

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

MINUTES
Board of Finance Regular Meeting
Wednesday, December 17, 2014
7:30 PM
New Fairfield Community Room

Members present:

Wes Marsh, Chairman
Don Blackwell
Michael Cammarota
Tom Edwards
John Hodge
Jane Landers
Brian Shea, Alternate
Cheryl Reedy, Alternate

Members not present:

Steve Brown, Alternate

Other Town Officials Present:

Evelyn Abraham, Finance Director
Susan Chapman, First Selectman
Mike Gill, Selectman
Kim Hanson, Selectman
Ken Chapman, BOE member
Susan Starr, BOE member
Maureen Salerno, Commission on the Aging Chairman

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Appointments- None

Correspondence and Announcements- None

Public Comment- None

Approval of Minutes

John Hodge made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2014 regular meeting as presented. Don Blackwell seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Wes Marsh made a motion to add item 6A “Approval of the December 15, 2014 audit subcommittee meeting minutes” to the agenda. Jane Landers seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Jane Landers made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2014 audit subcommittee meeting as presented. Don Blackwell seconded the motion.

Wes Marsh made a motion to amend the previous motion to amend the minutes to read “motion to recommend to the full BOF the **acceptance** of the 2013/2014 New Fairfield town audit as prepared by O’Connor Davies, LLP” instead of the **approval** of the audit. Jane Landers seconded the amendment.

Vote to amend motion: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Vote on motion as amended: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Budget Transfers- None

Senior Tax Relief

Chairman Wes Marsh spoke of the two current tax relief programs for seniors. In 2013, a total of 151 households participated in these programs. There was a discussion of whether it would be more beneficial to change the entire program or to increase the income limits so that more households would qualify. The board compared tax relief programs of surrounding towns. It was noted that some surrounding towns require a length of residency of at least five years.

Commission on the Aging Chairman Maureen Salerno spoke of the need to help more seniors in town and noted that most of these residents have lived in their homes for several decades.

It was decided that a committee should be formed to come up with an estimate of what these proposed programs would cost the town and come back with a recommendation to the BOF. John Hodge, Tom Edwards, Michael Cammarota and Cheryl Reedy volunteered to serve on this committee. This will need to be voted on by the Board of Selectmen and then taken to a Town Meeting. It was suggested that it might be prudent to have a Public Hearing to get feedback from the taxpayers.

John Hodge made a motion that the BOF Chairman form a subcommittee of at least 3 BOF members for the purpose of examining additional Elderly Tax Relief and report back to BOF at the next regular BOF meeting. Wes Marsh seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

2015-2016 budget planning

Chairman Wes Marsh spoke of the upcoming budget planning and noted that the Superintendent of Schools will present her budget in early January. The taxable grand list has decreased due to the revaluation.

Chairman Marsh spoke of the possible need to go into Executive Session at the January meeting to discuss the Operating budget, GASB 45, Medical Insurance, Debt Service and Capital and Nonrecurring. There was a brief discussion of the contingency fund for the BOF and a line for Policy and Procedures.

Wes Marsh made a motion to add \$20,000.00 to the BOF budget for a Policy and Procedures manual. Jane Landers seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

There was a brief discussion of the town auditors and it was noted that their fee will be increase to \$52,000.

ONGOING UPDATES

Medical update

- The Medical Fund has a reserve of approximately \$1.7 million.

Legal update

- Legal expenditures increased by approximately \$10,000 last month.

Year to date expenses review

- \$21,435.00 was added to the Town Audit expenses.
- First Selectman Chapman noted that dispatcher overtime expenses should go down now that a new full-time dispatcher has been hired.
- Finance Director Evelyn Abraham spoke of the possibility of outsourcing payroll.

Current year revenue update

- The tax collection rate for this year was 99.5% which was 1% more than last year.
- Real Estate conveyance fees are expected to rise over the next year.

Cap & Non-town

- The unappropriated fund balance for Cap & Non is over \$1 million.
- Jane Landers asked about Christmas decorations in front of Town Hall. This is part of the Streetscape project.

Public Comment- Selectman Kim Hanson spoke of the Senior Tax relief program and asked the BOF to be cognizant that there are many younger people in town that are struggling or may also have low incomes and asked the board to try to determine how many families would qualify for these tax relief programs if they were not based on age. Selectman Hanson questioned the BOF's role in writing tax policy.

Future agenda items

Budget planning, town audit and Elderly Tax Relief programs are scheduled for January. It was suggested that the board may want to hold a special meeting in January to discuss the Elderly Tax Relief proposal.

Board member comments

Board members wished everyone "Happy Holidays". Chairman Wes Marsh reminded residents that taxes are due in January.

Adjournment

Don Blackwell made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:50pm. John Hodge seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)