

[Board of Finance 5-6-2021 Regular Meeting - YouTube](#)

Board of Finance Regular Meeting Final Minutes
Thursday, May 6, 2021
7:30 pm

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Finance was held on Thursday, May 6, 2021, at 7:30 pm via Webex in Fairfield, CT.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Brown Chair, Christopher DeWitt Vice-Chair, Mary LeClerc Secretary, Lori Charlton, Sheila Marmion, John Mitola, Jack Testani, James Walsh

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ed Bateson

OTHERS PRESENT: Community & Economic Development Director Mark Barnhart, Affordable Housing Committee Vice-Chair Cindy Sammarco, Atty Mike Andreana from Pullman & Comley, CFO Jared Schmitt, Tax Assessor Ross Murray, Tax Collector David Kluczowski, CAO Tom Bremer, FairTV

1. Call to Order

Mr. Brown called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Brown led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Brown and the Board held a moment of silence for devoted Fairfielder Tom Quinn.

3. To hear, consider and adopt a bond resolution entitled “A resolution appropriating \$2,000,000 for all costs associated with the purchase of properties on Quincy Street within the Parkview Commons Development and the reimbursement of the Housing Trust Fund and authorizing the issuance of bonds to Finance such Appropriation” as recommended by the Board of Selectmen (*requires RTM approval*)

Mr. Brown made a motion, seconded by Mr. DeWitt to bring Item 3 before the BOF.

Community and Economic Development Director Mark Barnhart was joined by Affordable Housing Committee Vice Chair Cindy Sammarco. Mr. Barnhart said Parkview Community was purchased by the Town in 2004 from the Federal Government. He said the Town always has the first right of refusal of a sale and he is hoping to use that to purchase three properties. He said the intent is to acquire the three parcels, plus one the Town already owns and redevelop the site to preserve home ownership and those units. Mr. Barnhart said the properties will be demolished and new and more units will be built. He said the sales from the completed units would pay of the note. Mr. DeWitt asked about the amount of \$2 million. Mr. Barnhart said there are binders of sale to purchase three units and one that has already been purchased. He said the overall intent is to cover up to six lots and attorney costs. He said refunding funds to the trust fund for the purchase was already done on one of the Quincy properties. Mr. Barnhart said the Town will only bond what it uses which might only be \$1.5 million. He said the Town will partner with a builder and the parcels will become condos which will be sold as affordable housing.

Ms. LeClerc asked if, as owner of the land, the Town would be responsible if something happened on the property. Mr. Barnhart said this is still being worked out.

Mr. Walsh made a motion, seconded by Mr. DeWitt to waive the reading of the bond. The motion carried unanimously.

The original motion carried unanimously.

4. To Consider and Set the Mill Rate for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2021 and Ending June 30, 2022

Mr. DeWitt made a motion, seconded by Mr. Walsh to put Item 4 before the BOF.

Before CFO Jared Schmitt and Tax Assessor Ross Murray presented this item, Mr. Brown said this budget season has come to an end and it is one budget that spans two years. He said due to tumultuous times last year, there were additional funding needs which have resulted in additional funding needs. He said it has also resulted in a significant surplus originally thought to be \$3.2 million, but it is now believed to be \$4.8 million. Mr. Brown said the RTM was able to reduce the Fund Contribution by \$1 million. He said he heard someone had said it was “overtaxing”, but he said no one knew what would happen. Mr. Brown said the Town also has to spend money on alleged criminal activity related to the fill pile. He thanked everyone for their tireless efforts in getting a \$2.3 million reduction to the original budget.

First Selectwoman Kupchick discussed the BAA and how they granted more appeals than what was anticipated. The Board then had a discussion about the BAA appeals and the process. Mr. Murray said there were some appeals for which they were reconsidering the decisions. He said he could give the BOF an update regarding Superior Court appeals in a month. Tax Collector Dave Kluczowski talked about the tax collection rate and how the Town is scheduled to proceed with regular collection heading toward a 98.8% collection rate. Mr. DeWitt wanted the public to know that the Mill Rate and Collection Rate are tied together.

Mr. Testani made a motion, seconded by Mr. DeWitt to set the mill rate for FY 2022 at 26.98. The motion carried unanimously.

5. To Hear, Consider and Act Upon the Suspense List for Tax Collector

Mr. Mitola made a motion, seconded by Mr. DeWitt to bring Item 5 before the BOF.

