

Board of Finance Regular Meeting
Tuesday, November 1, 2022, 7:30 pm Via Webex And In Person
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=mOet2oJg3uQ>.

FINAL MINUTES

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Tax Assessor Ross Murray, CFO Jared Schmitt, Budget Director Frank Magneri, Board of Education liaison to the Board of Finance, Jeff Peterson, 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 and discuss the Assessor's Report on Tax Relief for the Elderly and Disabled Homeowners Program

Sheila Marmion made a motion to put Item 3 before the Board. Christopher DeWitt seconded the motion.

The backup for this item is on pages 1-3. This Tax Relief program was last modified in 2021. Tax Assessor Ross Murray said there was a drop of \$584,000 and a decline in the number of participants from 1315 last year to 1137 this year. Mr. DeWitt commented that some of the decline was due to residents who are now deceased or had moved out of town. Mr. DeWitt pointed out that there were 65 new applications. Mr. Murray said some applicants did not qualify due to income. He said some had excess assets and 42 did not reapply. He said there are also 21 residents with disabilities who are under 65 years old. Mr. Murray said the RTM started the program prior to the changes in 2021 by the BOF committee. It hadn't been changed in eight years.

4) Discuss with Town and BOE officials the BOF Budget Subcommittee options for improving the effectiveness of the budget process

Craig Curley made a motion to bring item 4 before the board. Mr. DeWitt seconded the motion.

Chairwoman Charlton thanked Mr. DeWitt for serving on the budget committee and presenting this item. There is no backup for this item. Mr. DeWitt asked the Board questions about the last budget process. Board members gave their input on what they liked and didn't like about the budget process last year. Board of Education liaison to the Board of Finance, Jeff Peterson, suggested putting budget questions and answers on the website so the public can access it. CFO Jared Schmidt said the budget is the most important thing the town does. Mr. Schmidt felt that the budget presentation should be live and should be a joint meeting. James Walsh asked for the Town and BOE budget books to be delivered prior to their presentations. Chairwoman Charlton also went through her list of suggestions. There was a discussion about the number and length of meetings.

Ways to decrease the length of the meetings:

- Questions in advance
- First Selectwoman and CFO present the Town Budget
- Only non-profits that have changes or are new present
- Only departments that have budget changes present and in person
- No mixed agendas on voting nights

The full discussion can be accessed using the meeting recording link above.

- 5) To hear, consider and act upon the draft minutes of September 8, 2022, September 20, 2022, September 26, 2022, and October 18, 2022

September 8, 2022: approved 7-0-2 (DeWitt, Testani abstained).

September 20, 2022: Chairwoman Charlton motioned to strike the last sentence in the paragraph above Item 3: “but the process will be better in the long run”. Vice Chair John Mitola seconded the motion. The amended minutes carried unanimously.

September 26, 2022: Mr. Testani motioned to postpone approving these minutes until the next BOF meeting on 11/22/22 to review discussion that was left out of the minutes. Chairwoman Charlton agreed. Christopher DeWitt seconded the motion which carried 8-0-1 (Walsh abstained).

October 18, 2022: approved 8-0-1 (DeWitt abstained).

- 6) To hear, consider and act upon any communications

Mr. Schmitt stated that an item approved by the BOF was changed by the RTM. He said it was an item regarding the approval of roof projects for Riverfield and Sherman elementary schools. He said there was an \$8,000 difference between the resolution on the agenda and the backup documents. He said the BOF increased the approval to match the backup documents, but it should have been for the lower amount in the resolution. Mr. Schmitt said Town Bond Counsel suggested changing it with the RTM. He said the \$8,000 difference had to do with Holland Hill and the BOE hadn't approved that project at that time.

Mr. Schmitt said the surplus revenue from FY 22 was transferred to the Penfield Pavilion account for remediation. He said an update will be given to the BOF prior to the 11/22/22 meeting. A special meeting will try to be scheduled an hour before the regular meeting.

- 7) Adjourn

Ms. DeWitt made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Vice-Chair John Mitola seconded the motion which passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Pru O'Brien
Recording Secretary