

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

MINUTES
Board of Finance Meeting
Wednesday, May 13, 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
Kathy Baker, BOE member
Rick Regan, BOE member
Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Julie Luby
Director of Technology, Dr. Karen Fildes
Christine Baldelli, Middle School Principal
Cheryl Milo, Middle School Assistant Principal
James Mandracchia, MHHS Principal
Karen Gruetzner, Consolidated School Ass't Principal
Katherine Matz, Pupil Personnel Director
Melissa Busnel, Special Education Supervisor
Mary Stolle, Athletic Director
Kerrie Greening, Tax Collector
Bruce Taylor, Fire Chief

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

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Appointments- None

Correspondence and Announcements

Chairman Wes Marsh noted that the BOF received many emails both for and against cuts to the budget. He summarized the emails. It was noted that there were 14 emails against increases in the budget and 9 in favor of increases or no cuts.

Public Comment

John Hodge spoke of the last recession from 2008 and noted that the town was able to operate at that time with less staffing. He spoke of the increased staffing in the last few years and noted that this is not the time to add positions or increase the budget. He cautioned about using the general fund for the budget.

Consolidated School teacher Michelle Brown spoke of the many needs that the students may have once they return to school and asked the Board not cut the budget as it could negatively affect the education of the students.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino spoke of a previous comment and noted that there were the same number of in 2015 as there are now.

First Selectman Pat Del Monaco spoke of staffing for the Town of New Fairfield and noted that in 2010 there were 106 positions on the municipal payroll and today there are 96 positions.

Selectman Kim Hanson compared the administrative line in the 2015-2016 budget to the administrative line for the initial proposed budget for 2020-2021 and noted that the cost is up 45%.

BOE Chairman Peggy Katkocin spoke in support of the budget and the increased needs of students especially with distance learning.

Maria and Gabe Gouveia spoke in support of the BOE budget and noted that the needs of the students have changed due to distance learning. They noted that real estate values are directly related to the value of the schools.

Amanda Lombard spoke of the needs of the students once they return to school. She noted that the first round of cuts were understandable but the second round are too deep and could cause significant problems with the education system.

Approval of Minutes

Jane Landers made a motion to adopt the minutes of the May 6, 2020 BOF meeting as presented. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Budget Transfers- None

Discussion of Medical Plan for 2020-2021

Tom Kowalchick from USI spoke of the medical plan for the Town of New Fairfield. He noted that claims are much lower than normal due to not having any elective surgeries. He estimated that the fund balance as of June 30 will be between \$2 and \$2.2 million. He noted that there is a healthy fund balance in the medical fund but warned that there are many unknowns due to COVID 19. There was a discussion of premiums for the next year specifically Individual Stop Loss (ISL) and Aggregate Stop Loss (ASL). The Board asked Mr. Kowalchick for comparisons of previous years. It was decided that decisions about the Medical Plan can be decided in June after the budget is adopted.

Connecticut General Statutes-Non-lapsing accounts

Wes Marsh read the Connecticut General Statute definition of a non-lapsing account and the request from the BOE that the BOF expand the definition of a non-lapsing account to allow for the surplus to be used for expenses that are caused by COVID 19. There was a brief discussion of what the COVID 19 expenses will be and there was a consensus among the Board members that these funds should be available with the caveat that the funds are earmarked for COVID 19 expenses but will be put in the Capital and Nonrecurring account if not used. Director of Business and Operations Dr. Rich Sanzo thanked the Board

for their support and noted that once the BOE surplus is finalized, they will be able to provide much greater detail.

Discussion - BOS and BOE requested 2020/21 budgets and reductions

Wes Marsh spoke of a scenario designed by Anthony Yorio that will bring the budget to just under a 1% increase which represents approximately \$1,783,100. Anthony Yorio spoke of the specifics of this scenario and specifically adjustments that were made to the budget in the beginning of the budget cycle. He spoke of Round 1 and Round 2 of cuts and reworking the 5-year capital plan to a 6-year capital plan. He spoke of using the unassigned fund balance for critical infrastructure projects. He suggested putting the entire education expenditure surplus into the non-lapsing account. He spoke of the BOS expected surplus of approximately \$328,750. Members of the BOF thanked Anthony Yorio and Wes Marsh for all their hard work with this budget compromise and noted that it was a scenario that everyone can live with.

Wes Marsh made a motion to reduce Municipal Expenditures in operations by \$297,489, increase the Medical Insurance Fund contribution by \$17,609 and reduce Cap & Non expenditures by \$672,911, for a total net reduction of \$952,791. Anthony Yorio seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Wes Marsh made a motion to reduce Education Expenditures in operations by \$341,950, increase Medical Insurance Fund contribution by \$111,591, reduce Debt Service by \$13,520, and to reduce Cap & Non expenditures by \$400,000 for a total net reduction of \$643,879. Michael Cammarota seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Wes Marsh made a motion to increase the Sherman Tuition revenue by \$70,000. Jane Landers seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Wes Marsh made a motion to approve the following: Shall the town government expenditures totaling \$12,276,720 from the general fund and \$749,000 from the capital and nonrecurring fund and \$928,256 from other governmental funds for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021 be approved. Cheryl Reedy seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Wes Marsh made a motion to approve the following: Shall the education expenditures totaling \$43,709.08 from the general fund for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021 be approved. Jane Landers seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Discuss - Board of Finance article for the Town Tribune

It was decided to put an article regarding the budget in the May 21st edition of the *Town Tribune*. Wes Marsh and Cheryl Reedy will write the article with Anthony Yorio reviewing it.

Public Comment

Nancy Fairchild thanked the BOF for all their hard work in putting together a responsible budget.

Selectman Kim Hanson spoke of his concerns and disappointment with the budget noting that it may create holes in the budget for future years.

Maria Gouveia thanked the BOF for their hard work and noted the difficulty of pleasing everyone.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino thanked the BOF for their hard work and efforts.

Future Agenda items

- Medical fund will be discussed
- The Budget will be discussed
- Town Tribune article

Board Member Comments

Members of the BOF thanked everyone involved in the budget process and wished everyone good health.

Adjournment

Michael Cammarota made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:32 pm. Tom Garben seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0 (Motion approved)