

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

MINUTES
REVISED

Board of Finance Regular Meeting
Wednesday, April 15, 2020
7:30 PM
Virtual meeting via Zoom

Members present via Zoom

Wes Marsh, Chairman
Michael Cammarota
Tom Garben
Jane Landers
Cheryl Reedy
Anthony Yorio
Brian Shea, Alternate
Mark Werner, Alternate
Greg Williams, Alternate

Other Town Officials Present via Zoom

Ed Sbordone, Finance Director and Town Treasurer
Pat Del Monaco, First Selectman
Khris Hall, Selectman
Kim Hanson, Selectman
Dr. Pat Cosentino, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Rich Sanzo, Director of Business and Operations
Peggy Katkocin, BOE Chairman
Greg Flanagan, BOE member
Rick Regan, BOE member

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

BOE Network Administrator Paul Gouveia gave a brief overview of the rules and procedures for having a virtual meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

Appointments- None

Correspondence and Announcements

Chairman Wes Marsh noted that the BOF received two emails from residents. The first email was from John Cotumaccio asking that the BOF consider a 0% increase to the 2020-2021 budget and consider putting the school building project on hold in light of the coronavirus pandemic. The latter email was from Linda Decker asking the BOF to place a cap of \$44 million on the budget until there can be an in-person referendum and also asked the BOF to consider delaying the school building project.

Public Comment

Monika Thiel spoke of her concerns with using the property at 78 Gillotti Road for the high school building project and spoke of how it would affect neighbors on Gillotti Road. She asked for members to come up with a solution that works for everyone.

Phil Frobey spoke of the purchase of 78 Gillotti Road and specifically his concerns with whether or not this purchase meets the criteria under the Governor’s Executive Order 7S.

Selectman Kim Hanson echoed Mr. Frobey’s concerns regarding the legality of the purchase with the criteria outlined in the Governor’s Executive Order and further spoke of the 8-24 referral from the Planning Commission that was approved at their April 15, 2020 meeting. He noted that this meeting did not include Zoom information for the public to attend.

Approval of Minutes

Michael Cammarota made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2020 regular meeting as presented. Jane Landers seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Budget Transfers

Wes Marsh made a motion to make the following Inter-Departmental budget transfer in the amount of \$10,000.00. Tom Garben seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

\$	Transfer From		\$	Transfer To	
\$5,000.00	42100001-110.02	Police-Secretary Salaries	\$10,000.00	4290-110.00	OEM Salaries
\$5,000.00	42100005-130.00	Police-SRO Overtime			
\$10,000.00			\$10,000.00		

Boat Dock Invoice

Wes Marsh made a motion to authorize the payment of the Boat Dock invoice to Race Engineering in the amount of \$220.00. Jane Landers seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Discussion of Medical Plan for 2020-2021

Tom Kowalchik from USI spoke of the town’s medical plan for the 2020-2021 budget. He spoke of claims through February 2020. He noted that claims have been running a little higher in March but expects April, May and June to be lower due to all elective surgeries and doctor visits being cancelled due to COVID 19. He noted that testing for COVID 19 is covered and will be tracked separately. He spoke of the possible delay in the budget process and how it would affect employee contributions.

Finance Director and Town Treasurer Ed Sbordone spoke of the year to date medical claims as of March 31, 2020 and noted the there is a reserve fund balance of approximately \$2.086 million. Based on projections, the fund balance will drop down due to claims. He spoke of projections using claims from April, May and June from last year. Tom Kowalchik will send the board monthly claims data from Anthem for review at the April 22 BOF meeting. He will also get the status of the prescription drug rebate for the April 22nd meeting.

Discussion of potential purchase of property located at 78 Gillotti Road

Wes Marsh noted that the BOS met virtually on April 13 and tabled the decision to purchase the property at 78 Gillotti Road until there is more information and input from the public. There is a virtual joint meeting scheduled between the BOS and the BOF on Monday, April 20th to discuss the purchase

and to solicit public input regarding the purchase. The Planning Commission met immediately prior to this meeting and voted unanimously to give an 8-24 referral. It was noted that there are some concerns from residents as to whether or not the Governor's Executive Order allows for the purchase of this property without a Town Meeting. Anthony Yorio noted that there has been a legal opinion issued to the BOS noting that they do have the authority. This will be discussed further at the April 20th joint meeting between the BOS and BOF.

