

Board of Finance 3-31-2021 2021-2022 Budget Vote - YouTube

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 PUBLIC EXECUTIVE SESSION - BUDGET VOTE FINAL MINUTES
Wednesday, March 31, 2021
7:30 p.m.

The Board of Finance Public Executive Session Budget Vote was held at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 31, 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: First Selectwoman Brenda Kupchick, Controller Caitlin Bosse, Linda Gardiner, CFO Jared Schmitt, FairTV

I. Call to Order

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

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Brown led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Public Executive Session - Budget Vote (No Public Comment)

Mr. Brown made a short statement. He thanked First Selectwoman Kupchick for putting out a budget after listening to the BOF's concerns for the Town. He said she worked very hard on the budget. He also thanked the department heads for all of their work and the BOE for the challenges they had.

Mr. Brown made a motion to put the FY 22 budget of \$335,485,240.00 before the BOF as passed by the BOS. Mr. Dewitt seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Revenue by department:

Mr. Bateson made a motion to amend the HSR budget to increase Dept. 7113, line item 42471, Greens Fees by \$50,000 and to also increase Dept. 7113, line item 42473, Golf Cart Rental by \$60,000. Mr. DeWitt seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Mr. Bateson made a motion to amend the Town Clerk budget to increase Dept. 1030, line item 423 Conveyance by \$75,000. Ms. LeClerc seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Mr. Brown made a motion to accept the amended non-tax revenue budget to \$27,205,744.00. Mr. Walsh seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

BOE Budget:

Mr. Brown made a motion to approve the BOE FY 2022 budget of \$192,084,220.00 as amended. Ms. LeClerc seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Expenses:

First Selectwoman Kupchick made a presentation in support of her budget. She thanked the BOF for their hard work not just for this budget, but for the Town. She said the Town is projecting a \$3.2 million surplus and she hopes the BOF will consider using some of that to add to the Fund Balance. She also asked the Board to consider the expenses for the fill pile issues and the most recent violation from 2012. First Selectwoman Kupchick said she is confident that the plan she has put in place is good for the community. She also mentioned that FY budget 2021 was a difficult process with the pandemic. She said the meetings were tough and contingency was cut. She said contingency for FY 2022 needs to be higher. She said she looks forward to the budget passing and moving it forward to the RTM.

Ms. LeClerc made an amendment to increase FairTV line 53205, Fees & Professional Services to \$4,200.00 for its manager. Mr. DeWitt seconded the amendment which carried unanimously.

Mr. Brown made an amendment to reduce Active Employee Benefits, line item 52100 by \$183,265.00. Mr. Walsh seconded the amendment which carried unanimously.

Mr. Mitola made an amendment to reduce the Community & Economic Development Capital Outlay budget by \$60,000 for the Town website redesign. He said he supports the concept, but wants to get the budget down and federal funds might be available for this website redesign. Ms. Marmion seconded the amendment which failed 3-6-0 (Mr. Brown, Mr. Walsh, Mr. DeWitt, Mr. Bateson, Mr. Testani, Ms. LeClerc opposed).

Regarding the Contingency budget, Town Controller Caitlin Bosse said it is closely related to salary reserves and an amount budgeted for open contracts. She said it is based on what will be paid out. She said the liability estimated is accurate per the consultant. Ms. Bosse said the administration is comfortable with reducing this by \$100,000. She said any additional reduction could result in negative funds and will need to be over from somewhere else.

Ms. Charlton made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the contingency. Mr. Mitola seconded the motion. The motion failed 3-6-0 (Mr. Brown, Mr. Walsh, Mr. DeWitt, Mr. Testani, Mr. Bateson, Ms. LeClerc opposed).

Ms. Charlton wanted to know why amounts discussed previously were different. There was a detailed discussion regarding the Contingency budget.

Ms. Charlton made an amendment to decrease the Contingency line item 58010 by \$280,000. Ms. Marmion seconded the amendment.

Mr. Walsh made a motion to modify the amendment to reduce the Contingency line item 58010 by \$100,000. Mr. Testani seconded the amended motion which carried 6-3-0 (Ms. Charlton, Mr. Mitola, Ms. Marmion opposed).

