

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

MINUTES
Board of Finance Special Meeting
Monday, July 1, 2024
7:30 PM
Via Zoom

<u>Board of Finance members present</u> Thora Perkins, Chairman Mark Beninson Wes Marsh Cheryl Reedy Claudia Willard Patrick Hearty, Alternate Peggy Katkocin, Alternate <u>Board of Finance members not present</u> Greg Williams, Alternate	<u>Other Town officials and Educators present:</u> Dr. Ken Craw, Superintendent of Schools Melissa Lindsey, First Selectman Pat Del Monaco, Selectman Tom Perkins, Selectman Olga Melnikov, Finance Director Terry Friedman, Town Treasurer Paul Gouveia, Director of Technology Karen Gruetzner, Middle School Principal Rob Spino, Elementary Ass't Principal Jennifer Hilderbrand, Elementary Ass't Principal Holly Smith, Town Clerk Shareen Langdon, Tax Collector Elisa Beckett-Flores, Registrar of Voters Dan McDermott, Registrar of Voters Dominic Cipollone, BOE Chairman Greg Flanagan, BOE member Amy Johnson, BOE member Kim LaTourette, BOE member Samantha Mannion, BOE member Ed Sbordone, BOE member/Deputy Treasurer
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Call To Order- Clerk Thora Perkins called the meeting to order at 7:32pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Appointments- Thora Perkins made a motion to elevate alternate member Patrick Hearty to a full member for the purposes of this meeting. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Correspondence and Announcements

Thora Perkins thanked Finance Director Olga Melnikov for all her help with the budget.

Thora Perkins spoke of correspondence that was received by the BOF since June 26th. She noted that 21 emails were received commenting that the budget presented for referendum on June 29th was too low.

Six of the emails requested a full restoration to the budget. Thirteen emails were sent to the BOF expressing agreement with the Mil Rate set by the BOS on June 29th. Two residents noted that they voted yes to the June 29th budget. Cheryl Reedy noted that 56 emails have been received since June 29th and most agreed with the decision made by the BOS on June 29th.

Public Comment

Ten members of the public including Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ken Craw spoke during “Public Comment” and asked the BOF to follow the lead of the BOS and set the Mil Rate at 36.52 as was done by the BOS on June 29th.

Vote on revised Town and Education 2024/2025 budget to recommend to a Town Meeting

Thora Perkins made a motion to restore \$600,000 to the BOE Operating budget of the latest proposed budget and to increase non-tax revenue in the Building Permits Line by \$22,000. (001-R3200005). Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Cheryl Reedy noted that the \$22,000 increase in non-tax revenue in the Building Permits Line is due to the increase in the insurance premiums due to the increase in the replacement costs for the Fire Department apparatus. Adding \$22,000 to the budget allows the Town to pay the insurance premiums without causing a hole in next year’s budget.

Claudia Willard read a statement noting that she will vote for the increase in the budget, but expressed her reservations and noted that she would like to see a better balance between the cost of education and the needs of the town. She spoke of residents having increasing difficulty paying taxes.

Cheryl Reedy made a motion to add \$22,000 to the Property and Casualty Line of the Board of Selectmen. Mark Beninson seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Vote on revised Town and Education 2024/2025 budget to recommend to a Town Meeting

Thora Perkins made a motion to recommend to a Town Meeting the following expenditures for the Board of Selectmen: Town government expenditures totaling \$14,127,707 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. Wes Marsh seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Thora Perkins made a motion to recommend to a Town Meeting Education expenditures for the Board of Education: Education expenditures totaling \$55,271,776 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. Mark Beninson seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Advisory Questions

Thora Perkins made a motion to add two advisory questions to the budget referendum. Wes Marsh seconded the motion. **Vote: 4-2-0 (Motion approved- Wes Marsh and Cheryl Reedy, Mark Beninson, and Patrick Hearty in favor, Thora Perkins and Claudia Willard opposed)**

Public Comment

Approximately eight members of the public thanked the BOF for working together and coming to an agreement.

Board member comments

Cheryl Reedy spoke of the promise by the majority of the BOF that the track and turf field be funded by the 2023-2024 surplus. She spoke of the timeline and the bids for this project. She spoke of the plan to list capital projects and possible funding sources for these projects.

Cheryl Reedy thanked First Selectman Melissa Lindsey and Selectman Pat Del Monaco for coming to an agreement with the budget. She thanked her fellow BOF member and all the taxpayers that voted on June 29th.

Claudia Willard thanked everyone for the hard work with the budget.

Thora Perkins spoke of the bids for the track and turf field. She reminded everyone that the budget is fluid and is susceptible to change. She thanked First Selectman Melissa Lindsey, the entire BOS, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ken Crow and his staff for all the work on the budget.

Thora Perkins thanked her fellow BOF members and noted that the Board will meet on July 17th to review applicants for the vacant position. There will be notice in the July 5th edition of the Town Tribune.

Adjournment

Mark Beninson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 pm. Patrick Hearty seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Received by email on 07/08/2024 @ 8:30 a.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield