

**Board of Finance Regular Meeting**  
**Thursday, May 5, 2022**  
**7:30 pm**  
**Via Webex**  
**and**  
**In-Person at BOE Conference Room 295A/B**  
**501 Kings Hwy E., Fairfield, CT**

A recording of this meeting can be found here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZdrEqE-N0Q>.

**FINAL MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair Lori Charlton, Vice Chair John Mitola, Secretary Sheila Marmion, Craig Curley, Christopher DeWitt, Mary LeClerc, Kevin Starke, Jack Testani, James Walsh

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Tax Collector Dave Kluczowski, Town Attorney James Baldwin, CFO Jared Schmitt, DPW Interim Director John Marsilio, Assistant DPW Director John Cottell, Buildings Manager James Ryan, Bond Counsel John Stafstrom, Police Chief Robert Kalamaras, Fire Chief Denis McCarthy, Conservation Director Tim Bishop, Parks & Recreation Director Anthony Calabrese, FPS Executive Director of Operations Angelus Papageorge, BOE Chair Christine Vitale, Budget Director Frank Magneri, FairTV

1. Call to Order  
Chairwoman Lori Charlton called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.
2. Pledge of Allegiance  
Jack Testani led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. To Hear, Consider and Act Upon the Suspense List for Tax Collector  
Chris DeWitt made a motion to put Item 3 before the Board. John Mitola seconded the motion.

The backup for this item is on page one of the backup documents.

Tax Collector Dave Kluczowski asked the Board for permission to transfer \$114,459.69 from the Delinquent to the Suspense account. He said these accounts are uncollectible, but legally they are still collectible for 15 years if for some reason they do get paid. He said these are all motor vehicle taxes.

Mr. DeWitt made a motion to approve Item 3. Kevin Starke seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY  
To hear, consider and approve a recommendation from the Board of Selectmen to transfer not more than \$325,000 from the WPCA Fund Balance for the proposed Carriage Drive sewer line extension project pursuant to C.G.S. §7-253 and the agreement with participating homeowners (*found in the backup*).

Sheila Marmion made a motion to put Item 4 before the Board. Craig Curley seconded the motion.

The backup documents are on page 14.

Town Attorney James Baldwin said this is the first time in over 10 years that residents requested to have a sewer hookup in their neighborhood. He said the property owners are eager for the lines to go in and the neighborhood will pay in advance for engineering for the connection. He said WPCA will be pay for the project and the residents will pay back the Town as well as paying their regular sewer fees. Attorney Baldwin said the cost per hookup is \$4,250.00 in addition to 50% of the installation. He said the residents are currently on septic. There was a discussion about the fees and paying them back.

Mr. Testani made a motion to approve Item 4. Ms. Marmion seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER – 20 YEARS (*requires RTM approval*)  
To hear, consider and adopt a bond resolution entitled, “A resolution appropriating \$2,400,000 for the costs of the East Trunk Wetlands Crossing project and authorizing the issuance of bonds to finance such appropriation”.

Chairwoman Charlton said Items 5 & 6 were both related to the WPCA and the items are not ready to be presented to the Board.

Mr. DeWitt made a motion to postpone the items until it is appropriate for them to go back before the Board. Mr. Testani seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

6. WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY - SUPPLEMENTAL RESOLUTION (*requires RTM approval*)

To hear, consider and act upon the following Resolution:

WHEREAS, the Town of Fairfield (the “Town”) has adopted at the request of the Water Pollution Control Authority (“WPCA”) a Resolution entitled “A resolution appropriating \$2,400,000 for the costs of the East Trunk Wetlands Crossing project and authorizing the issuance of bonds to finance such appropriation” (the “Resolution”); and

WHEREAS, the Resolution appropriated \$2,400,000 for costs associated with the East Trunk Wetlands Crossing Project (the “Project”) and authorized the issuance of bonds (the “Bonds”); and

WHEREAS, while the Town is liable for the debt service on the Bonds, for internal accounting purposes, it is appropriate that the costs of the Project including debt service on the Bonds (the “Costs”) be allocated to the WPCA; and

WHEREAS, the Town’s WPCA has agreed to pay for the costs of the Project and the debt service on the Bonds authorized by the Resolution.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, That the debt service on the Bonds as it becomes due shall be paid by the WPCA from its own funds and the obligation of the WPCA shall be set forth in a memorandum of understanding with the Town satisfactory to the Board of Selectmen.

See Item 5.

7. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER – 20 YEARS (*requires RTM approval*)

To hear, consider and adopt a bond resolution entitled, “A resolution appropriating \$1,949,778 for the costs of town-wide facility system upgrades and authorizing the issuance of bonds to finance such appropriation”.

CFO Jared Schmitt shared documents that start on page 16 of the posted backup. He said the documents contain an overview and context for projects on the agenda. He also said the documents show the Town’s capacity to borrow money. Mr. Schmitt said two WPCA items were taken off the proposed FY 22-23 project list. He said the other projects on the list are ready to begin. There was a discussion about the list. Ms. Marmion asked about the proposed \$7 million to \$10 million for Penfield Construction and wondered how that number was estimated. Mr. Schmitt said the number is based on conversations with consultants and FEMA. He said there will be different options, but they don’t know in which direction it will go. He said as more information is given, there will be a better sense of cost and approach to the construction. Mr. Schmitt said there will be no bonding in the next 12 months as no decision will be made regarding construction on Penfield until there is feedback from the public. There was a discussion on how the total amount of bonding is determined. Mr. Testani asked about the consultants working on Penfield Pavilion. DPW Interim Director John Marsilio said the elevation of the building is being worked on by architects and soil engineers to study the elevation. He said the contaminated material underneath the building has the same consultant the Town is using for remediation. Mr. Marsilio said the Town is working with FEMA for solution options and is moving along, but approvals are needed from FEMA and State and local departments. The discussion of Penfield and the fill pile continued. Chairwoman Charlton said she would like to have a meeting with the BOF regarding Penfield and will put that discussion on the June meeting agenda.

Mr. Testani made a motion to put item 7 before the Board. Craig Curley seconded the motion.

There is extensive backup in the documents from pages 21-477. Buildings Manager James Ryan said this request was from the town-wide facility audit and code compliance. He said these items are priority one which is considered most important, and they were summarized before the Board in February. Mr. Curley asked if the report that was generated last year took into consideration an inflation increase. Mr. Ryan said the study was completed in February and public works did have some concerns, but soft costs shouldn’t be affected. He said Silver Petrucelli Associates did refer to costs increases in the report. Mr. Ryan said four of 17 buildings have priorities and the costs are under \$10,000 each. He said the issues have not been addressed yet, but he thought it would be easier to do one blanket bid that would include all the jobs and it will be a total of over \$15,000.

There was a discussion about why the projects were put under one job and not done by department. Mr. Schmidt said these are urgent needs so they were put into one project. He said the Senior Center upgrades will be removed since separate or prefunding is being used. There was a discussion about the list and the ARPA funding. After a lengthy discussion, it was decided that the Board will get updates quarterly or as requested on the progress of each project in item seven, starting with the September meeting.

Ms. Marmion made a motion to approve item 7. Kevin Starke seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

8. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER – 10 YEARS (*requires RTM approval*)

To hear, consider and adopt a bond resolution entitled, “A resolution appropriating \$7,000,000 for the costs associated with the emergency radio project, authorizing a grant to reimburse \$3,500,000 of such appropriation and authorizing the issuance of bonds to finance such appropriation”.

The backup documents for Item 8 are on page 479 and the 14-point analysis begins on page 483. Police Chief Robert Kalamaras said this proposal is to replace the public safety radio system so it can be upgraded to the State system. He said the current system has consistent failure and does not support the State system. He said there is a \$3.5 million grant to support the project and he is asking the Board for an additional 3.5 million to fund it in full. Fire Chief McCarthy said this project has been in the forecast for five years. He said neighboring towns have already migrated to the State system.