Anthony Yorio gave a brief background of the thought process of the PBC in deciding to recommend this purchase to the BOS. He noted that if this option is chosen, \$452,772 would be taken out of the construction budget which represents \$325,000 for the price of the property and the state reimbursement. An additional \$547,000 will be put in the contingency fund to yield a cost of \$1 million less.

Members of the BOF asked to see a copy of the written legal opinion concerning what is permissible in the Governor's Executive Order 7S. Pat Del Monaco spoke of the time sensitivity of the project and the need to use Executive Order 7S.

Director of Business and Operations Dr. Rich Sanzo showed pictures of each of the scenarios for the high school building project and spoke of the advantages of Option C. There was a concern from board members regarding the state reimbursement and it was noted that New Fairfield is on the State's priority list and it is not likely that the state reimbursement won't come through. There was a brief discussion of how each scenario would affect property owners on Gillotti Road and it was noted that they are encouraged to give public comments at the April 20th BOS/BOF meeting.

BOS and BOE requested 2020-2021 budgets and reductions

There was a discussion of the Governor's Executive Orders. It was noted that Executive Order 7S is for special appropriations such as the purchase of 78 Gillotti Road. Executive Order 7I notes that the BOF should adopt the budget and set the Mil Rate. Wes Marsh spoke of the logistics of setting the budget absent the budget referendum.

Auditor's Recommendations to Management from Fiscal year 2018-2019 audit

Wes Marsh spoke of the auditor's recommendations for fiscal year 2018-2019 and explained the difference between recommendations and material weaknesses. Ed Sbordone spoke of the recommendations made by the auditor and noted that he has sent an email to them asking for clarification. He noted that he will meet with his staff and come up with a response that won't be implemented until fiscal year 2020-2021 as it is too late for this fiscal year. Rich Sanzo spoke of recommendations for the Board of Education and steps made to implement them.

ONGOING UPDATES

Medical update- no comments

Legal update- no comments

Year to date expenses review- no comments

Current year revenue update- Property tax collection rate is 98.87%. There was a brief discussion of declining interest rates which will affect revenues especially for April, May and June 2020. LOCIP

money was received to the town today in the amount of \$78,666. \$1.8 million in ECS money is due to the town by the end of the month.

Cap and Non update- no comment

Public Comment

First Selectman Pat Del Monaco spoke in response to a request for unemployment data for New Fairfield residents and noted that the Department of Labor has been overwhelmed and has not been able to get that information to date. She noted that the Department of Labor has recently made significant changes to their computer systems which will hopefully allow them to get through the back log.

Monika Thiel spoke of the screen shot and pictures for the high school building project. She asked that the pictures be expanded to show other houses especially the ones on the other side of Gillotti Road. She suggested that homeowners on Gillotti Road should have been asked for their feedback regarding using this site. She further spoke of the property of 74 Gillotti Road regarding lead paint and the possibility of having soil tested.

Selectman Kim Hanson spoke of his concerns with the process of the purchase of 78 Gillotti Road and specifically the Planning Commission not receiving information on a timely matter and he not receiving a written copy of the legal opinion. He spoke of changes to the specifications with this option and concerns with the possibility that the state reimbursement will not be received.

Philip Frobey spoke of his concerns regarding the process for purchasing 78 Gillotti Road. He encouraged the BOF to look at a smaller tax increase.

Jenn Hickey spoke of 78 Gillotti Road and the need to test the soil. She further asked about unemployment rates for New Fairfield residents.

Future Agenda Items

Upcoming meetings

- Potential purchase of 78 Gillotti Road- Joint meeting between BOS and BOF on Monday, April 20th at 7:30pm via Zoom
- BOF meeting via Zoom on Wednesday, April 22

Board member comments

Members of the Board of Finance thanked everyone that logged into the meeting and gave public comment. They encouraged residents to stay informed and send comments either through emails or zoom meetings.

Adjournment

Jane Landers made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 pm. Tom Garben seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)