

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8vuZ8-XIOE>

*****FINAL*****

**BOARD OF FINANCE BUDGET HEARING
MEETING MINUTES
April 9, 2020**

The Board of Finance Budget Hearing was held at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 9, 2020, via Teleconference.

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

ALSO PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE Conservation Director, Acting DPW Director Brian Carey, Health Director Sands Cleary, Building Official Tom Conley, Solid Waste and Recycling Director Michael Zembruski, WPCF Superintendent Bill Norton, Human and Social Services Director Julie DeMarco, Engineering Manager William Hurley, CAO Thomas Bremer, First Selectwoman Brenda Kupchick, FairTV

1. Call to Order – Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 9:02 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Brown led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Discussion on the Following Budgets:

First Selectwoman Kupchick addressed the Board and emphasized how extremely important the proposed grant writing position and Economic Development position are in this crisis. An extensive discussion was had on how to cut the budget.

Health and Welfare

6010 Health

Expenses - Mr. Cleary explained that there are four changes in his budget. He said Temporary Payroll and Travel and Meeting increased and Fuel & Lube and Postage were reduced. He said he requested a nurse at Stratfield School to help with increased student numbers and with the ECC relocation there as well. Mr. Walsh requested the increased number of students from last year at Fairfield Warde and Stratfield schools which Mr. Cleary will compile. Mr. Cleary reported that there are some grant funded programs his department is obligated to continue. He said he has shifted priorities and explained how the role of his department has changed and how his staff is handling new challenges with the virus. He added that since there is a State Declaration, COVID19 expenses will be reimbursed 75%. Mr. Cleary informed the Board his department has had plans in place, necessary supplies and has run drills for years for this type of emergency.

Revenue – Mr. Cleary said the bulk of the \$14,000 increase is 250 rental units that will come online. He said he built in a 2% increase in Fees although a two-year average may be more accurate. Restaurant revenue was thoroughly examined.

6050 Human and Social Services

Ms. DeMarco reported a decrease in Advertising and Postage. She requested the part-time Bigelow Center Director position be increased to full-time. She said she will maintain the Bigelow Center Coordinator. Ms. DeMarco said she sees increases due to the increased pay rate for exercise instructors. She requested an increase for her position because she said it is low compared to similar towns. She discussed how the virus is affecting her department's work and their ability to assist seniors. Ms. DeMarco said her staff is managing lunches, groceries and check-ins with the help of CERT members. She said a grant helps cover the Outreach Social Worker salary.

Public Works

5011 Public Works Administration

Mr. Walsh asked about the hiring of a Public Works Director. He asked if the intent of the Administration is for Mr. Carey to perform both jobs next fiscal year. First Selectwoman Kupchick replied that she has interviewed three candidates and had considered hiring one them before the pandemic occurred. Mr. Carey remarked Interim DPW Superintendent Novak has been a huge help.

5030 Public Works Operations

Expenses - Mr. Carey said there was a small decrease. Mr. Walsh suggested Mr. Carey and Mr. Novak prepare a priority list. Mr. Carey said he and Mr. Novak already reduced their request from 17 items to 9 items and the remaining are all necessities. Mr. Brown requested a list of trucks being replaced. Mr. Carey said he will resend the Capital spreadsheet to the Board. Board members said they would like to see a more thorough analysis. Mr. Carey said he will supply a contract analysis as well. Mr. Bremer explained the vehicle fleet replacement plan.

Revenue - Mr. Carey informed the Board that revenue will not go down and that SCG and Aquarion are doing a lot of work around Town.

13013010 WPCA

Mr. Norton noted a small increase due to equipment replacement and contractual obligations.

5050 Building

Expenses - Mr. Conley said the one big change was a request for a part-time employee who would cover blight and condemnation. He explained how blight is currently handled and how it takes up a tremendous amount of time among a few departments that would appreciate the help so they could relieve their time and spend it on inspections. Mr. Conley said blight fines go into the General Fund and would be used to pay for the new employee resulting in no cost to the Town. He said the fines would exceed the cost to cover the position. He said he is short a full-time inspector and has interviewed candidates, but has had difficulty because other towns are hiring at higher pay. Mr. Conley went through how outdated their office furniture is and how the layout makes it extremely difficult to function.

Revenues – Mr. Conley reported as of today, revenue is \$2 million and he expects it to exceed last year's numbers or this year's projections. He discussed many permit and solar energy projects coming in. He said that given the universities are moving forward with construction, revenue will be strong next year. Mr. Conley said the Town has had to redo the entire permitting process because of the virus.

There was discussion on whether the Town will see continued revenue from the universities and businesses since the universities are cutting back and will experience a more difficult time in the future. Mr. Conley believes construction will start up again and said he hasn't seen a slowdown. Board members said they would like updated numbers before they vote. Mr. Brown said will bring Mr. Conley back to discuss his findings after he has had more time to research the numbers, has a better feel for small projects and speaks with the universities.

5070 Engineering

Mr. Hurley reported a 0% increase. He said Rental and Storage was reduced and Fuel & Lube and Overtime were recommended for reductions.

4070 Street Lighting

Mr. Hurley noted a decrease.

6070 Solid Waste and Recycling

Mr. Zemruski said the increase was contractual agreements for trash and recycling. He explained Contracts and Overtime earnings and said revenue is the same as last year.

The items below will be taken up at another meeting:

Culture and Recreation

- 7030 Penfield Pavilion Complex**
- 7050 Parks and Receptions**
- 7070 Waterfront and Marina**
- 7111 Carl Dickman Golf Course**
- 7113 H. Smith Richardson Golf Course**
- 7010 Library**
- 7011 Library – Fairfield Woods Branch**

4. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Mitola moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:18 am. Ms. Charlton seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 9-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila Tesei
Recording Secretary