

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-aNXst0L98>

***** FINAL *****
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, October 6, 2020
7:30 pm

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Finance was held virtually on Tuesday, October 6, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. in Fairfield, Connecticut.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jim Brown-Chair, Mary LeClerc-Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: Comptroller Caitlin Bosse, CAO Thomas Bremer, Interim Public Works Director Brian Carey, PKF O'Connor Davies Partner Joseph Centofanti, BOE Superintendent Mike Cummings, BOE Executive Director of Personnel and Legal Services, Title IX Coordinator Colleen Deasy, Deputy Fire Chief Kyran Dunn, Tax Collector David Kluczowski, First Selectwoman Brenda Kupchick, BOE Executive Director of Finance & Business Services Doreen Munsell, BOE Executive Director of Operations Angelus Papageorge, BOE Member and BOF Liaison Jeff Peterson, CFO Jared Schmitt, BOE Chair Christine Vitale, FairTV

1. Call to Order – Vice-Chair Chris DeWitt called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. DeWitt led the Pledge of Allegiance.
Mr. DeWitt reminded the public that there will be no live public comment. He said the public is encouraged to email comments including their name and address to bof@fairfieldct.org.
3. To hear, consider and act upon the following resolution as recommended by the Board of Selectmen (*pending BOS approval at its 10/5/20 meeting; requires RTM approval*)
WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the Town of Fairfield to expend a total of \$58,832 to purchase 8 Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) and 2 Cardiac Compression Devices (CCDs), \$53,483.64 of said project costs to be funded by a grant available under the FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) 2019 Program and a ten percent match from the Town of Fairfield (\$5,348.36); and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Brenda L. Kupchick, First Selectwoman, be and hereby is authorized to accept in the name of and on behalf of the Town of Fairfield, a Grant in the amount of \$58,832; 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; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that \$5,348.36 is hereby appropriated to fund said project costs, to be transferred from FY21 Fire Department Operating funds.

Mr. Testani motioned to approve the item. Ms. Charlton seconded the motion.

Deputy Fire Chief Kyran Dunn respectfully requested funding for AEDs and CCDs and said they are great life savings tools. He said AEDs are on all Fairfield's equipment, but they are starting to age. He said these machines perform better than humans; they give the compressions for the same depth, amount of time and are uninterrupted. First Selectwoman Brenda Kupchick said her son was recently saved by this equipment. Mr. DeWitt asked for updates at the next meeting for FEMA reimbursement on Penfield Pavilion and COVID.

The motion carried unanimously, 7-0-0.

4. To hear, consider and act upon the following resolution as recommended by the Acting DPW Manager (*pending BOS approval at its 10/5/20 meeting; requires RTM approval*)
WHEREAS, Federal monies are available under the Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery Program, administered by the State of Connecticut, Department of Housing pursuant to Public Law 93-383, as amended; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Chapter 127c, and Part VI of Chapter 130 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Commissioner of Housing is authorized to disburse such Federal monies to local municipalities; and

WHEREAS, it is desirable and in the public interest that the Town of Fairfield accept from the State \$300,000 in order to undertake a Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery – Tranche 2 Project, Fairfield Waste Water Treatment Plant Hardening, and to execute an Assistance Agreement therefore, should one be offered; and

WHEREAS, the funding is cognizant of the conditions and prerequisites for State Assistance imposed by Part VI of Chapter 130 of The Connecticut General Statutes; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that that Brenda L. Kupchick, First Selectwoman, be and hereby is authorized to accept in the name of and on behalf of the Town of Fairfield, a Grant in the amount of \$300,000 from the Commissioner of the Department of Housing; 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 as well as provide additional information to execute any other documents as may be required by the Commissioner to execute an Assistance Agreement with the State of Connecticut for State financial assistance if such an Agreement is offered and to execute any amendments, rescissions, and revisions thereto, and to act as the authorized representative of the Town of Fairfield.

Mr. John Mitola motioned to approve the item. Ms. Sheila Marmion seconded the item.

