

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

MINUTES

**Board of Finance Regular Meeting
Wednesday, March 6, 2024**

7:30 PM

Community Room at 33 Route 37

<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> Dr. Ken Craw, Superintendent of Schools Melissa Lindsey, First Selectman Tom Perkins, Selectman Pat Del Monaco, Selectman Carrie DePuy, BOE Director of Business and Operations Olga Melnikov, Finance Director Terry Friedman, Town Treasurer Shareen Langdon, Tax Collector Mark Ottusch, Athletic Director Phil Ross, Director of Buildings and Grounds Bruce Taylor, Fire Chief Dominic Cipollone, BOE Chairman Tim Blair, BOE member Greg Flanagan, BOE member Sue Huwer, BOE member Ed Sbordone, BOE member/PBC member
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Call To Order Chairman Doug Jendras called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Appointments- None

Correspondence and Announcements

Cheryl Reedy noted that tours of all three fire houses will be given most likely on Monday, March 18th.

Public Comment

Jeff Alviti spoke of the need to replace the turf field and track. He spoke of the approximately \$600,000 in the field replacement fund but suggested that the balance should come from taxes.

Rick Regan spoke in support of the budget and noted that many increases are due to contractual obligations, debt service or medical insurance increases. As a result, a budget with no increase will have cuts.

Keith Landa encouraged the BOF to think long term and not to underfund the reserve fire department equipment fund.

Millie Kellogg spoke in support of the Board of Education budget. She further spoke in support of hiring an assistant for the Animal Control Officer.

Jim Keller encouraged the BOF not to forget the track when budgeting to replace the turf field.

Discussion and review of the Grand List

Tax Collector Shareen Langdon spoke on behalf of the Assessor. She spoke of the Grand List for this year and last year. Finance Director Olga Melnikov explained the process of compiling the Grand List and the possibility that it may change after the meeting of the Board of Assessment Appeals.

Cheryl Reedy spoke of reasons for changes to the Grand List for this year and noted that it is down slightly from last year. Motor Vehicles has gone down due to the correction of prices from recent years. The Grand List for personal property has gone down primarily due to a reduction from a company no longer working on the school project. The Grand List for real estate is higher than last year.

Discussion and review of Adjustments to Property Tax

Shareen Langdon spoke of adjustments that affect property tax including the Elderly Tax programs, new construction, Fire fighter abatement and the Suspense List. Olga Melnikov spoke of how these adjustments are accounted.

Discussion and review Non-Tax Revenues

Olga Melnikov spoke of non-tax revenue including interest, licenses and permits, real-estate conveyance, Sherman tuition and town clerk receipts and how it affects the budget.

Carrie DePuy spoke of State reimbursements and the formula used for special education expenses. She spoke of the state shortfall for the Excess Cost grants and how it affects New Fairfield.

Town Treasurer Terry Friedman spoke of how interest rates are estimated. She estimated that the amount of interest for next year will probably go down due to the lower rates and a lower cash available.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ken Craw and Carrie DePuy noted that it is anticipated that more Sherman students will attend New Fairfield High School due to the new building. Negotiations are currently underway regarding the amount of tuition.

Discussion and review Debt Service

Terry Friedman noted that the total debt payment prior to using any premium is \$8,166,000. Next year is will be \$8,083,000 prior to u sing any premium.

Discussion and review of Municipal Capital

Melissa Lindsey noted that they are hoping to use ARPA funds for bridges and drainage. There was a brief discussion of fully funding the Apparatus Reserve fund for the Fire Department instead of the Equipment Reserve Fund.

The amount requested by the BOS for Capital and Nonrecurring is \$50,000. Cheryl Reedy spoke of revenue that comes in to Capital and Nonrecurring that can also be used for capital projects. She noted that the cost of capital projects far exceed the budgeted amount and suggested sweeping some ARPA funds that are no longer needed. There was a brief discussion of whether or not to go ahead with the Beach House renovations or use the fund for other projects. There was a brief discussion of plow trucks for the Town.

Discussion of Education Capital

Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross and Athletic Director Mark Ottush spoke of the field and track replacement and the dangers of playing on an old field. Wes Marsh suggested having the Town budget contribute \$200,000 from the \$600,000 that is in the BOE budget for this replacement. There was a discussion of the history of the Fund 211 and the Field Fees.

Phil Ross spoke of projects and repairs needed for the Middle School and what is entailed in renovate as new vs. piece meal renovations.

Public Comment

Keith Landa noted that there are only two appeals on the agenda for the Board of Assessment Appeals meeting on March 16th so it is unlikely that the grand list will be greatly affected. He further spoke in support putting the track and field replacement expenses in the budget.

Future Agenda items

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

The March 13th meeting will discuss payroll and non-payroll for both the BOE and Town. It will be held on Zoom.

The March 20th regular meeting will be held in-person. The medical consultant will give a presentation at this meeting.

Board Member Comments- Wes Marsh thanked the BOE, BOS and everyone that made a public comment. He encouraged residents to give their opinions on the budget in the future.

Adjournment

Wes Marsh made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:48 pm. Doug Jendras seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Received by email on 03/11/2024 @ 4:01 p.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield