

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Es32ziq6xgA>

***** FINAL *****

BOARD OF FINANCE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, July, 7, 2020
7:30 pm

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Finance was held virtually on Tuesday, July 7, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. in Fairfield, Connecticut.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Interim CFO Caitlin Bosse, PKF O'Connor Davies-Joseph Centofanti BOE Superintendent Mike Cummings, Human and Social Services Director Julie DeMarco, Purchasing Director Gerald Foley, First Selectwoman Brenda Kupchick, Executive Director Fairfield Public Schools Angelus Papageorge, Town Internal Auditor Connie Saxl, FairTV

1. Call to Order – Mr. Brown called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Brown led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

3. To hear, consider and act upon the following resolution as recommended by the Board of Selectmen (**requires RTM approval**):
WHEREAS, as part of the Bigelow Center for Senior Activities' Five-Year Bus Replacement Plan, it is in the best interest of the Town of Fairfield to expend up to \$67,696 to purchase a wheelchair-accessible motor vehicle to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities, \$53,600 of said purchase to be funded by a Traditional 5310 Capital Senior Bus Grant under Section 5310 of the Federal Transit Act's Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program as administered by the State of Connecticut; and NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Brenda L. Kupchick, First Selectwoman of the Town of Fairfield, be and hereby is authorized to accept in the name of and on behalf of the Town of Fairfield a Traditional 5310 Capital Senior Bus Grant in the amount of \$53,600; and FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriation of up to \$67,696 be, and hereby is approved; and FURTHER RESOLVED, that the First Selectwoman is hereby authorized, on behalf of the Town of Fairfield, to sign and execute any and all necessary documents to secure said grant.

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

Ms. DeMarco reported this state grant is available every two years to replace outdated buses. She said the State provides 80% funding and 20% is paid out of the Bigelow Center donation account. She said the cost is slightly more because of the added a \$600 plexi-glass screen between the bus driver and passengers.

The motion carried unanimously, 9-0.

4. To hear, consider and act upon the following resolution as recommended by the Board of Selectmen (**requires RTM approval**):
WHEREAS, the Federal Transit Administration, Section 5310 Program, Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities, offers grants through the State of Connecticut, Department of Transportation; and
WHEREAS, The Town of Fairfield is applying for approximately \$27,552 and the funding shall be used for salary, maintenance and fuel; and
WHEREAS, grants are to be used for capital and operating expenses for public transportation services and alternatives beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), designed to assist seniors and individuals with disabilities; and
WHEREAS, the Town of Fairfield will submit an application for funding to enhance Bigelow Center for Senior Activities' transportation services by filling in the gaps in public transportation in the Town of Fairfield by going beyond services required by the ADA, servicing eligible riders not within a three-quarter mile of a bus stop and expanding operating hours to enable additional services; and
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Brenda L. Kupchick, First Selectwoman of the Town of Fairfield, be and hereby is authorized to accept in the name of and on behalf of the Town of Fairfield a matching Federal Transit Administration grant in the amount of \$27,552; and
FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriation in the amount of \$27,552 be, and hereby is approved; and
FURTHER RESOLVED, that the First Selectwoman is hereby authorized, on behalf of the Town of Fairfield, to sign and execute any and all necessary documents to secure said grant.

Mr. DeWitt motioned to waive the reading. Mr. Mitola seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 9-0.

Mr. Walsh motioned to approve the item. Mr. Testani seconded the motion.

Ms. DeMarco explained the quarterly report submitted for reimbursement. She said she hopes to expand the Bigelow Center hours although it won't be used for weekend hours since it's been assessed that there is no interest. Ms. DeMarco said this grant allows expansion of service without creating expenses for the Town. She said she is unsure if the entire amount will be used, but would like to explore it to determine if there is a need for additional rides.

The motion carried unanimously, 9-0.

5. PURCHASING AUTHORITY

To hear, consider and act upon a bid waiver request from the Fairfield Public Schools for the order to Hoffman Architects to update a building assessment of the Fairfield Ludlowe High School facility for an amount not to exceed \$57,050.00.

Mr. DeWitt motioned to approve the item. Ms. Marmion seconded the motion.

Mr. Papageorge stated Central Office is seeking a bid waiver not to exceed \$57,050 due to air quality concerns. He said a study was performed for \$150,000 so instead of going out to bid, Central Office can utilize the existing study and have it updated.

Mr. Papageorge said the request also includes a recommended balance and testing of the HVAC system. Ms. Marmion said she heard that Connecticut OSHA had a complaint and asked with respect to COVID-19, if this study will get done regardless of who receives the bid. Mr. Papageorge replied yes stating that the HVAC which is a State Guideline will be balanced. He said OSHA did address the report, but it is not complete and OSHA is almost satisfied. Mr. Papageorge said some classes need to be held for custodians, but they can't be held due to COVID-19 so training is being extended to the end of the summer. Ms. Marmion inquired if these studies need to be performed in all the schools. Mr. Papageorge replied yes stating that Central Office is looking at State Guidelines and working with the engineering company that designed and installed the HVAC system.

Ms. LeClerc asked if in the original process when the architect was hired if this is an addition or if this is a different process from the original hire. Mr. Papageorge said he can only assume it went through the bidding process since it was a non-reoccurring item. Ms. LeClerc asked if it would be better to go through the formal bid process to be consistent with what the Town does for every school. Mr. Papageorge said he asked Hoffman Architects to look at Ludlowe High School since Hoffman has already done work there to be fiscally responsible. He said this is close to a \$200,000 study at this point.

Mr. Bateson asked if issues are related to when Ludlowe High School was closed. He thanked Mr. Papageorge for spotting that 100% fresh air intake could cause more damage due to humidity.

Mr. DeWitt said this is not a time to be waiving bids. He said the back-up which includes Purchasing Director Foley's emails clearly show the process is being followed. First Selectwoman Kupchick said Mr. Foley works 24/7. Mr. Walsh congratulated Mr. Foley for following the Town Charter noting this is the first bid waiver the BOF has seen on its agenda and bid waivers should come before the BOF according to the Town Charter. Mr. Walsh said he is also inclined to agree that Hoffman Architects can do a better job than other companies. Mr. Papageorge said he doesn't think he can get a better price and added that Hoffman has performed prior work with the Town.

Mr. Foley said he and Mr. Papageorge agreed it's better to use the same company to update the study. Mr. Foley said he is in favor of this, but since it is such a large cost he brought this to the BOF to vet. He said he feels it is a prudent measure to stay with the same company and get the study completed in a timely fashion. Mr. Foley then went through the RFP timeline which he said would delay the whole process.

The motioned carried, 8-1. (Brown, Charlton, Bateson, LeClerc, Marmion, Mitola, Testani, Walsh in favor and Dewitt opposed)

6. To Review and Discuss the DPW audit report and recommendations from the BOF audit subcommittee

Mr. Brown said the report began last year when Tom Flynn was BOF Chair and was completed in July. He thanked Mr. Centofanti for all the time he has spent on it and thanked the Town employees for their cooperation. Mr. Brown noted he took Mr. Bateson's place on the BOF Audit Subcommittee.

First Selectwoman Kupchick read a statement summarizing the pile history and what has transpired since she has been in office. She said there has been a lack of policy and procedure for a very long time.

She said she welcomes the BOF's input and would like a liaison from the BOF to serve on a working group being set up on the DPW audit.

Mr. Bateson asked what the status is on the CFO and DPW positions and who is on the search team. First Selectwoman Kupchick said the search team includes Purchasing, Human Resources, Finance and her Administration. She said the team is working on job descriptions for the CFO and DPW Director and are working on reorganization also. First Selectwoman Kupchick said the Interim DPW Director has done an amazing job. Mr. Mitola said Fairfield needs to be treated like a Town of over 60,000 residents when hiring for big positions like these and not looked at as a small town. First Selectwoman Kupchick said the Town needs to provide employees with training and structure and given there is a lot of work to do she is so glad she fought for the CAO position.

Ms. Charlton said she appreciates someone from this Board to act as liaison with the First Selectwoman's administration. She identified several audit reports Ms. Saxl prepared and remarked Ms. Saxl doesn't have time to go back to confirm the implementation. Ms. Charlton said she believes in addition to a liaison, there should be periodic tracking to show where the Town is on follow-up. Mr. Walsh added the BOF gets quarterly updates, but it needs a matrix so it can go back and validate when the matrix has been updated so that the Town can follow-up and perform the oversight it's supposed to be doing, show it is making progress and periodically reviewing the status. Mr. Brown agreed this would be 100% necessary to put on a quarterly agenda and at more meetings if necessary. Mr. Testani agreed with the First Selectwoman that the audits can be costly and the Town needs to be cautious given fiscal restraints. Mr. Brown said Ms. LeClerc will get back to the First Selectwoman on serving as a liaison on the working DPW audit group.

Ms. LeClerc informed the Board that she had Mr. Centofanti give an overview of the DPW audit report, the process and its findings to the BOF Audit sub-committee. She said the sub-committee recommended adding priorities and feel it's important to know how they are ranked.

Ms. Charlton referred to the report and cited more than 10% errors in purchase order invoices which she said is a high exception rate. She said the results of testing documentation not being found is a huge issue. She said she was troubled by the results. She said cash collections in departments is a complete disconnect to the Finance Department.

Mr. DeWitt said it was a great report and thanked Mr. Centofanti and the Audit sub-committee. Mr. DeWitt reviewed the purchasing recommendations. He commented that it appears the DPW Director needs to be a PE and also have a MBA. He said it is a struggle to find a DPW Director and asked if the focus should be finding someone with an MBA or with a DPW background. He said there needs to be follow-up with the Purchasing and Finance departments and added that there are so many policies that relate to other departments, not just DPW.

Mr. Mitola pointed out that other Towns have great purchasing policies. Ms. Charlton suggested Mr. Centofanti update the purchasing policy since he has access to what other towns are doing and also look at implementation. She said the auditors didn't look at capital items. She said she is not suggesting the Town perform another audit, but it should put procedures in place around implementing and training. Members then discussed the Munis software and reports. First Selectwoman Kupchick said per Mr. Walsh's request, she will inquire what the Veoci system is used for.

Ms. LeClerc discussed the report's recommendations that include:

- The Town wants to stop collecting cash
- The Town should wait for implementation to show improvements before paying for additional testing
- Report everything back to the BOF on a regular basis and to keep it in the loop
- Town administration handles the operational
- Sound management practices
- Internal control improvements
- Periodic onboard training from the beginning
- Implement a system to report to boards when problems come up so it is brought to their attention
- Make Town Charter and State Statute summaries on what Town is required to do and include the process
- Improve purchasing process
- Adhere to forms policies

Mr. Brown asked Mr. DeWitt if he would be involved in updating this policy to which Mr. DeWitt agreed. Mr. DeWitt said he would like the BOF to own the punch list report in an Excel format and the Town should report to the sub-committee. Mr. Bateson said it's the new CFO's role along with the First Selectwoman and the Purchasing Director to write policies, not the BOF. He said the corrections need to come from within although the BOF can assist.

Mr. LeClerc then discussed next steps that include:

- Get a bid waiver in place
- Have the BOF Audit Sub-Committee follow up with the Finance Committee on what is appropriate
- Have Ms. Bosse and Ms. Saxl start the Matrix so the Audit Sub-Committee can then add and make sure everything is in place
- Have Ms. Saxl or Mr. Centofanti perform an internal audit to make sure everything is in place and working how it should be

Ms. Charlton asked Mr. Centofanti for the report in Word format. Mr. Brown recommended the Board send its thoughts to Ms. LeClerc. He emphasized the hiring of a CFO and DPW Director.

7. Update on COVID-19-Related Expenses

Ms. Saxl gave an update on departments' expected expenditures, projections and actuals. She said the Town is submitting reimbursement to FEMA for 75% and 25% through the State of Connecticut COVID-19 Relief Fund to receive 100% reimbursement. Ms. Saxl said she compiled actual expenditures for the period of January 2020 through this June for all departments. She said it will take 2-3 weeks to hear what the Town will receive from the FEMA reimbursement. Ms. Saxl said she is inputting the expenditures through the State of Connecticut portal for the remaining 25% and hopes to get 100% back. She said there have been almost 1,500 volunteer hours logged which the Town is also entitled to through FEMA. She said she is continuing to compile and gather this information as FEMA requires detailed backup including copies of checks, invoices and timesheets.

The Board discussed and reviewed the detailed report expenses for the departments. Mr. Bateson asked Ms. Saxl to provide police overtime backup. Ms. Marmion asked if there are any savings from the departments. Ms. Saxl said she is not tracking savings at this time. Mr. Bremer said he will give an update on fiscal year-end numbers at the August BOF meeting.

8. To hear, consider and approve the following meeting minutes: May 5, 2020, May 7, 2020, May 11, 2020, May 19, 2020, June 4, 2020

Mr. DeWitt motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Testani seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 9-0.

9. To Hear, Consider and Act Upon Any Communications – None.

10. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Board, Ms. Charlton motioned to adjourn the meeting at 11:15 p.m. Mr. Walsh seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 9-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila Tesei
Recording Secretary