

Board of Finance Quarterly Review Meeting
Tuesday, February 21, 2023
7:30 pm

A Virtual Quarterly Review Meeting of the Board of Finance was held via Webex on Tuesday, February 21, 2023 at 7:30 pm in Fairfield, Connecticut.

A recording of this meeting can be found here: [BOF Qrtly Review 2.21.23](#)

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: JRIB Chairwoman Carolyn Trabuco, Executive Director of Finance and Business-FPS Courtney Leborious, BOE Liaison to BOF Jeff Peterson, Superintendent of Schools Mike Testani, Contoller Caitlin Bosse, CFO Jared Schmitt, Budget Director Frank Magneri, Police Chief Robert Kalamaras, Deputy Police Chief Keith Broderick, FairTV, members of the public

1. Call to Order

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

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Christopher DeWitt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. To review the status and timing of various open items

Chairwoman Charlton reviewed open items:

- WPCA Trunkline Project-updated financial plan ready to review with the Town
- Internal Audit items-Bid Waiver practices, internal controls at the Transfer Station and decline in Waste Fees will be updated at the next Audit Subcommittee meeting.
- Capital Projects, including ARPA projects, will be updated later in this meeting.

A resident contacted Chairwoman Charlton and Christopher DeWitt (as Purchasing Policy members on the BOF) with a FOIA request for information on usage of AMEX cards by Town employees. Some cards are being used for purposes not within the policy and the Town is conducting an investigation on the issues that were raised. Craig Curley asked for the identity of the resident requesting the information. Ms. Charlton shared that it was Ms. Dana Kery who made the request. Ms. Kery is a former RTM member and currently a member of the Ethics Commission but made the FOIA request as a resident. Both Jack Testani and James Walsh were concerned that this issue hadn't been shared with the Board until now as Ms. Charlton said the investigation has been ongoing for a few months.

Mr. Testani made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss this issue. James Walsh seconded the motion which carried 5-4-0 (Charlton, Curley, Marmion, Mitola opposed)

*Due to technical issues, the Executive Session will be held after the last item and before adjournment.

4. To review the current status of the Town's Pension and OPEB funds

Sheila Marmion made a motion to bring this item before the Board. Vice-Chair John Mitola seconded the motion. The backup is located on page 1 of the backup documents.

JRIB Chairwoman Carolyn Trabuco reviewed her report.

- **Pension Market Value** is \$413.7 million as of 12/31/22 quarter end which is up 5.35%. Fiscal Year to date is flat. Allocations: 53% Equities (60/40 domestic/international), Fixed Income 31% (70/30 domestic/international), Private Equity 7.7%, 6.8% Real Estate <1% cash.
- **OPEB Market value** is \$69.99 million which is up 7.19%. Fiscal Year to date is up 1.79%. Allocations: 69.7% in Equities (60/40 domestic/international), Fixed Income 19.8% (70/30 domestic/international), Real Estate 10%, starting to allocate to Private Equity but it is <1%. The JRIB is now meeting 6 times per year instead of 11. Receiving quarterly reports from Vanguard instead of monthly. Ms. Trabuco continued to go over her reports to the BOF. Please access the meeting link to hear the full discussion.

5. To review the BOE FY23 Q2 financial update

Craig Curley made a motion to put item 5 before Board. Christopher DeWitt seconded the motion. The backup is on page 30 of the documents.

Executive Director of Finance and Business-FPS Courtney Leborious went through her reports. There are transfers due to surpluses that she will be requesting be approved. Surpluses were from continued personnel vacancies, shortage of bus drivers and less buses driven, early retirements and insurance premiums due to the shortage in personnel. There were lower costs in some SPED programs and the BOE is meeting all of its service obligations. Legal services are running over as well as a few other programs/projects. Ms. Leborious continued going over her reports and then took questions from the Board.

6. To review the Town FY23 Q2 financial update

Christopher DeWitt made a motion to put item 6 before the Board. Craig Curley seconded the motion. The backup begins on page 63 of the backup documents.

Controller Caitlin Bosse presented her report. The estimated increase in Fund Balance went up to \$2.9M. Revenue: \$500K in Senior/Disabled tax relief-same as Q1. Tax Collection rate increased just under 1%. Investment Income projected at \$2M, Conveyance Fees projected at a decrease of \$100K due to shortage of inventory. Building Permits and Fire Marshal Fees: \$100K favorable for both. Large projects in town- Ash Creek Apts, Dorms at both Fairfield University and Sacred Heart University, St. Catherine School major renovation and some smaller projects that will be starting soon. Parks and Recreation up about \$350K due to golfing season longer and Burr Homestead events. State Payments revenue is up as well. FEMA funding from Hurricane Ida still coming in. Senior Center is now charging for memberships. These are all positive revenues.

Expenses: Vacancy churn – flat. Parks and Recreation increased salaries and added a Burr Homestead salary. Unemployment was down and since the winter has been mild there are lower gas and electricity expenses. Due to vacancies, there are smaller contributions to retirement. Ms. Bosse took questions from the Board.

Police Chief Robert Kalamaras and Deputy Chief Keith Broderick went through the new Emergency Communication Center budget which is a self-sustaining fund. March 1st they will go live with Westport Police and Fire along with New Canaan Fire on board. Any employees

from Westport who accepted the job at the ECC will become Fairfield employees. There will be 19 employees out of 22 vacancies. This merger was scheduled to take place on July 1st 2022 but there were technology and vendor challenges. There is an anticipated savings of about \$600K. The Chief and Deputy Chief took questions from the Board.

7. To hear a status update on active capital projects, including ARPA-funded projects
The backup for item 7 begins on page 108 in backup documents. CFO Jared Schmitt said he made some changes and additions to the format. The Board has requested a report for project costing less than estimated. Mr. Schmitt went through his report. Projects costing less than originally estimated are in bold print with the original allocation and the actual final cost after they were closed out. Mr. Schmitt confirmed that the Department Heads are seeing their projects through completion. ARPA projects have to be committed by 12/2024 and funds spent by 12/2026. There were no significant highlights regarding Capital Projects.

Mr. Schmitt took questions from the Board. The process was discussed.

8. To hear, consider and act upon the draft minutes of January 31, 2023
Chairwoman Lori Charlton made a motion to approve the minutes of 1/31/2023. Jack Testani seconded the motion.
Christopher DeWitt had suggested corrections in item 6 of those minutes regarding the vote count. Mr. DeWitt made a motion to amend the lower vote count from opposed to abstained in two votes. Ms. Charlton seconded the motion which carried unanimously.
Ms. Charlton also made a motion to insert the word “balance” into the last paragraph in item 4 of the 1/31/2023 minutes to say, “fund *balance* policy for WPCA”. James Walsh seconded the motion which carried unanimously.
The amended motion carried 8-0-1(Marmion abstained)

9. To hear, consider and act upon any communications
March 1st meeting has been rescheduled for Thursday, March 2nd and will be a Special Meeting.

*James Walsh made a motion to go into Executive Session. Jack Testani seconded the motion. Executive Session began at 10:17pm.

*Christopher DeWitt made a motion to come out of Executive Session. James Walsh seconded the motion. Executive Session ended at 11:14pm.

There were no votes taken during Executive Session.

10. Adjourn
James Walsh made a motion to adjourn. Craig Curley seconded the motion which carried unanimously.
The meeting adjourned at 11:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Pru O'Brien
Recording Secretary