Ms. Testani made a motion to approve item 8. Mr. DeWitt seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

9. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER – 20 YEARS (*requires RTM approval*)

To hear, consider and adopt a bond resolution entitled, “A resolution appropriating \$2,250,000 for the tide gate system project and authorizing the issuance of bonds to finance such appropriation”.

The backup for this Item is on page 487. The 14-point document is on page 490. Tim Bishop said this item was in the Capital outlay before he was assumed his role as Conservation Director. He said this is for the tide gate north of Old Dam Road and is located at a historic railroad bridge. He said the tide gate was installed in 1980 and replaced in 1999. Mr. Bishop said it is at the end of its lifetime and it is a flood control structure so it needs to be replaced. He said the three tide gates will be replaced with five tide gates. He said the railroad bridge has been registered as historic since 1992 based on the architecture, but it has fallen into disrepair. Mr. Bishop said the Town has approval from DEEP, but the Town is still waiting for approval from ACOE.

Mr. DeWitt made a motion to approve Item 9. Mr. Curley seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

10. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER – 15 YEARS (*requires RTM approval*)

To hear, consider and adopt a bond resolution entitled, “A resolution appropriating \$450,000 for the costs of the transfer station repair project and authorizing the issuance of bonds to finance such appropriation”.

The backup documents begin on page 492 and the 14-point document is on page 495 and addresses critical repairs for the Transfer Station. Assistant DPW Director John Cottell said this request includes the original request of \$90,000 for smaller repairs. He said his is a 40-year-old building, and the Board has already approved \$250,000 for items that have been completed.

He said the project will take approximately two years to complete. There was a discussion regarding what repairs had been done and what was still needed to be done.

Mr. DeWitt made a motion to approve Item 10. James Walsh seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

11. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER – 10 YEARS (*requires RTM approval*)

To hear, consider and adopt a bond resolution entitled, “A resolution appropriating \$4,125,000 for the costs of the Roger Ludlowe Middle School turf field project and authorizing the issuance of bonds to finance such appropriation”.

Mr. Mitola made a motion to put Item 11 before the Board. Mr. Curley seconded the motion.

Parks and Recreation Director Anthony Calabrese said this item has been on the Waterfall Chart since 2017. He said it is shovel-ready and is for the fields on the lower side of the road behind Roger Ludlowe Middle School. Mr. Calabrese said he'd like to have LED lights installed as well. He said Tomlinson Middle School and Fairfield Ludlowe High School both already have turf fields. He said the life of a turf field is ten to twelve years and these fields come with an eight-year warranty. Mr. Calabrese said other turfs in Town have been replaced for an amount ranging between 100,000 to \$500,000. He said maintenance is less than the original installation. He said there is minimal maintenance for the turf field as it would be swept quarterly. He said it's more money upfront, but it's more cost efficient. Mary LeClerc asked about drainage and wondered, since this is a wet area, if drainage will be installed. Mr. Calabrese said drainage will be installed. A detailed discussion followed. Mr. Starke said he wanted to go on the record that the Fairfield Athletic Foundation should have put some amount of funding into this field and not into the next one. He said the field is nice to have more than it is a need and he is concerned with must haves coming the Town's way particularly on the environmental front like funding for the Rooster River or beach area flooding.

Ms. Marmion made a motion to approve Item 11. Craig Curley seconded the motion. The motion carried 8-1-0 (Starke opposed).

12. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER – 20 YEARS (*contingent on 05/04/22 BOS approval; requires RTM approval*)

To hear, consider and adopt a bond resolution entitled, “A resolution appropriating \$22,701,443 for the costs associated with Phase I of the air conditioning upgrade project at various schools, authorizing grants to reimburse \$1,116,320 of such appropriation and authorizing the issuance of bonds to finance such appropriation”.

