

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

**MINUTES
Board of Finance Regular Meeting
Wednesday, April 24, 2024
7:30 PM
Via Zoom**

<u>Board of Finance members present</u> Doug Jendras, Chairman Mark Beninson Wes Marsh Thora Perkins Cheryl Reedy Eric Huff, Alternate Peggy Katkocin, Alternate (arrived 7:40 pm) Greg Williams, Alternate <u>Board of Finance members not present</u> Claudia Willard	<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 Carrie DePuy, Director of Business and Operations Terry Friedman, Town Treasurer Amy Johnson, BOE member
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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- Doug Jendras noted that Claudia Willard was unable to attend tonight's meeting and appointed Eric Huff to serve in her absence.

Correspondence and Announcements

Chairman Doug Jendras noted that 22 emails have been sent to the Board of Finance since the last meeting. Many of the emails spoke of concerns regarding cuts to the budget and specific programs and town services. Some of the emails spoke of concerns regarding possible higher taxes.

Doug Jendras gave an example which included specific dollar increases. He noted that if a house is assessed at \$250,000, the taxes would be \$9,097 for the year which is up \$372.50 over last year. Taxes on this house were increased by \$607.50 for the 2023-2024 year from the taxes paid for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Thora Perkins thanked Carrie DePuy for sending a copy of Fund 306 that included the present capital balance for the BOE.

Public Comment

Cheryl Reedy clarified that the elected officials salaries increases were initiated by her and not the elected officials themselves. The reason for the increases are due to either increases in hours or in order to make the salaries comparable to other towns. She noted that only the BOF can set the salaries for elected officials.

Approval of Minutes

Thora Perkins made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 3 2024 public hearing and the April 3, 2024 regular meeting as presented. Mark Beninson seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Budget Transfers- None

Fiscal year 2022-2023 surplus capital requests

Cheryl Reedy made a motion to approve an additional appropriation of \$245,000 from the unreserved fund balance into Capital and Nonrecurring as requested. Mark Beninson seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Wes Marsh noted that since the \$245,000 is more than the BOS surplus for 2022-2023 money from the general fund is also being used for this additional appropriation.

Finance Director Olga Melnikov spoke of the process for transferring unspent BOE funds.

Cheryl Reedy made a motion to approve the transfer of \$33,327.01 (BOE Expenditure surplus for 2022-2023) to BOE capital and nonrecurring (No Town Meeting is required). Wes Marsh seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ken Craw noted the \$33,327.01 is a combination of the 2022-2023 expenditure surplus plus the close out of fiscal year 2022.

ONGOING UPDATES

Medical update

Thora Perkins noted that the medical subcommittee met on April 22nd with Tom Kowalchik from USI Insurance. They discussed the rolling 12 month claims and noted that March 2024 is one of the best months recently with claims much lower than previous years. Tom Kowalchik will come to the May 22nd regular BOF meeting with recommendations for the Individual Stop Loss and the Aggregate Stop Loss. The next medical subcommittee will be held on Monday, May 20th at 3:30pm.

Legal update

Olga Melnikov noted that the Legal budget is in good shape. Significant progress has been made with Union contracts. First Selectman Melissa Lindsey noted that she is optimistic that the legal budget will last until the end of the fiscal year but will notify the BOF if there are any concerns.

Expenditure update

Olga Melnikov reviewed the expenditures for the fiscal year. Police overtime is higher than usual but it is offset by police salaries for positions that have not yet been filled. There was a brief discussion of the possibility of having to transfer money to the Registrar of Voters in the event that the budget doesn't pass. There was a brief discussion of utility expenditures and public works.

Thora Perkins thanked the town employees and department heads for keeping within their budgets.

Revenue update

Olga Melnikov noted that revenue is on target for the year. Interest revenue is much higher than expected. There was a brief discussion of the payments for the Sherman tuition and it was noted that there are four installments per year.

Capital and Nonrecurring update

There was a discussion of which projects will be swept and the reports for the Capital and Nonrecurring reports. There was a suggestion of creating a capital project subcommittee with representatives from the three main boards to discuss process and procedures and long term planning.

Mark Beninson made a motion to form a capital project subcommittee with representatives from the BOF, BOS and BOE with Cheryl Reedy and Thora Perkins as members from the BOF. Thora Perkins seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Unassigned general fund balance review.

There was a question of the status of the project for the Ball Pond drainage. Melissa Lindsey noted that some ARPA funds were used for this project. Phase I can begin once an easement is signed by one of the residents.

Public Comment

Selectman Tom Perkins clarified information about the Ball Pond drainage project and spoke of the delay in getting easements. He noted that the piece of land that was recently donated will help with the project.

Future agenda items

There was a discussion of the need to have a special meeting in the near future to discuss next steps depending on the results of the budget vote. If the budget passes, the Mil Rate will need to be set by the BOF. If the budget fails, the BOF will need to determine if money should either be added or subtracted from the budget to send to another referendum. It was decided to file an agenda for Monday, April 29th at 7:30 pm via Zoom with both scenarios and table the items that are not needed.

Insurance consultant Tom Kowalchik will come to the May 22nd BOF meeting and will discuss recommendations for the ISL and ASL for the medical insurance.

The BOE appropriation will be discussed.

Board member comments

Doug Jendras encouraged everyone to vote in favor of the budget on Saturday, April 27th. He thanked Olga Melnikov, Suzanne Kloos and Quintin Flower for their help with the budget process.

Cheryl Reedy asked that as many people as possible vote at the budget referendum.

Thora Perkins spoke of the hard work of the BOF in putting forth the best budget for the town. She noted that the process was much better than last year.

Adjournment

Doug Jendras made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 pm. Mark Beninson seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Received by email on 04/29/2024 @ 8:30 a.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield