

Board of Finance Regular Meeting
Tuesday, February 7, 2023
7:30 pm
Via Webex
And In Person at the
BOE Offices, Room 295 A/B
501 Kings Highway East
Fairfield, CT

A recording of this meeting can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=db18J_Ygl0M.

FINAL MINUTES

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: James Walsh

OTHERS PRESENT: Senior Managing Director Phoenix Advisors Matthew Spoerndle, Partner PKF O'Connor Davies LLP Joseph Centofanti, Engineering Manager Bill Hurley, Fire Chief Denis McCarthy, Deputy Fire Chief Kyran Dunn, Superintendent of Schools Mike Testani, BOE Chair Jennifer Jacobsen, BOE Liaison Jeff Peterson, FPS Executive Director of Operations Angelus Papageorge, DPW Interim Director John Marsilio, Police Chief Robert Kalamaras, Deputy Police Chief Keith Broderick, Attorney John Stafstrom, Director of Parks & Recreation Anthony Calabrese, CFO Jared Schmitt, Controller Caitlin Bosse, FairTV, members of the public

1) Call to Order

Chairwoman Lori Charlton called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

2) Pledge of Allegiance

Vice-Chair John Mitola led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3) To hear an update from the Town's financial advisor

Backup for this item is posted online on pages 1-13. Senior Managing Director from Phoenix Advisors Matthew Spoerndle reviewed the overall credit ratings and finances of the Town as compared to other AAA towns in Connecticut. His presentation is also shared on screen in the meeting recording. Mr. Spoerndle said credit fundamentals don't change that much unless there are major changes in the budget or Grand List. He said the data he collected is from the State's Office of Policy and Management (OPM) as well as bond sales and end of Fiscal Year data. Some data points from the report for Fairfield include:

- Total Fund Balance as % of Revenues – 12%
- Unassigned General Fund Balance as % of Revenues - 10.8%
- Debt % of Grand List – 1.25%
- Debt Service as % of Operating Expenditures – 6.5%-7%
- Tax Collection Rate - >99%

After his presentation, Mr. Spoerndle answered questions from the Board. Craig Curley said he would like to see Fairfield compared to other towns with comparable demographics with AAA ratings. Mr. Spoerndle said he will gather some of that data and update the Board.

- 4) To hear an update from the Town's external auditor on the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report

Jack Testani made a motion to put Item 4 before the Board. Christopher DeWitt seconded the motion.

The backup for this item is posted online beginning on page 14. Joe Centofanti, Partner at PKF O'Connor Davies LLP, went through his presentation of the report. Some highlights include: New Opinion Format-Opinion first vs last, New Lease standard implemented-GASB 87, and Parking Authority is now included with the Town audit. Financials such as the Internal Service Fund and General Fund were reviewed. Pension and OPEB for Police and Fire as well as employees were discussed. The environmental liability funds for Penfield and the fill pile were reviewed as well. The full presentation and members' questions can be accessed here, [BOF Meeting 2.7.2023](#).

Chairwoman Charlton had a question for either CFO Jared Schmitt or Mr. Centofanti regarding line item CNR Remediation Cost 2022 and whether the money was authorized to be spent. Ms. Charlton stated for the record that she would like to follow up at the next meeting with an analysis on what authorization was used and how much was spent. She also asked Controller Caitlin Bosse how long it takes to close the financial books and to know the final numbers, especially if there is surplus. Ms. Bosse said she will keep AP open until August to be sure June invoices are submitted. She said sometimes the invoices don't come in until later, so the final numbers should be available by mid to late November.

- 5) **NON-RECURRING CAPITAL – 20 YEARS (*requires RTM approval*)**

To hear, consider and adopt a bond resolution entitled, "A resolution appropriating \$7,687,622 for the costs of certain non-recurring capital projects and authorizing the issuance of bonds to finance such appropriation".

At its February 6th meeting, the BOS amended this item: Selectman Flynn made a motion to remove item 2.1, Exhibit A from the resolution (\$432,600.00) and amend the resolution amount to \$7,255,022.00. Selectwoman Lefkowitz seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Vice-Chair John Mitola made a motion to put this Item before the Board. Jack Testani seconded the motion.

The posted backup for this item can be found on page 195 and the project list is on page 199, Exhibit A. Chairwoman Charlton opened up this Item to Public Comment:

- Jim O'Brien, 250 Sherwood Drive, Southport – Said he has to use Pickleball courts in other towns.
- Betsy Hulme, 37 Pratt Street – She said she was on the committee for the original Pickleball court which now has roots growing through it which is embarrassing.
- Doug Goodman, 11 Aberdeen Way, Spt – He said to please consider the Pickleball courts when approving this item. Fairfield needs them.
- Julia Gulemi, 221 Lindamer Lane – She said she was one of the younger players at tonight's meeting, but Pickleball is catching on like wildfire. She said having new courts will draw people here.