The backup is on page 505 and the cost estimates are on page 509. Fairfield Public Schools Executive Director of Operations Angelus Papageorge presented this item. He said the project was being referred to air conditioning, but it is more for indoor air quality which the BOE/Administration were made aware during COVID. Mr. Papageorge said this item is for improving air quality. He said he is aware that \$22 million is a lot, but it is typical of a large construction project for the BOE.

He said this work may be partially reimbursable, but the work must be done first and the BOE needs the funding up front. He said it is possible when work is being performed in some of the ceilings that other items will need to be added like sprinklers to bring the building up to code.

There was a long discussion about what things could be in the three school buildings that could potentially add cost to the project. Mr. Papageorge said this is Phase 1 of the project and there is a project chart on page 521 of the backup documents. Mr. Testani said he received an email from State Representative Cristin McCarthy Vahey which said that Governor Lamont had approved grants for air conditioning upgrades in public schools. Mr. Testani said he doesn't think this item should be approved until the BOE looks into this potential grant funding. There was a discussion about grants and funding.

Mr. Testani made a motion to table this item to the June 7, 2022 meeting. James Walsh seconded the motion which failed 2-7-0 (Testani, Walsh in favor).

Ms. Marmion started a discussion about the use of air conditioning in the summer when the schools are unoccupied and energy costs are rising. Mr. Walsh asked for an estimate on energy costs. Mr. Walsh said he was unaware that the Board was approving the whole amount and said this is not what is needed to hire the engineering firm. BOE Chair Christine Vitale said the whole project cost had to be approved in order to be considered for grant reimbursement. Mr. Walsh started a discussion about building committees and if there were limits on how they could spend money once it was approved. Mr. Papageorge said that for the record, there have been many internal conversations regarding the building committee that will be formed for this project and the BOE wants to make sure project costs don't spin out of control.

Mr. Starke made a motion to approve Item 12. Mr. DeWitt seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

13. To Consider and Set the Mill Rate for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2022, and Ending June 30, 2023

The backup for the Mill Rate is on page 522.

Mr. DeWitt made a motion to put Item 13 before the Board. Mr. Mitola seconded the motion.

CFO Jared Schmitt talked about the changes made to the budget that effect the Mill Rate. He said the State budget passed and there was an additional \$1.2 million given to the Town. He said that money was added to the non-revenue for the Town to bring the Mill Rate down.

Budget Director Frank Magneri walked through the documents and schedules. He said there was an adjustment to Schedule B due to Board of Assessment Appeals' adjustments. He said the Mill Rate will be 27.24 and the tax collection rate will be 98.9. There was a discussion about determining the tax collection rate. Some of the Board members had comments on the budget in general.

Chairwoman Charlton made a motion to approve Item 13. Jack Testani seconded the motion which carried 8-1-0 (DeWitt opposed).

14. To hear, consider and act upon a recommendation from the Board of Finance Audit Subcommittee to accept the bid and reappointment of the independent auditors for Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2022

Ms. LeClerc told the Board that the Audit Subcommittee had voted to continue the contract with PKF O'Connor Davies.

Chairwoman Charlton made a motion to approve Item 14. Sheila Marmion seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

15. To hear, consider and act upon the draft minutes of March 31, 2022, and April 5, 2022

Ms. Marmion made a motion to approve the minutes of 3/31/22. Mr. DeWitt seconded the motion which carried 8-0-1 (Testani abstained).

Chairwoman Charlton made a motion to approve the minutes from 4/5/22. Ms. Marmion seconded the motion which carried 8-0-1 (LeClerc abstained).

16. To hear, consider and act upon any communications

Mr. Schmitt thanked his department for all the hard work they put into the budget process. He noted that Budget Director Frank Magneri has been an incredible addition to the team, Controller Caitlin Bosse is always fantastic, and Town Auditor Connie Saxl is always on point. He said the whole department has been great handling the budget.

17. Adjourn

Ms. Marmion made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:38 pm. Mr. DeWitt seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Pru O'Brien  
Recording Secretary