Interim DPW Director Brian Carey reported the Town received a grant for over \$3 million. He said Laura Pulie in the Engineering Department researched and came up with additional State funding for \$300,000 to complete the hardening project. Mr. Carey gave an overview on the contaminants there. He said the project started March/April 2020 and about six weeks into the project some oily water was found. Mr. Carey said the water was sampled and petroleum and PCBs were detected. He said

soil testing was performed and over time, PCBs were discovered sporadically throughout the site. Mr. Carey said the Town is developing a plan with DEEP to manage this in accordance with DEEP's regulations. He said the degree and extent of contamination to be remediated needs to be determined at a future point when this project is complete. Mr. Carey said that historically a lot of material has been buried on the site.

The motion carried unanimously, 7-0-0.

5. To hear status of Tax Deferment Report from Tax Collector

Tax Collector David Kluczowski said there was an Executive Order by the Governor that gave Towns three options on tax deferment. He summarized the low interest program and tax deferment. Mr. Kluczowski said he met with Ms. Bosse and CAO Tom Bremer and concluded the Town was going to achieve the same revenue as it had in the past, before COVID. He said the Town pushed out the process by 30 days and gave taxpayers extra time to pay. He said taxpayers paid timely even with the deferment. Mr. Kluczowski walked the Board through the July 1 deferment date. He said the good news is that the Town is still processing mail and revenue is still coming in. He said the Town is at the same percentage benchmark as last year.

6. To hear, consider and act upon a request from the BOE's Executive Director of Finance and Business Services to approve Schedules "D" and "E" carrying over funds for encumbrances and re-appropriations as of June 30, 2020

Mr. DeWitt stated that late in the day, a BOE document was sent to the BOF with background from the last meeting. BOE Executive Director of Finance & Business Doreen Munsell reported in July that reimbursement checks were received as the BOE was preparing for its final close of its books and it consulted with the auditors. She explained the check had to be applied to FY19/20 which brought the balance up. Ms. Munsell said she was concerned about COVID expenses. Auditor Joseph Centofanti recommended July POs be moved into FY19/20.

Ms. Munsell said the roof repair reimbursement was \$125,000 and was received prior to the close of the FY20/21 budget, but it was applicable to FY19/20 so it would have put the BOE over the non-lapsing account. Mr. DeWitt thanked Ms. Munsell for condensing the data for clarity.

Jack Testani questioned expense allocations. He said there are absolute requirements that have to be considered when allocating more than \$1.4 million. BOE Chair Christine Vitale said this was already approved and allocated in terms of managing the BOE budget to run two school modules. Mr. Testani said these POs were allocated and the Town was aware of COVID in March. He said certainly some of the POs could have been cancelled in a year where the Town is trying to deal with a COVID crisis. Ms. Vitale remarked that students are still being educated.

Jim Walsh inquired about the insurance conference call that the BOF was never told about. He said the BOF was supposed to approve transfers at its last meeting.

Mr. Walsh questioned the PO dates written in July and asked why it didn't even get a sentence in the report. Ms. Munsell said it was done in July and when she wrote the report in September it was a non-issue. She said it was something done in the midst of a pandemic. She said she didn't think to mention it and had spoken with Mr. Centofanti and it was his recommendation to write 2019 and 2020 POs in July. Ms. Munsell said it was done months before and then forgotten. Mr. Walsh said it is his understanding that a PO can't be written after July 1 because it won't be paid after June 30 and that Town employees are warned of this.

Mr. Centofanti said the BOE has the right to approve the list. Mr. Walsh said he wants to know what policies and procedures are needed to be put in place to ensure this doesn't happen again. Mr. Walsh suggested Mr. Centofanti notify the BOF Chair if there are drastically higher expenditures that need to be transferred. Ms. Vitale apologized for not bringing it to the BOF's attention over the summer when the reimbursement check came in for the Osborn Hill roof.

Mr. DeWitt said he will look into a procedure or process with the purchasing policy and report to the BOF and BOE at the next meeting in November. Ms. Munsell explained how the BOE came to the number in the PO report.