Mr. Walsh made a motion to approve the amended contingency budget of \$1,486,451.00. Mr. DeWitt seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Walsh made an amendment to reduce the Contribution to Surplus, Dept. 2020, line item 58970 from \$2.2 million to \$1.2 million. Mr. Bateson seconded the amendment.

Mr. Mitola made a motion to amend the amendment and reduce the Contribution to Surplus by \$2.2 million and fund with the projected surplus. Ms. Charlton seconded the amendment. There was a detailed discussion about the surplus and the unknown expenses regarding the fill pile. The amendment failed 3-6-0 (Mr. Brown, Mr. Walsh, Mr. DeWitt, Mr. Testani, Mr. Bateson, Ms. LeClerc opposed). The original amendment to reduce the Contribution to Surplus, Dept. 2020, line item 58970 from \$2.2 million to \$1.2 million passed unanimously.

Ms. Marmion made an amendment to reduce the amount of the Town's contribution to the Pequot Library from \$400,000 to \$350,000. Ms. Charlton seconded the amendment which failed 4-5-0 (Mr. Brown, Mr. Walsh, Mr. Bateson, Ms. LeClerc, Mr. Testani opposed).

Mr. DeWitt made an amendment to reduce the Public Works Capital Outlay, line item 57000 by \$102,500. He said there are 10 items in the budget, but he wanted to reduce some of them to give taxpayers some relief. Mr. Bateson agreed. Mr. Bateson seconded the amendment which carried unanimously.

Mr. DeWitt made an amendment to remove from Parks & Recreation Capital Outlay \$150,000 for the study and take it out of the surplus. Mr. Testani seconded the amendment which carried unanimously.

Mr. Testani made an amendment to remove from HSR Rental, line item 53310, \$60,000 for golf carts, which was offset by an earlier motion. Mr. DeWitt seconded the amendment which carried unanimously.

Mr. Brown said Retiree Benefits, OPEB and Pension will be funded as recommended and he made an amendment to reduce line item 52105, OPEB by \$115,903.00. Mr. Walsh seconded the amendment which carried unanimously.

Mr. Brown made an amendment to reduce line item 52210, OPEB Police & Fire by \$40,000. Mr. DeWitt seconded the amendment which carried unanimously.

Mr. Brown made an amendment to reduce Retirement Contributions, line item 52310, by \$78,793.00. Ms. Charlton seconded the amendment which carried unanimously.

Mr. Brown made an amendment to reduce Retirement Contributions, Police & Fire, line item 52311 by \$217,328.00. Mr. Walsh seconded the amendment which carried unanimously.

Mr. Brown made an amendment to adjust the WPCA retiree benefits, line item 52100, by \$3,195. Mr. DeWitt seconded the amendment which carried unanimously.

Mr. Brown made an amendment to adjust line item 52105, OPEB Health to \$142,898.00. Mr. DeWitt seconded the amendment which carried unanimously.

Mr. Brown made an amendment to reduce line item 52310, Retiree Contributions by \$6,389.00. Mr. Walsh seconded the amendment which carried unanimously.

Mr. Brown asked for the overall budget numbers from Ms. Linda Gardiner.

The adjustment to the General Fund Revenue increased by \$185,000.

The adjustment to the Expenditures was reduced by \$2,123,589.00.

The net effect to the General Fund is \$2,308,589 favorable.

The budget tax increase was reduced from 1.9% as approved by the BOS to 1.12% by the BOF. Ms. Gardiner said there will be another opportunity after the RTM goes over the budget to look at everything again.

The tax levy assessed is \$315,317,856.00. The increase is \$16,699,771 which brings the total budget to \$333,361,651.00.

Mr. Brown made a motion to recommend the adjusted FY 2022 budget of \$333,361,651.00 to the RTM. Mr. DeWitt seconded the motion which carried 6-3-0 (Ms. Charlton, Ms. Marmion, Mr. Mitola opposed).

Mr. Brown thanked the BOF members and said he feels the Town is in a very strong financial position. He also thanked First Selectwoman Kupchick for her work as well.

Mr. Bateson reminded the Chairman that WPCA had to be approved.

Mr. Brown made a motion to approve the WPCA budget, as amended. Mr. DeWitt seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Various members of the BOF thanked Chairman Brown for his leadership and willingness to work with those who disagreed with some decisions.

IV. Adjourn

Mr. Walsh made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:29 pm. Mr. Mitola seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Pru O'Brien
Recording Secretary