Christopher DeWitt and Mr. Schmitt discussed items that appeared on the list this week, but not last week and the reasoning why that happened.

Projects on the list:

Engineering:

- Guiderail Repairs Phase 2-\$210,000
- Design of Stratfield Road-\$325,000 (Urban Grant-no details yet)
- Design of Post Road and Jug Handle-\$175,000
- Round Hill and Reef Road sidewalks-\$611,298
- Lower Wharf/Fishing Pier, Southport-\$800,000

Engineering Manager Bill Hurley presented his list of items. There was a discussion about these many projects and who would supervise them. Mr. Hurley said all jobs will be assigned to different engineers. He said major projects will have a hired consultant and the smaller projects will have an engineer.

Fire Department:

- Pumper LSN 14-\$980,000

Fire Chief Denis McCarthy answered questions regarding the Pumper Truck and said it is not eligible for grants.

Parks and Recreation:

- HSR Driving Range Upgrades-\$275,000
- Post Tension Tennis Courts-Fairfield Woods-\$522,000
- Tunxis Hill Park Pickleball Courts (4 replaced, 2 new)=\$575,000

Parks and Recreation Director Anthony Calabrese went through the projects and then members reviewed the Board of Education's list of non-recurring projects.

Board of Education:

- N. Stratfield Elementary-Vestibule project-\$652,500
- Osborn Hill Elementary-Vestibule project-\$597,500
- FWMS-Vestibule project-\$769,500
- FWHS-Boiler Burner Replacement-\$343,862
- FWHS-Knapps Highway Tennis/Basketball Courts-\$418,362

Executive Director of Operations, FPS Angelus Papageorge, and BOE Chair Jennifer Jacobsen went through the list of projects with the Board.

There were discussions with each Department Head in attendance regarding their department's non-recurring projects. The full discussion can be accessed here: [BOF Meeting 2.7.2023](#).

Ms. Charlton made a motion to amend the amount of the resolution to appropriate \$7,255,022 as the Greens Farms Bridge has been removed. The Town side is \$4,473,298. Jack Testani seconded the amendment which passed unanimously.

The main motion, as amended, carried unanimously.

6) CHIEF FISCAL OFFICER (*requires RTM approval*)

To hear, consider and adopt a resolution appropriating \$760,000 for the costs related to uses of Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund and the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund.

Mr. DeWitt made a motion to put Item 6 before the Board. Mr. Testani seconded the motion.

The backup for this item starts on page 284 in the posted backup. There are five projects listed which Fire Chief Denis McCarthy, Parks & Recreation Director Anthony Calabrese and Police Chief Robert Kalamaras presented:

- Fire Station Rehabilitation-\$50,000: This is phase 3 of a multiyear program of the five fire stations. It addresses the major living and operating spaces for safe and healthy working conditions and is separate from the DPW Capital Needs Assessment, but Buildings Manager James Ryan will use his expertise when needed. This request is for the renovation of bathrooms at Fire Station 1.
- Fire Department Command Vehicle-\$150,000: In accordance with the apparatus replacement program, Fire is requesting a replacement of Car 3, the Shift Commander's response vehicle. The vehicle was put into service in 2019 and in five years, the vehicle will have over 80,000 miles. Once replaced, the older vehicle will go into reserve service and used for weather emergencies.
- Fire Department Vehicle Replacement-\$60,000: New staff vehicles. Between 2013-2019, no staff vehicles were replaced and now they are being replaced. The older vehicles will be passed down to other staff before being placed in reserve.
- Sgt Murphy Playground Replacement-\$150,000: The playground is between the Fire and Police buildings. The equipment on this playground is in poor condition and continues to deteriorate making it unsafe. The cost covers demolition, removal of the old equipment and then installation of the new equipment. The new playground will meet all safety requirements.
- Police Department Headquarters Rehabilitation-\$350,000: The Police Department was built in 1976 and in the last 50 years the needs of the building have grown. This is a proposed three-year renovation plan for some of the heaviest impacted areas in the department. This FY 23-24 request is for phase 1, the lobby renovation-addition of Shift Commander office, new carpeting throughout the building, and upgrading the technology in the multipurpose classroom used for training, press conferences, commissioner/town meetings.

7) To hear, consider and act upon any communications

Mr. DeWitt said he would like the audit finding of bid waivers as well as data from 1/10/23 meeting to be available at the 2/21/23 BOF meeting. Ms. Charlton reminded everyone that the next meeting on Tuesday 2/21/23 will be Webex only.

8) Adjourn

Ms. Charlton made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:21 pm. Craig Curley seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Pru O'Brien, Recording Secretary