Mr. Kluczowski said that, in accordance of general State Statute 12-165, he was transferring \$109,465.74 to the Suspense List. He said his office has exhausted all efforts to collect these taxes and they are now uncollectable. Mr. Kluczowski explained the different reasons why taxes become uncollectable.

Mr. Brown made a motion, seconded by Ms. LeClerc to approve the transfer of the tax accounts to the Suspense List - \$74,410.64 in Motor Vehicle tax and \$35,055.10 in Personal Property tax. The motion carried 7-0-1 (Mr. Walsh abstained).

6. To Hear an Update on Fill Pile/FEMA Rejection of Reimbursement for Penfield Pavilion

CAO Tom Bremer presented this item.

He said there are seven sites which he gave updates on:

- Gould Manor: Mr. Bremer said this is not part of the fill pile although it was tested as a result of the fill pile. He said this is historical contamination and does not require DEEP approval. He said the DOH has a 2–3-week plan to clean Gould Manor.
- Fill Pile: Mr. Bremer said there were two rounds of testing on the water-side and on the dirt side. He said testing found that there is leaching into the water in the marshes. He said the Town is 2-3 weeks away from finishing the plan and to begin negotiations with DEEP and the EPA. Mr. Bremer said the site will have to be capped which will require 2 feet of dirt on top of the fill pile and then topsoil to grow grass. He said it could be up to 4 feet of the dirt/topsoil. Mr. Bremer said once the site is capped, wells will be put into the site. He said the wells will be monitored and tested every quarter to start. He said funding will need to be put into the budget, approximately \$100,000-\$150,000 per year. Mr. Bremer said this is more positive than originally thought. He said he will have a better idea as time goes on. He said there are lawsuits against various people and Court will be back in session in August.
- Penfield: Mr. Bremer said the two parking lots across the street were tested and are not contaminated. He said there are many hot spots under the building and parking lot. He said there was an enormous amount of fill used underneath the pavilion and it should have been 2 feet, but 5-6 feet was used. Mr. Bremer said there is concern with how much fill is there. He said the Town had been approved to use FEMA and insurance money to replace the building, but in 2016, it was decided the Town would repair the building without FEMA approval. Mr. DeWitt wondered if the building would still be sound if 5-6 feet of fill had to be removed underneath. Mr. Bremer said engineering studies will need to be performed. He said all air quality testing around and inside the building is fine and safe. First Selectwoman Kupchick said the bottom of the pavilion is closed off with netting so the fill cannot get outside of where it is now.
- Hardening Project/Wastewater Treatment Plant: The wall to protect the firehouse and the water treatment plant from a 500-year flood is 70%-80% complete. PCBs were found and had to be removed and remediated. The road also needs to be raised. The plan is to have it done before school starts as not to have to move the buses.

7. To Hear Consider and Act Upon a Request from the CFO to Transfer:
\$200,000 from the General Fund Contingency (01002010-58010)
\$500,000 from Private School Bus Transportation (01002531-58500)
\$300,000 from DPW Regular Payroll (01005030-51010)

To:

\$800,000 to (01011010-58950) for litigation costs related to the fill pile
\$150,000 to (01007050-57000) Parks and Recreation Capital Outlay for the Master Plan
\$50,000 to (01002130-58500) for Pequot Library Roof Replacement

Mr. Brown made a motion, seconded by Mr. DeWitt to approve Item 7.

Town Attorney Jim Baldwin said litigation money cannot be bonded and it would have to come out of surplus. There was a discussion about litigation and how much money should be put aside. Mr. Baldwin thanked Mr. Bremer for all his hard work.

The motion carried unanimously.

8. To hear, consider and act upon the draft minutes of March 2, 2021, March 10, 2021, March 11, 2021, March 16, 2021, March 18, 2021, March 23, 2021, March 25, 2021, March 27, 2021, March 29, 2021 and March 31, 2021

Mr. Brown made a motion, seconded by Ms. Charlton to approve the minutes before the Board. The motion carried unanimously.

9. To hear, consider and act upon any communications.
There were no new communications.

10. Adjourn
Mr. DeWitt made a motion, seconded by Mr. Testani to adjourn the meeting at 9:56 pm. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Pru O'Brien
Recording Secretary