

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EOhO93QsQFU>

Members of the Public: Due to COVID-19 & pursuant to Executive Orders 7B & 9H, the Town is holding this meeting via Webex.

✓ FairTV's webpage, <https://fairfieldct.org/fairtv/government>

BOARD OF FINANCE BUDGET DELIBERATIONS FINAL MINUTES
Monday, March 29, 2021
7:30 pm

The Board of Finance Budget Deliberations was held at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, March 29, 2021 in Fairfield, CT via Webex.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Edward Bateson, Jim Brown-Chair, Lori Charlton, Christopher DeWitt-Vice Chair, Mary LeClerc-Secretary, Sheila Marmion, John Mitola, Jack Testani, James Walsh
OTHERS PRESENT: Assessor Ross Murray, Parks and Recreation Director Anthony Calabrese, Fairfield Museum and History Center Executive Director Mike Jehle, Town Attorney Jim Baldwin, CFO Jared Schmitt, First Selectwoman Brenda Kupchick, HR Director Jim Haselkamp, Controller Caitlin Bosse, FairTV

I. Call to Order

Mr. Brown called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Brown led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Brown made a motion to move Item 4 to Item 3 and move Item 3 to Item 4. Mr. DeWitt seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Executive Session – Discuss Personnel Matters and Contracts with the Town Attorney and CFO Pertaining to 2022 Contingency

Mr. Brown made a motion to go into Executive Session at 7:34 pm. Mr. Bateson seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Mr. DeWitt made a motion to end Executive Session at 8:49 pm. Mr. Bateson seconded the motion which carried unanimously. The Board took no action.

IV. Public Executive Session - Budget Deliberations (No Public Comment)

Mr. Calabrese asked to add 20 additional carts and to increase line 53310-Rental from \$117,000 to \$177,000. He said he wanted to update revenue to make the request for carts neutral by increasing line 42473 from \$385,000 to \$455,000.

Mr. Walsh asked if having the additional carts and new clubhouse would attract more tournaments. Mr. Calabrese answered that carts now have to be rented for tournaments. He said purchasing additional carts would be more cost effective. He said they will be under warranty to lease them and if something were to go wrong, the rep will come and fix the situation.

Mr. Jehle said he is requesting an additional \$10,000 from the Town for the Fairfield Museum which he said has provided exhibitions for 35,000 visitors. He said before the pandemic, the Museum made \$4 million for the Town. Mr. Jehle said the Museum gets about 4500 students each year and it also offers free programs, jazz concerts, the holiday on the green and a range of other events. He said the funding from the Town provides small, but very important leverage from private donors. He said town funding has not increased since 2011. He said the increase will help continue programs for the Town. Mr. Jehle said the Museum lost \$250,000 last year during the pandemic and he would like to continue free programs. He said the Museum closed last March and reopened on July 20, 2020 following State and Town guidelines.

Mr. Murray said the BAA has completed 638 hearings. He said deliberations have started and so far there are 228 decisions. He said reductions are approximately 5% overall. He said the BAA did ask for an extension which could affect setting the Mill Rate.

First Selectwoman Kupchick thanked the BOF for all their hard work. She said this budget reflects the priorities of the BOF. She said last year, the Town was able to provide stability to residents by not increasing taxes. First Selectwoman Kupchick said this budget began with a \$10 million hole and the Town is working to reduce the increase and use some of the surplus to put into the fund balance so to not impact taxpayers. She said the Town was given another DEEP violation from 2012 and will need to find out what will need to be done. She said there will be litigation costs for that as well. She said Gould Manor Park was being worked on prior to the arrest of the Interim DPW Director/Conservation Director and has since been delayed. First Selectwoman Kupchick said the sidewalk and soil has arsenic and after many fences had been taken down, the Town put in a new fence along the outside of the sidewalk. She said the Town is working with DEEP on clean up and to fix the issues. She asked the BOF to not drain the surplus as the Town might need additional funds for litigation and mitigation.

Mr. Brown said the right thing was done last year to not raise taxes. He said the \$2.2 million contribution is in the budget book. He said there is an estimated \$3.2 million surplus and the Board does not want to put the Town's AAA rating in jeopardy. Mr. Brown said the Board will have the opportunity to lower the mill rate and contribute to the fund balance. Members of the Board voiced their support of using part of the surplus to contribute to the fund balance as well as lower the taxes for residents. Mr. Walsh noted that there is still another quarter left in the current budget and the final numbers will not be ready until May. He said there is no number regarding the environmental issues and remediation costs. He said he does support reducing the contribution to the fund balance and lowering taxes.

Mr. Brown thanked everyone at the meeting for their work on this budget.

V. Adjourn

Ms. Charlton made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 pm. Mr. Testani seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Pru O'Brien
Recording Secretary

