

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

**MINUTES
Board of Finance Regular Meeting
Wednesday, February 21, 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 <u>Board of Finance members absent</u> Greg Williams, Alternate	<u>Other Town officials and Educators present:</u> Melissa Lindsey, First 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 Dominic Cipollone, BOE Chairman Amy Johnson, 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 noted that an emails were received from Olivia Micca regarding an FOI request and from Animal Control Officer Kim Kraska describing the role of the Animal Control Officer.

Public Comment

Khris Hall spoke in regard to agenda item #11 regarding salary increases and spoke in support of salary increases for some town employees including the Senior Center Director, the Parks and Rec Director and the Social Services Director.

Olivia Micca spoke in opposition of the transfer for the proposed outreach position. She asked if the heads of the respective departments that the transfer was coming out of were told ahead of time.

Fire Chief Bruce Taylor invited the members of the Board of Finance to take a tour of the firehouse.

Eileen Hacaj spoke against the Inter-Departmental transfer that would fund a proposed outreach position.

Keith Landa spoke against the transfer for the proposed outreach position. He noted that no description or demonstrated need has been made available for this role.

John McCartney spoke again the transfer and hiring of the outreach position.

Tom Quigley spoke as the Chairman of the Water Pollution Control Authority and noted that he was not made aware that money was being transferred out of the WPCA budget. He spoke of the need for these funds for water testing.

Tom Perkins spoke in support of the First Selectman and the hiring of the outreach position.

Kim Hanson spoke in support of the First Selectman and the hiring of the outreach position.

Joshua Beckett-Flores asked that residents keep all comments polite and civil.

Peggy Katkocin spoke of concerns that department heads were not made aware of money being taken out of their respective accounts ahead of time. She spoke against the hiring of an outreach position and suggested that overflow work could be delegated to the other selectmen.

Addition to the Agenda

Doug Jendras made a motion to add agenda item #12F “Ongoing Updates- Unassigned General Fund Balance”. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Approval of Minutes

Thora Perkins made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2024 meeting as presented. Claudia Willard seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Budget Transfers

There was a lengthy discussion of the request by the BOS to transfer funds from various line items for the proposed outreach position.

Thora Perkins made a motion to approve the following Intra-Departmental transfer of \$7,127.00. Mark Beninson seconded the motion. **Vote: 5-1-0 (Motion approved- Wes Marsh opposed)**

\$	Transfer From		\$	Transfer To	
\$627.00	001-4430-0000-000/110.00	WPCA Salaries	\$7,127.00	001-4110-0000-000/110.00	Board of Selectmen Salaries
\$500.00	001-4199-0000-000/610.00	Comm for the Youth M&S			
\$2,000.00	001-4470-0000-000/110.00	COA-Salaries			
\$4,000.00	001-4161-000-002/332.01	Professional Services- Legal Tax			
\$7,127.00					

BOF Policy, Procedures, website and calendar

There was a discussion of adding specific policies and procedures to the BOF page on the website. There was also a suggestion of changing the date of the monthly BOF meetings to the fourth Wednesday of the month in order to get more information for the packets and give more time to study the materials. It was noted that a revised calendar will have to be filed with the Town Clerk.

Cheryl Reedy made a motion to authorize the BOF Chairman to update the BOF website to include BOF policies and procedures on the BOF page and request that a “button” to access the budget be put on the front page of the Town’s website. Mark Beninson seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Doug Jendras made a motion to change the regular BOF meeting dates to the fourth Wednesday of the month instead of the 3rd Wednesday of the month beginning in April 2024. Mark Beninson seconded the motion.

Cheryl Reedy made a motion to amend the previous motion to be contingent as long as a meeting room is available. Thora Perkins seconded the motion.

Vote on amendment: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

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

Freedom of Information recommendation from the Town Clerk

There was a brief discussion of the recommendation from the Town Clerk regarding a policy and procedure for the Board when a Freedom of Information request is received. Chairman Jendras noted that he will keep the rest of the Board apprised of any requests and responses.

Discussion of Audit subcommittee

Doug Jendras noted that there is an RFP pending for a new auditor. The BOF audit subcommittee will be involved in choosing the new auditor. Olga Melnikov noted that the audit is complete and will be sent to the audit subcommittee in the near future. It was noted that there were no material weaknesses or deficiencies found. A meeting between the current auditor the audit subcommittee will be set up soon to accept the audit and recommend it to the full BOF.

Review report of salary increases

Thora Perkins noted that a report regarding salary increases was sent to her and Chairman Doug Jendras. She noted that there are three town positions that are proposed for base salaries. This will be discussed further during the budget process.

ONGOING UPDATES

Medical update- Claudia Willard noted that the Medical subcommittee meeting met on Feb. 20th and discussed claims for the period July 1 2023 to January 31, 2024. It was noted that claims are lower than last year but claims are trending upward each month. Tom Kowalchik from USI will monitor claims in the upcoming months, will negotiate fixed fees for New Fairfield with Anthem and will market the Stop Loss policy with other insurers to try to get the best premium.

The next meeting of the Medical subcommittee will be held on March 19th at 3:30pm at the Town Hall Annex Conference Room.

Legal update

Olga Melnikov noted that the legal budget is trending on budget.

Year to date expenses update

There was a brief discussion of the overage of the police budget. Olga Melnikov spoke of the timing of invoices for Resident State Troopers and noted that only one invoice per year is received. It was noted that the ambulance line is encumbered because it is a known cost throughout the year.

Current year revenue update

Olga Melnikov noted that Tax Collector Shareen Langdon worked with several mortgage companies to get taxes paid to the town direct deposited thus gaining more interest.

Town Treasurer Terry Friedman noted that interest rates remain high and it is expected that this revenue will be higher than budgeted.

Capital and Nonrecurring update

No discussion

Unassigned General Fund Balance

There was a brief discussion of the unassigned general fund balance and the policy to keep two months of expenses in this fund. There was a request for the overage of the fund balance to put on this report every month. Cheryl Reedy reminded of the healthy unassigned general fund balance and noted that New Fairfield is in much better financial shape than surrounding towns.

Public Comment

Selectman Tom Perkins thanked the BOF for approving the budget transfer for the outreach position and spoke of how social media has affected the role of the First Selectman and the need for this position.

Keith Landa thanked Cheryl Reedy for speaking of the healthy unassigned fund balance and noted that it was due to the hard work of previous administrations.

Registrar of Voters Elisa Beckett-Flores extended an invite to Board of Finance members to learn the process and procedures for voting and referendums.

Future Agenda items

An update on the ARPA projects will be given at a future meeting.

The March 2nd Budget Hearing and the March 6th BOF meeting will be held in person. Decisions regarding subsequent meetings will be made at the previous meeting.

Board Member Comments- None

Chairman's Comments

Doug Jendras noted that he sent an email to the Board of Education with questions regarding the budget process.

Adjournment

Doug Jendras made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:53 pm. Wes Marsh seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)