

Board of Finance Public Budget Hearing #4
Wednesday, March 20, 2024, 7:30 pm
Via Webex 4 and In Person at the
BOE Offices, Room 295 A/B
501 Kings Highway East, Fairfield, CT 06825

A recording of this meeting can be found here: [BOF Public Budget Meeting #4 3/20/24.](#)

Backup documents for this meeting can be found here: [BOF Public Budget #4 Backup Packet .](#)

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairwoman Lori Charlton, Vice Chair John Mitola, Secretary Craig Curley, Shane Pendley, Amy Ruggiero, Kevin Starke, Jack Testani, James Walsh

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mary LeClerc

OTHERS PRESENT: First Selectman Bill Gerber, Interim CFO David Becker, Budget Director Frank Magneri, Town Clerk Betsy Browne, Tax Assessor Ross Murray, Police Chief Robert Kalamaras, Deputy Police Chief Eddie Weihe, Dog Warden Paul Miller, Fire Chief Denis McCarthy, Deputy Fire Chief Kyran Dunn, 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
John Mitola led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 3) Discussion on the Following Budgets:

General Government – Administrative

1030 Town Clerk-pages 40-45 - \$629,139 – Town Clerk Betsy Browne

- Revenue-Recording fees, conveyance tax and certified copies - \$1,551,888 as of close of business 3/19/24. FY25 budget \$2,150,000.
- Conveyance and recording fees down but certified copies are up.
- Expenses – overall budget has decreased. New assistant who started at lower step.
- \$40,000 transfer from printing to 53000- IT for software for all electronically recorded records
- OT increased due to elections.

Finance

3050 Tax Assessor-pages 111-115 - \$1,258,750 – Tax Assessor Ross Murray

- No revenue
- IT software increase due to reclassification of map services.
- Fees & Professional services due to revaluation for 2025

Discussion about revaluation process.

Public Safety

4030 Police-pages 142-149 - \$17,906,151 – Police Chief Robert Kalamaras, Deputy Chief Eddie Weihe

Chief Kalamaras gave an overview before going through budget.

- Overall performance is influenced by population and conditions.
- Most frequently asked questions: staffing-112 sworn officers, 105 sworn working positions and 4 waiting for certification. 3 positions vacant but have made offers. Retention and recruitment remains a moving target without changes to the bargaining unit.
- Technology-increasing solvability factors. Gathers evidence and data but also increases time to apply data to investigations. Crimes have increased as have traffic and speeding.
- ECC-FCRD- requesting assistance of management plan to hire civilian director. Captain from the ECC will be transferred to PD and be liaison to Director at FCRD.

There was a discussion vacancies, training and the management of the FCRD.

Deputy Chief Weihe went through budget highlights.

- Increase in payroll due to FPD absorbing cost to hire FCRD Captain as well as 2.75% salary increases. Cuts were made in various lines to minimize the increase.
- Decrease in OT due mostly to relocation SWAT team to regional location and will drive down annual cost of in-house training.
- Decreased vehicle maintenance line to be funded mostly by outside job vehicle fees.
- Increases in OT, IT, Fees & Professional Services, Communications and Training
- Overall proposed increase is 3.8%.

A discussion regarding various items in this budget followed.

4050 Animal Control -pages 150-154 - \$405,548 – Dog Warden Paul Miller

- Minimal revenue set by state funding
- Law changing regarding quarantined dogs so fees are down as they are not getting as many dogs for quarantine.
- Expenses- step increase for FT officer, PT payroll increase for wages that have been low for years.
- OT costs will go down with hire of new FT officer.
- Special Dept. Supplies – increased for animal food. 100-200 dogs/cats are impounded each year. There was a large animal cruelty case last year and there were more animals to feed. Also received donations. There aren't as many animals now.

There was a discussion about quarantined revenue.

4150 Emergency Communications-pages 159-162 - \$2,381,205 transferred out

123 Fairfield County Regional Dispatch-page258-262 - \$3,959,441 - Police Chief Robert Kalamaras, Deputy Chief Eddie Weihe

- The FCRD is a self-supporting budget
- Fairfield Police Dept. to absorb cost to hire FCRD Captain to reorganize and achieve appropriate staffing.

- OT due to staff vacancies that will need to be filled.

There was a lengthy discussion about the staff and revenue from other towns participating. The discussion in its entirety can be heard on the meeting recording linked at the top of this document.

4010 Fire-pages 132-141 - \$17,375,343 - Fire Chief Denis McCarthy, Deputy Fire Chief Kyran Dunn

- Increase in apparatus-more costly to maintain
- Cancer bill – equipment turnout gear and a new CT law for protection causing increase in department expenses. Need to replace if exceeding 10 years.
- State is requesting increased supervision with ladder department on I-95.
- Revenue derived from fees with participation in CO program with building dept.
- Wage increases last year were reported in a different area
- Inflation has caused higher projections
- Training budget increased due to changes in OSHA after inspection. Requested support for additional training in department and onboard new positions.

There was a discussion about promotions, staffing, supervising and safety.

4) Adjourn

John Mitola made a motion to adjourn. Kevin Starke seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 12:13 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Pru O'Brien
Recording Secretary