

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xFF3V_ZPmY

*****FINAL*****
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
May 7, 2020

The Virtual Board of Finance Regular Meeting was held at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 7, 2020.

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: Edward Bateson (8:00 p.m.), Jim Brown-Chair, Lori Charlton, Christopher DeWitt-Vice Chair, Mary LeClerc-Secretary, Sheila Marmion, John Mitola, Jack Testani, James Walsh

ALSO PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: Town Attorney James Baldwin, Budget Director Linda Gardiner, Interim CFO Caitlin Bosse, First Selectwoman Brenda Kupchick, CAO Tom Bremer, Town Clerk Betsy Browne, Building Director Tom Conley, Parks & Recreation Director Anthony Calabrese, BOE Chair Christine Vitale, BOE Superintendent Michael Cummings, FairTV

1. Call to Order – Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Brown led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Brown reminded everyone that there will be no live public comment. He said the public is encouraged to email comments including their name and home address before or after the meeting to bof@fairfieldct.org.

3. To Approve the Following 2020 Minutes: January 7, February 5, February 25, March 11, March 16, March 16, April 9 and April 9.

Mr. DeWitt motioned to approve the items. Mr. Mitola seconded the motion.

The January 7, 2020, minutes were approved unanimously, 8-0.

The February 5, 2020, minutes were approved unanimously, 8-0.

The February 25, 2020, minutes were approved unanimously, 8-0.

The March 11, 2020, minutes were approved unanimously, 8-0.

The March 16, 2020, 7:05 p.m. minutes were approved, 8-0-1 (Walsh abstained).

The March 16, 2020, 7:35 p.m. minutes were approved, 8-0-1. (Walsh abstained).

The April 9, 2020, 7:00 p.m. minutes were approved unanimously, 8-0.

The April 9, 2020, 7:30 p.m. minutes will be voted on at another meeting.

4. Public Executive Session – Budget Deliberations (No Public Comment)

Mr. Cummings presented the most current document dated May 6, 2020, related to BOE COVID-19 expenses for the 2020 budget season. He said he anticipates closure periods, an extended school day and high school summer school for students who haven't been able to keep up with distant learning in order to keep them on track to graduate. Mr. Cummings said these items will further supplement additional hours and PPE. Each category 1-9 was examined by the BOF.

Mr. Mitola said the left over money should be used for the upcoming school year and not be used to reduce spending in another department because it is for education in this budget. He suggested he and Mr. Walsh put together an MOU.

First Selectwoman Kupchick said each town department is submitting COVID-19 expenses to the Finance Department which is tracking and submitting expenses to the State for reimbursement. First Selectwoman Kupchick summarized the COVID-19 adjustments to the FY21 BOS budget. The BOF examined the expenditures, adjustments, reductions and increases for the Town. Ms. Bosse explained the debt service recommendation.

There was an extensive discussion on OPEB, the mortality rate table, pensions, retirements and the Town's AAA rating.

Mr. Baldwin said he looked into the issue on revenue as he said he was asked to do by the BOF Chair and he said in his view, it is not an appropriate matter for this Board to take up unilaterally. He said if you look back at how the BOF addressed revenue issues/projections, it has always been adhered to by this Board. Mr. Baldwin said there is a legal basis for this; this Board is supposed to consider appropriations in the context of reasonable projections. In his analysis based on the past history of the BOF, Mr. Baldwin said it is not a reasonable basis to go against the recommendation of the people who run those departments or the administration as long as those recommendations are reasonable.

Mr. Mitola disagreed. He said he doesn't think it's a legal issue and this Board has made revenue adjustments. Mr. Walsh said he agrees with Mr. Mitola and asked Mr. Baldwin to provide case law or language from the Town Charter. Mr. Walsh said the BOF has made adjustments with the Town Clerk's conveyance tax for seven years in a row and has been on target.

Ms. Gardiner said all revenue adjustments in the past have been in agreement and was afraid there was going to be a wide spread cut without rationale to many revenue lines. She said all cuts have been made with the department heads' agreement. Mr. Walsh disagreed saying the BOF has changed revenue. Mr. Brown said he remembers it that way too. Mr. DeWitt said he remembers the BOF changing the collection rate as Mr. Walsh does. Mr. Baldwin said in every case it has been endorsed by the department head not necessarily the night of the vote but at some point it was communicated during the budget process.

Mr. Bateson said it is a slippery slope. He said if the BOF wants to adjust revenue and there is a basis to do it, the BOF will do that. Mr. Flynn confirmed the BOF has almost every year adjusted revenue, sometimes with department head approval and sometimes not. He said sometimes the BOF adjusted revenue when it received better information after the budget book was printed and between the time the BOF voted. He said the BOF has adjusted revenue both for the collection rate as well as the mill rate itself and the BOF can still adjust the revenue rate by adjusting the mill rate.

Mr. Mitola motion to add a Private Executive Session to the agenda. Mr. DeWitt seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 9-0.

Mr. Brown invited Mr. Bremer and Mr. Flynn as ex-officio into Executive Session with the BOF.

5. Private Executive Session

Mr. Brown motioned to enter Private Executive Session at 10:28 p.m. Mr. DeWitt seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 9-0.

Ms. Charlton motioned to reconvene into Public Session at 11:05 p.m. Mr. Walsh seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 9-0.

6. To Hear, Consider and Act Upon Any Communications – none.

7. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Walsh moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:07 p.m. Mr. Testani seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 9-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila Tesei
Recording Secretary