5-1-0 (Motion approved- Cheryl Reedy opposed)**

There was a brief discussion of getting a written request from the BOS for surplus funds in the future.

Approval of Minutes

Thora Perkins made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2023 meeting as presented. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Budget Transfers

There were no transfers up for approval. There was a brief discussion of School Resource Officer transfers. Finance Director Olga Melnikov gave an explanation of the this account.

BOE request for fiscal year 2023 surplus funds

Chairman Doug Jendras noted that the BOF received a request from the BOE asking that the 2022-2023 expenditure surplus of \$33,327.01 go to the BOE Capital and Nonrecurring account. Wes Marsh spoke of the BOF policy of putting 100% of revenue surplus to the unassigned fund balance and 50% of the expenditure surplus to the unassigned fund balance. Up to 50% of the expenditure surplus is given to the BOE and BOS. He noted that the request from the BOE of \$33,327.01 equals 100% of the expenditure surplus. It is up to the BOF to decide to grant the full 100% or adhere to the policy of 50%. It was noted that surplus distribution is usually not given until the audit is complete. There was a discussion of how using the surplus affects the budget. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ken Craw explained that the purpose of the request was to fund a failing intercom system at the Middle School. Dr. Craw noted that if the intercom system is not funded with surplus funds, it will need to be put in the Capital and Nonrecurring budget request for 2024-2025. It was decided that the surplus funds will stay in the General Fund and will be discussed at a later date.

BOS request for fiscal year 2023 surplus funds

Doug Jendras noted that the BOS surplus will stay in the General Fund and will be discussed at a later date. First Selectman Melissa Lindsey noted that she appreciated the feedback from the BOF and will follow the procedure better in the future.

Elected Officials Salaries

Cheryl Reedy spoke of reasons for reviewing the salaries for elected officials. Discussion of whether the salary discussion should be within the confines of the budget. Members of the BOF gave their opinions on whether or not elected salaries should be increased. There was a suggestion of having a subcommittee set up to discuss this. It was decided to table this item until a later date. The BOF discussed urgent needs for funding for the Registrars of Voters

Cheryl Reedy made a motion to make the following Additional Appropriation in the amount of \$14,368.00 for the Registrar of Voters (TOWN MEETING NOT REQUIRED). Wes Marsh seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Registrar of Voters Elisa Beckett-Flores explained updates to the voting process including early voting that will cause a shortfall to the salary budget for the Registrar of Voters. She further noted that the expenses for the third budget vote for the 2023-2024 budget was included in the 2023-2024 budget thus creating a shortfall.

\$	<i>Transfer From</i>		\$	<i>Transfer To</i>	
\$14,368.00	001/R34210 10	General Fund-Sale of Equipment	\$9,868.00	001-4140-0000-000/110.00	ROV- Salaries
			\$1,500.00	001-4140-0000-000/610.00	ROV -M&S
				001-4140-0000-000/105.00	ROV-Elected Salaries
\$14,368.00			\$14,368.00		

Discussion of the Public Comment Policy

Cheryl Reedy noted that she and BOF Alternate member Peggy Katkocin met to discuss an updated Public Comment policy. Cheryl Reedy noted that the existing policy may not be legal. Peggy Katkocin noted that members of the public should be allowed to address elected officials and encouraged the board to set up a simple process that allows residents to feel that they are being heard by their elected officials. Wes Marsh spoke in favor of the revised policy because it gives the chairman more flexibility with public comments.

Wes Marsh made a motion to approve the revised Public Comment policy dated January 5, 2024 as presented. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion. **Vote: 2-4-0 (Motion denied- Wes Marsh and Cheryl Reedy in favor, Mark Beninson, Doug Jendras, Thora Perkins and Claudia Willard opposed)**

Policies and Procedures update

Olga Melnikov gave an update on Policy and Procedures. She spoke of new software and how it affects purchases and disbursements. This will be presented to the Board of Selectmen at their next meeting. The Board asked Finance Director Olga Melnikov for a monthly report of the Unassigned Fund Balance.

Cheryl Reedy made a motion to approve the requested changes to Purchases and Disbursements Policy as recommended by the Finance Director. Wes Marsh seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

ONGOING UPDATES

Medical update- The Medical subcommittee meeting scheduled for January 16, 2024 was cancelled due to weather. Thora Perkins noted that she received the following information from Insurance Consultant Tom Kowalchik from USI. Medical Claims in December were \$462,193 which represent 71.3 % of the projection. This is similar to November claims which were \$458,000 or approximately 71.2% of projection. New Fairfield compared well to other municipalities. Olga Melnikov gave a brief description of the Medical Reserve Fund.

Legal update

Olga Melnikov noted that the legal budget is trending below budget but noted that legal bills are usually sent a month behind.

Year to date expenses update

Thora Perkins asked for a report showing all town Union salaries that have increased more than the contractual 2.5%. This will be on as an agenda item for the next regular BOF meeting.

Current year revenue update-

Olga Melnikov noted that there are no areas of concern. It is hopeful that there will be revenue surplus this fiscal year.

Capital and Nonrecurring update

The Board reviewed capital accounts especially Bridge and Drainage projects.

Public Comment

Selectman Tom Perkins spoke of a comment made earlier in the meeting about him “coaching” BOF member Thora Perkins.

Future Agenda items

Elected Officials salaries- March

BOF Policies to be put on the BOF page on the Town's website.

There was a suggestion of inviting the Assessor to speak about the Elderly Tax Relief ordinances.

Cheryl suggested asking State Representatives and State Senators to future meetings.

Possible acceptance of audit once audit is completed.

Policy and procedures for requests to the BOF

Discussion of changing meeting dates for 2025 so that back up can be sent to Board members earlier.

Board Member Comments

Board members wished everyone a happy 2024 and noted that they are looking forward to working with everyone.

Adjournment

Mark Beninson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:43 pm. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Received by email on 01/22/2024 @ 3:42 p.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield