

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

MINUTES
Board of Finance Regular Meeting
Wednesday, March 16, 2011
7:30 PM
New Fairfield Community Room

Members present:

Wes Marsh, Chairman
Tom Edwards
Robert Klick
Jane Landers
Al Mardis
Tom Wahlig
Norma Gyle, Alternate
Brian Shea, Alternate
Members not present:
Tom Quigley, Alternate

Other Town Officials Present:

John Hodge, First Selectman
Jay Waterman, Finance Director
Ed Sbordone, Accounting Manager
Dr. Alicia Roy, Superintendent of Schools
Barbara Mechler, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Craig McClain, Director of Management Services
Mariana Coelho, High School Principal
Mike Chapleau, Assistant High School Principal
Dr. Diane Hartman Chesley, Middle School Principal
Christine Baldelli, Assistant Middle School Principal
Sarah McLain, Meeting House Hill School Principal
Scott Bannon, Meeting House Hill School Ass't Principal
Wendy Seeley, Consolidated School Principal
Lynn Fichtel, Consolidated School Assistant Principal
Aimee Turner, Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Kim Hanson, BOE Chairman
Scott Akam, BOE member
Karen Chance, BOE member
Vic Flagello, BOE member
Sean Loughran, BOE member
Various teachers and paraprofessionals

Call To Order Chairman Wes Marsh called the meeting to order at 7:30pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Appointments- No appointments were necessary for this meeting. Chairman Wes Marsh welcomed Norma Gyle as the new alternate to the board.

Correspondence and Announcements- None

Public Comment

Steven Roe spoke of the newly purchased communications tower and legal fees.

Approval of Minutes

Robert Klick made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2011 regular meeting as presented. Al Mardis seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Discussion of Medical Insurance

There was a lengthy discussion of medical insurance and the difference between 110% and 120% aggregate stop loss and the premiums associated with each. Finance Director Jay Waterman went over the numbers and noted that Steve Rinaldi from the firm of Everett James has recommended 110% stop loss. Most members of the board were in favor of the 120% stop loss. There was a discussion of the difference in premiums how that would affect the 2011-2012 budget.

Discussion of Teachers Contract

Al Mardis noted that he met with Director of Management Services Craig McClain regarding the teacher's contracts. Mr. Mardis spoke of the possibility of reopening the teacher's contract that was negotiated in 2009. It was noted that the 2011-2012 BOE budget contains approximately \$800,000 worth of raises. Of this \$800,000 approximately \$507,000 were from teachers. There was a discussion of STEP increases. Mr. Mardis thanked Mr. McClain for spending the time to go over this.

Discussion of overall budget for 2011-2012

Chairman Wes Marsh noted that he met with Town Treasurer Phil Cammarano and noted that the town was able to get a lower interest rate for the school project. The debt service payment for next year is \$480,000 less than originally projected due to a lower interest rate and no principal payment required for 2011-2012.

It was noted that the BOF would still like to see the BOE operating budget at a 0% increase. There was a discussion of the 2010-2011 BOE budget and if any budget surplus could be applied to GASB 45. Finance Director Jay Waterman noted that he checked this with Milliman and noted that it was feasible to have a surplus go directly to GASB. The board spoke of possibly putting \$125,000 of the 2010-2011 BOE budget surplus into this.

There was a discussion of other ways to find money for the 2011-2012 budget so as to reduce the percentage of tax increase. Wes Marsh will check with Town Treasurer Phil Cammarano regarding the general fund and the policies regarding taking money out of the general fund for budget funding. Jay Waterman gave some scenarios as to the budget increase. There was a discussion as to what would be the maximum percentage increase that the taxpayers can absorb.

Electronic correspondence received from public

Robert Klick read an e-mail sent to the Board of Finance regarding the 2011-2012 budget from Dale Arnold. Mr. Arnold spoke of the current economic times and struggles of many families in New Fairfield and asked that the board consider this when sending the budget to the voters.

Change in agenda

Wes Marsh made a motion to move agenda item #12 "Public Comment" to item #10A. Tom Edwards seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Public Comment

Many members of the public including some teachers in New Fairfield schools spoke in favor of the schools and asked the board not to make any further cuts and to put the budget out to the taxpayers and let them decide.

BOE Chairman Kim Hanson noted that this has been a very civil budget season.

Vote on Disclaimer for BOF section of town's website

There was a discussion of the town's website and the disclaimer already on the website. The board noted that they would like to add a further disclaimer regarding e-mails sent specifically to the Board of Finance.

Jane Landers made a motion that the BOF make the following disclaimer on the town's website. "While individual Board of Finance members will not respond to e-mails, your e-mail will be shared with all board members." Al Mardis seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Future Agenda Items

Regular monthly reports will be on the March 23rd agenda. There will also be a further discussion of the medical insurance and 110% vs. 120% aggregate stop loss. GASB 45 and the General Fund will be on for discussion and Jay Waterman will work up a list of scenarios for the percentage increase for the budget.

Board member comments

Members of the board welcomed Norma Gyle as the new alternate.

The board reminded everyone of the budget process and spoke of the dangers of putting out a budget that was too high and could potentially get voted down. It was noted that there are a lot of families in New Fairfield on fixed incomes without children in the schools that would not want to see a tax increase.

Adjournment

Al Mardis made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:18pm. Tom Edwards seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)