Mr. DeWitt made a motion to amend the agenda item wording to state, "To hear, consider and act upon a request from the BOE's Executive Director of Finance and Business Services to approve the attached schedule in the amount of \$1,473,726.64 carrying over funds for encumbrances and re-appropriations as of June 30, 2020."

Mr. Testani seconded the amendment which carried unanimously, 7-0-0.

The main motion, as amended, carried unanimously, 7-0-0.

7. To hear, consider and act upon a request from the Superintendent and BOE Chair to approve the transfer of \$333,459 to the non-lapsing account

Mr. DeWitt gave background on the item which he said brings the Town to 2% in the non-lapsing account.

Mr. Mitola motioned to approve the item. Mr. Testani seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 7-0-0.

8. To hear, consider, and act upon a request from the CFO to approve the transfers for the 2020 budget for the total of the positive expenditure budget variances in excess of negative revenue variances to the Retiree Benefits-OPEB Health Town and Police & Fire budget lines

CFO Jared Schmitt introduced himself and said he looks forward to working with the Board and the Administration. Ms. Bosse said it is a complicated way to put together the sense of the body and explained it says any excess any budgeted money would fall in the fund balance if the Town doesn't take any action. She said there is not an exact dollar amount yet, but she will have at the end of the audit. She said the motion would be the contribution of surplus rather than waiting; this gives approval to put it into OPEB. Ms. Bosse said she can give an updated number at the November or December meeting. Mr. Bateson said he is concerned voting on an item without a number. Ms. Bosse said she won't have complete numbers by mid-December

Mr. Bateson motioned postpone the item to the December meeting.

Mr. Walsh motioned to amend the agenda item to state, "To hear, consider, and act upon a request from the CFO to approve the transfers for the 2020 budget for the total of the positive expenditure budget variances in excess of negative revenue variances to the Retiree Benefits-OPEB Health Town and Police & Fire budget lines, however this amount shall not exceed \$3,550,000." Mr. Testani seconded the amendment which carried unanimously, 7-0-0.

The main motion, as amended, carried unanimously, 7-0-0.

9. To hear the status of the Purchasing Policy

Mr. Bremer said the draft from the working group was sent to Mr. DeWitt last week and he is looking forward to working with him. He said it has not gone out to the BOE or to department heads as he wanted to give Mr. DeWitt a chance to make any changes as he sees fit first. Mr. Bremer said once he gets all comments back he will resubmit and leave it up to the BOF on how it wants to proceed.

Mr. Bremer reported that the audit recommendation is 90% complete. He said he will send out the administration's responses before the next BOF meeting in November. Mr. Bremer and Mr. Schmitt will make a presentation at the next BOF meeting to answer any questions. Mr. Bremer said they are hopeful to have a purchasing policy and answers to recommendations by then.

10. To hear and update on the fill pile

First Selectwoman Kupchick gave an update. She said the Town is waiting on the recommendation from the environmental attorney. Town Attorney Jim Baldwin said he believes paperwork will be signed off on Friday so the Town can perform testing. First Selectwoman Kupchick said the cost is \$800,000 to \$1 million to clean the seven sites. She said the Town's lawsuit with Osprey is still pending this may be able to be discussed at the next meeting in executive session. Mr. Walsh requested a funding update from Mr. Baldwin. Mr. DeWitt requested Mr. Baldwin's most current update on the lawsuits. Mr. Mitola asked if the Town could cut the grass at Gould Manor Park. First Selectwoman Kupchick said she will check with Mr. Carey tomorrow.

11. To hear, consider and approve the meeting minutes of September 1, 2020

Mr. DeWitt motioned to approve the minutes. Ms. Testani seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 7-0-0.

12. To hear, consider and act upon any communications

Mr. Testani welcomed the new CFO. Mr. DeWitt briefed the Board on last night's RTM meeting where the Town employees retirement benefit package was presented. He said the RTM requested the Pension Board do some work. He said the BOF will work with the RTM to understand what they are asking it to do. He said the BOF will hold a special meeting to hear from the RTM and make its recommendation.

13. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Mitola motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 p.m. Ms. Charlton seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila Tesei
Recording Secretary