

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

MINUTES

Board of Finance Regular Meeting
Wednesday, March 23, 2016
7:30 PM
New Fairfield Community Room

Members present:

Wes Marsh, Chairman
Michael Cammarota
Tom Edwards
John Hodge
Jane Landers
Anthony Yorio
Cheryl Reedy, Alternate
Rick Salem, Alternate
Brian Shea, Alternate

Other Town Officials Present:

Evelyn Abraham, Finance Director
Susan Chapman, First Selectman
Mike Gill, Selectman
Kim Hanson, Selectman
Ed Sbordone, BOE member/Accounting Manager
Dr. Alicia Roy, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Jason McKinnon, Ass't Superintendent of Schools
Mariana Coelho, High School Principal
Christine Baldelli, Middle School Principal
Sarah McLain, Meeting House Hill School Principal
Craig McClain, Business Manager
Sean Loughran, Parks and Rec Commission Chairman/BOE member
Steve Burfeind, BOE Chairman
Samantha Mannion, BOE member
Susan Starr, BOE member

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Appointments- None

Correspondence and Announcements- None

Public Comment

Mark Werner asked about Policies and Procedures for the BOF and asked about an email sent to the BOF.

Patrick Bower spoke of the BOE budget and specifically money spent on litigation for Special Education and Professional Development.

Laura Consiglio and Jennifer Brackenwagen spoke of the Board of Education budget.

Approval of Minutes

Anthony Yorio made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2016 regular meeting as presented. Jane Landers seconded the motion.

John Hodge made a motion to amend the minutes with the following two additions and revisions:

First Selectman Susan Chapman noted that this transfer is due to water testing **for the water system to be installed in the town center** and it is hopeful that this will be reimbursed from the state. John Hodge noted that Connecticut State Statutes require that the state pays for **the installation of the water system** and suggested that Town Counsel be consulted on this.

There was a discussion of the budget for the Candlewood Lake Authority. John Hodge noted that George Linkletter made a motion supporting State Senator Michael McLachlan's legislation at the last CLA meeting. This legislation would require Lake Authorities to comply with the same budgetary standards as municipalities. This motion was denied by the CLA because they felt there was not enough information on the proposed legislation.

Vote to amend: 5-0-1 (Motion approved- Tom Edwards abstained)

Vote on motion as amended: 5-0-1 (Motion approved- Tom Edwards abstained)

Discussion of Board of Education's requested budget for 2016-2017

At a previous BOF meeting, the board asked the BOE to give metrics and goals on how money spent for the Education budget will improve test scores and student achievement. Assistant Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jason McKinnon spoke of ways to measure success which includes a Data Dashboard, a website that tracks Professional Development and a curriculum development plan. There was a lengthy discussion of benchmarks and goals for students, teachers and administrators. Dr. McKinnon noted that the Data Dashboard puts a lot of information in one place and makes it easily accessible.

The BOF discussed capital projects and specifically the 211 Fund (turf field replacement fund) and the collection of field fees. There was a brief discussion of the possibility of renovating the auditorium in the future and it was noted that this would most likely be done through bonding.

There was a discussion of the BOE payroll budget vs. non-payroll. It was noted that in recent years, payroll has had a surplus and money has been transferred to pay for non-payroll items. The BOF asked for actual numbers for the last five years.

Discussion of Board of Selectmen's requested budget for 2016-2017

The BOF asked questions of First Selectman Susan Chapman regarding the requested BOS budget. There was a brief discussion of interest rates and it was noted that there has been an increase in revenue for Real Estate conveyance fees.

First Selectman Susan Chapman noted that she met with Candlewood Lake Authority Executive Director Larry Marsicano regarding the CLA budget. She noted that Mr. Marsicano acknowledged that there are some issues with their budget and they are working to correct them. John Hodge noted that the CLA Finance committee is meeting tonight to discuss the budget. Finance Director Evelyn Abraham will ask other Lake Authorities in Connecticut for a copy of their budgets in order to compare to the CLA.

Cheryl Reedy asked the condition of the roads and asked if there has been a review of the roads to determine what needs to be repaved.

ONGOING UPDATES

Medical update- The Medical reserve fund is positive.

Legal update- The town is waiting to hear from CIRMA about reimbursement for a lawsuit.

Year to date expenses review- None

Current year revenue update- The Tax collection rate is very high. Finance Director Evelyn Abraham noted that the Town will not get money from PILOT (Payment in lieu of taxes) and ECS.

Capital and Non recurring- None

Public Comment

Patrick Bower spoke of attrition in the schools and of the real estate market in New Fairfield and how it is affected by the schools.

Jennifer Brackenwagen spoke of the BOE budget and noted that taxpayers would also like to see actual numbers.

Laura Consiglio spoke of field fees.

Selectman Kim Hanson noted that there are other ways to measure success in the schools besides just test scores.

Future meetings

Wes Marsh made a motion to cancel the BOF meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 30th. John Hodge seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Wes Marsh made a motion to rename the Wednesday, April 6th BOF meeting from Budget Mark Up to Budget Discussion. John Hodge seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)

Board member comments

John Hodge spoke of attrition in the schools and noted that the turnover and retirement for teachers is not as high as it was ten or fifteen years ago.

John Hodge also spoke of the promise to the taxpayers to not have to pay again for the turf fields. He noted that the fields have a longer life than originally thought since the company replaced the field a few years ago due to an issue that was covered by warranty.

Anthony Yorio spoke of the General Fund and the GFOA recommendations. He supports putting any surplus into the General Fund.

Cheryl Reedy spoke of the Selectman Hanson's comment about test scores and noted that test scores do have value.

Wes Marsh spoke of the Policy and Procedures Manual and noted that the Town Department Heads gave their opinions regarding this manual. The auditor and the audit subcommittee will meet in the near future to discuss ideas for this manual. It is hopeful that this will be completed this year.

Adjournment

John Hodge made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:11pm. Wes Marsh seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)