

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

MINUTES

**Board of Finance Regular Meeting
Wednesday, March 13, 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 Peggy Katkocin, Alternate Greg Williams, Alternate	<u>Other Town officials and Educators present:</u> Dr. Ken Craw, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kris Woleck, Ass't Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction 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 Paul Gouveia, Director of Technology James D'Amico, High School Principal Scott Rohwedder, High School Assistant Principal Karen Gruetzner, Middle School Principal Allyson Story, Elementary School Principal Jennifer Hilderbrand, Elementary School Assistant Principal Rob Spino, Elementary School Assistant Principal Maria Kennedy, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Monika Krepsztul, Secondary Special Education Supervisor Alex Lambert, Elementary Special Education Supervisor Dominic Cipollone, BOE Chairman Tim Blair, BOE member Greg Flanagan, BOE member Amy Johnson, BOE member Kim LaTourette, BOE member Samantha Mannion, BOE member Ed Sbordone, BOE member/PBC member
<u>Board of Finance members absent</u> Eric Huff, Alternate	

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 the BOF will meet for tours of all three fire houses on Monday, March 18th at 6:15pm.

Doug Jendras noted that he will be meeting with the Registrars of Voters on Monday morning, March 18th for a tour and review of the Registrar duties. All BOF members are welcome to attend. The time has not yet been determined.

Public Comment

Danette Onofrio spoke as a private citizens in support of additional hours for the part-time Town Clerk for extra work required for state mandated early voting and changes in election laws.

Approval of Minutes

Thora Perkins made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2024, March 2, 2024 and March 6, 2024 meetings as presented. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Review and discussion of the Educational Operational budget

Members of the BOF asked questions of the administrators regarding the budget.

Claudia Willard asked about the annual cost per pupil expenditure- \$21,332.

Thora Perkins asked if there were any unused capital funds from previous projects. Carrie DePuy noted that all funds are earmarked for projects within the district.

Other topics discussed included non payroll amounts, technology including tech support and computers, curriculum, staff development and enrichment. It was noted that ARPA and ESSER funds have run out which causes a hole in this year's budget for items that we previously funded with these grants. There was a request for a transfer report for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. There was a brief discussion of whether cuts should be made from BOE operating or BOE capital.

Members of the BOF stressed that this is a difficult budget year and encouraged all three boards to work together to come up with a reasonable budget.

Review and discussion of the Municipal Operational budget

First Selectman Melissa Lindsey spoke of projects being done with ARPA funds this year. There was a brief discussion of the new Community Outreach position and it was noted that this a temporary position.

Other topics discussed included payroll increases for town employees, stipends for employees that were rolled into salaries, longevity pay, money for the Town Clerk and Registrars of Voters for early voting and new voting regulations. Town Clerk Holly Smith spoke of the advantages of increasing the hours for the part-time Assistant Town Clerk. There was a request for a report of the number of people that use the Senior Center on a daily basis.

Cheryl Reedy noted that the current proposed budget increase is 9.52% and that extensive cuts or other options must be made before this budget is sent to the taxpayers. She suggested that another Public Hearing be held before the final markup. She encouraged the BOS to sweep any capital projects that may have some funds left.

Cheryl Reedy spoke of a possible proposal for the Medical funds.

Public Comment

Registrar of Voters Elisa Beckett-Flores noted that if the part-time Assistant Town Clerk does not get her hours increased, an additional \$6300 will need to be added to the Registrar of Voters budget for moderators. She spoke of the good working relationship between the Registrars for Voters and the Town Clerk.

Selectman Pat Del Monaco noted that she is not in favor of the BOS budget because it does not include an additional \$21,000 for an Assistant Animal Control officer.

Future Agenda items

- Elected Officials salaries
- Audit subcommittee
- Medical subcommittee
- Scheduling of a second public hearing.
- Discussion of the 2024-2025 budget

The March 20th regular meeting will be held in-person at 7:30pm at the Community Room at 33 Route 37.

Board Member Comments

Mark Beninson spoke of the cuts needed to lower the budget and encouraged everyone to review the numbers carefully to get the budget down to a reasonable amount that the taxpayers can afford.

Wes Marsh noted that the lean areas in the budget are payroll and non-payroll and suggested that other areas such as medical, bond premium, non-payroll revenue and capital be looked at first.

Thora Perkins thanked Dr. Ken Craw, Dr. Kris Woleck, Dominic Cipollone, Carrie DePuy, and Paul Gouveia for their help with the BOE questions. She thanked Melissa Lindsey, Olga Melnikov, Holly Smith, and Elisa Beckett-Flores for their help with the BOS questions.

Chairman Doug Jendras thanked everyone for their help and support.

Adjournment

Doug Jendras made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 pm. Mark Beninson seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Received by email on 03/18/2024 @ 3:54 p.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield