

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

MINUTES

Board of Finance Meeting

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

7:30 PM

New Fairfield High School Library

Members present:

Joe Hart, Chairman
Lucy DiRocco
Jane Landers
Al Mardis
Wes Marsh
Tom Wahlig
Art Azzarito, Alternate
Brian Shea, Alternate
Tony Sanches, Alternate

Other Town Officials Present:

John Hodge, First Selectman
Ron Oliveri, Selectman
Tom Corbett, Selectman
Jay Waterman, Finance Director
Ed Sbordone, Finance Department
Janice Zackeo, Town Clerk
Dr. Joseph Castagnola, Superintendent of Schools
John Boccuzzi, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Mike Santogatta, Director of Management Services
Phil Ross, Director of Buildings and Grounds
Alicia Roy, High School Principal
Dr. Diane Hartman Chelsey, Middle School Principal
Christine Baldelli, Middle School Assistant Principal
Sarah McLain, Meeting House Hill School Principal
Wendy Seeley, Consolidated School Principal
Lynn Fichtel, Consolidated School Assistant Principal
Aimee Turner, Elementary Special Education Supervisor
Kim Hanson, BOE Chairman
Karen Chance, BOE member
Ken Chapman, BOE member
Vic Flagello, BOE member
Ralph Langham, BOE member
Ron Lyons, BOE member

Call To Order Chairman Joe Hart called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Appointments- None

BOF-Minutes

04/02/08

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Attachments- Petitions and transfer sheets- 23 pages

Correspondence and Announcements

Al Mardis read two e-mails sent from BOE member Monika Thiel regarding contract liabilities for the BOE Building Projects. In response to these e-mails Chairman Joe Hart requested the following items from BOE Chairman Kim Hanson, Superintendent of School Dr. Joseph Castagnola, Director of Management Services Mike Santogatta and First Selectman John Hodge.

These items include:

1. Who is responsible for these costs? BOE or Town?
2. Could this potential liability be encumbered in the 2007-2008 budget? If not, should the potential liability be added to the 2008-2009 budget?
3. What is the cost of the potential liability?
4. What is the cost incurred to date?
5. Are costs continuing to be incurred?
6. The BOF would like to see a copy of the contract.

Public Comment

Board of Finance Chairman Joe Hart went over the budget process and spoke of the requested budgets.

Dozens of residents and administrators spoke of the proposed budget cuts and specifically the proposed cuts to the school budget. A petition was submitted by over 400 taxpayers opposing the proposed cuts to the school budget. (Attached to the minutes of this meeting) A second petition was submitted by current eighth grade students regarding freshmen sports. (Attached to the minutes of this meeting)

Approval of Minutes

Joe Hart made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 26, 2008 meeting as presented. Jane Landers seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Budget Transfers

Joe Hart made a motion to make the following Intra-Departmental transfer. Al Mardis seconded the motion. (Such document to be attached to the minutes of this meeting)

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

\$'s	Account #		\$'s	Account #	
\$500.00	4151-110	BOF Salaries	\$500.00	4151-801	BOF Contingency
\$500.00			\$500.00		

Joe Hart made a motion to make the following Inter-Departmental transfer. Jane Landers seconded the motion. (Such document to be attached to the minutes of this meeting)

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

\$'s	Account #		\$'s	Account #	
\$2,000.00	4161-334	Consulting	\$2,000.00	4151-801	BOF Contingency
\$2,000.00			\$2,000.00		

Amendment to Agenda

Joe Hart made a motion to change the agenda to put agenda item #9 “Discuss and review budget cuts for the Town of New Fairfield for 2008-2009” as agenda item#7A ahead of agenda item #8 “Discuss and review budget cuts for the Board of Education for 2008-2009”. Jane Landers seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Discuss and review budget cuts for the Town of New Fairfield for 2008-2009

First Selectman John Hodge spoke of the proposed \$500,000 worth of cuts for the 2008-2009 town budget. Mr. Hodge spoke of the town’s fund balances and compared the town’s general fund to that of other towns. Mr. Hodge noted that New Fairfield has one of the strongest general fund balances in the area. There was also a discussion of the medical fund balance and the capital and nonrecurring fund. There was a discussion regarding taking money out of the capital and nonrecurring fund to pay for capital and nonrecurring expenses. Mr. Hodge spoke of suggested cuts to the budget such as road repair. It was decided that the BOF will go over specific line items at the April 9th BOF meeting. Mr. Hodge also spoke of his desire to have the vote for a concession stand and bathrooms at the turf field as a separate vote at the referendum.

Chairman Joe Hart thanked both the BOS and the BOE for all their hard work throughout the budget process and especially all the work done in the past week to prepare for this meeting.

Recess

Joe Hart made a motion to take a 15 minute recess at 10:00pm. Jane Landers seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Joe Hart made a motion to reconvene the meeting at 10:15pm. Al Mardis seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Discuss and review budget cuts for the Board of Education for 2008-2009

Brian Shea thanked the students who came out in support of the budget. Dr. Castagnola also thanked all the students and families who came out and supported the budget at recent meetings.

Dr. Castagnola noted that the BOE met on March 31st to discussed proposed cuts but no formal action was taken. Dr. Castagnola spoke of the impact of budget cuts and the long-terms effects of drastic cuts. A list of possible cuts were given to the Board of Finance prior to tonight’s meeting.

Joe Hart gave out a spreadsheet that catorgorized the proposed cuts into eight sections. The sections include Regular Education, Special Education, Administration, Support Services, Sports, Revenue and Capital. There was a discussion regarding prioritizing the cuts cutting administrative costs over costs for direct education. There was a discussion about adding back \$116,000 from utilities.

Public Comment

Some residents and BOE members Vic Flagello and Ralph Langham spoke of the education budget.

Board Member Comments

Members of the Board of Finance spoke of their opinion of the cuts and specifically their desire to have the cuts come from administrative cuts instead of direct education expenses.

Adjournment

Al Mardis made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:43pm. Jane Landers seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)