

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

MINUTES

Board of Finance Regular Meeting

Wednesday, May 22, 2024

7:30 PM

Via Zoom

<p><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</p>	<p><u>Other Town officials and Educators present:</u> Dr. Ken Craw, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kristine Woleck, Ass't Superintendent of Schools Melissa Lindsey, First Selectman Pat Del Monaco, Selectman Tom Perkins, Selectman Olga Melnikov, Finance Director Carrie DePuy, Director of Business and Operations Terry Friedman, Town Treasurer Director of Technology, Paul Gouveia James D'Amico, High School Principal Scott Rohwedder, High School Assistant Principal Allyson Story, Elementary Principal Rob Spino, Elementary Ass't Principal Jennifer Hilderbrand, Elementary Ass't Principal Holly Smith, Town Clerk Elisa Beckett-Flores, Registrar of Voters Dan McDermott, Registrar of Voters Dominic Cipollone, BOE Chairman Tim Blair, BOE member Greg Flanagan, BOE member Amy Johnson, BOE member Kim LaTourette, BOE member Samantha Mannion, BOE member</p>
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Call To Order Chairman Doug Jendras called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Quintin Flower gave a brief overview of the rules and procedures for a virtual meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

Appointments- Chairman Doug Jendras noted that Alternate member Eric Huff has resigned from the board.

Addition to the Agenda

Thora Perkins made a motion to add agenda item #4A “Presentation by Medical consultant”. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Correspondence and Announcements

Chairman Doug Jendras noted that as of 3pm today, the BOF received 27 emails since the last meeting. Most of the emails expressed opinions that the budget was too low and that money should be added back to the budget. Some emails expressed concerns of higher taxes, class sizes, ball fields and capital improvements.

Medical update and presentation

Tom Kowalchik from USI noted that medical claims are looking good. April 2024 claims were much lower than this time last year, which makes the 12 month tracking much more positive. He noted that he still recommends the \$200,000 Individual Stop Loss and an Aggregate Stop Loss of 125%. Mr. Kowalchik will come to a Medical subcommittee meeting in June to discuss recommendations for the next fiscal year.

Public Comment

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ken Crow spoke in support of the New Fairfield Schools and in support of the original budget as presented. He asked that no cuts be made to the education budget. He asked the Board to consider that affects of these cuts to class sizes and staffing and further asked that the Board think about the three year capital improvement plan and debt service when recommending the budget to the taxpayers.

Approximately a dozen members of the public spoke regarding the school budget. Of these speakers, one member expressed concerns with increased taxes and lowering of the budget and the rest spoke in support of increasing the BOE budget and resorting any cuts made to the school budget.

Cheryl Reedy spoke of comments made by BOF Chairman Doug Jendras in the Town Tribune and stressed that these comments are solely the opinion of the BOF Chairman and not the whole Board of Finance. She thanked the BOE and Field Fees committee for their due diligence with researching the best option for the turf and field project. She also thanked Director of Technology Paul Gouveia and his team for their hard work in determining non resident students. She assured the residents that the BOF will fund the capital projects as promised. Lastly, she cautioned about putting ideas and opinions on social media and encouraged residents to be kind to one another.

Approval of Minutes

Mark Beninson made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2024 regular meeting and the April 29, 2024 special meeting as presented. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Budget Transfers

Finance Director Olga Melnikov gave a review of the transfer for the fiscal year. She spoke of the need to make an Inter-Departmental transfer for the Registrar of Voters.

Cheryl Reedy made a motion to approve the following Inter-Departmental transfer in the amount of \$3,900.00. Mark Beninson seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

\$	Transfer From		\$	Transfer To	
\$3,900.00	001-4163-0000-000/520.01	General Insurance-Property and Casualty	\$2,500.00	001-4140-0000-000/110.00	Registrar of Voters-Salaries
			\$1,400.00	001-4140-0000-000/105.00	Registrar of Voters-Elected Salaries
\$3,900.00			\$3,900.00		

Cheryl Reedy made a motion to recommend to a Town Meeting an Additional Appropriation of \$41,672.99 from the General Fund-Unreserved to the BOE Capital and Nonrecurring fund. Wes Marsh seconded the motion. **Vote: 4-2-0 (Motion approved- Thora Perkins and Claudia Willard)**

There was a brief discussion of whether this Additional Appropriation should be tabled pending results of the referendum. It was decided not to table this motion as a token of trust for the BOE. Olga Melnikov explained how this Additional Appropriation affects the budget.

\$	Transfer From		\$	Transfer To	
\$41,672.99	001-E25321	General Fund-Unreserved	\$41,672.99	306-4600-0000-000/700.03	BOE Cap & Non
\$41,672.99			\$41,672.99		

Cheryl Reedy made a motion that the Board of Finance request that the BOS make an Intra-Departmental transfer in the amount of \$3,060 from the BOF Contingency to be broken up as \$2,560 to BOF Materials and Supplies (publishing of the budget in the Town Tribune) and \$500 to the BOS Materials and Supplies (publishing of the referendum notice in the Danbury News Times). Wes Marsh seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Vote on revised budget

Thora Perkins made a statement about the role of the BOF regarding the budget.

Thora Perkins made a motion to that the BOF made a reduction of \$250,000 to the BOE requested increased operating budget and to add \$100,000 back to the debt expenditure from the proposed BOF recommended budget of April 29th. Claudia Willard seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-2-0 (Motion approved- Wes Marsh and Cheryl Reedy opposed)

There was a lengthy discussion of the budget and speculations as to why the last two referendums failed. The Board discussed capital projects and the turf and field. They spoke of the BOE operating budget and how the cuts can affect class sizes, staffing and programs in the district.

There was a discussion of the process for billing if a budget is not passed in time for July 1st bills. The Board also discussed the possible loss of interest revenue and the cost to hold a referendum.

Wes Marsh made a motion to add advisory questions to the budget referendum. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Doug Jendras made a motion to recommend to a Town Meeting the following expenditures for the Board of Selectmen: Town government expenditures totaling \$14,105,707 from the General Fund and \$539,455 from the capital and nonrecurring funds and \$2,499,112 from other governmental funds for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025. Claudia Willard seconded the motion. **Vote: 5-1-0 (Motion approved- Cheryl Reedy opposed)**

Doug Jendras made a motion to recommend to a Town Meeting Education expenditures for the Board of Education: Education expenditures totaling \$54,921,776 from the General Fund and \$119,577 from the capital and nonrecurring fund for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025. Claudia Willard seconded the motion. **Vote: 4-2-0 (Motion approved- Wes Marsh and Cheryl Reedy opposed)**

ONGOING UPDATES

Medical update- Olga Melnikov noted that the Medical Fund is on track to date. It is expected that there will be a projected fund balance of over \$1.2 million.

Legal update- Olga Melnikov noted that it may be necessary to do a transfer into the legal budget before the end of the year.

Expenditures- The departments are trending on budget. There are some possible concerns about police overtime.

Revenue- The total revenue has exceeded budget by approximately \$340,000 as of April 30th. It is projected that revenue will exceed budget by over \$1 million for the year.

Capital and Nonrecurring- Olga Melnikov noted that projects that are funded through ARPA funds are receiving first priority due to deadlines. First Selectman Melissa Lindsey will bring an update of capital projects for review at the June BOF meeting.

Unassigned General Fund Balance Review- Olga Melnikov reviewed the Unassigned General Fund balance.

Public Comment

Over 20 members of the public spoke of their disappointment with tonight's vote and noted that they will vote "No- Too Low" at the next referendum.

One member of the public spoke of concerns of higher taxes and encouraged voters to pass this budget at the next referendum.

Registrar of Voters Elisa Beckett-Flores requested that transfers be made to fund future elections.

Future agenda items

The following will be discussed at future meetings:

ARPA Revised numbers and capital projects.

Presentation of track and field project.

Presentation by the First Selectmen regarding shared services of staff between the Town and BOE.

Board member comments

Cheryl Reedy thanked Finance Director Olga Melnikov for all her excellent work with the Town of New Fairfield and wished her well in her new position.

Doug Jendras wished Olga Melnikov well in her new position.

Adjournment

Doug Jendras made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:34 pm. Mark Beninson seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Received by email on 05/28/2024 @ 4:09 p.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield