

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
April 28, 2014

The Regular Monthly Meeting of the Town of Fairfield was held on Monday, April 28, 2014 at 8:00 P.M. at McKinley School, Thompson Street, Fairfield.

The meeting was called to order at 8 PM by Moderator Mary McCullough.

PRESENT: 49 ABSENT: 1 VACANCY: 0

PRESENT: Donovan, Herley, Lipp, Meyer, Sundman, Ambrose, Burshtein, Schindler, Steele, Varian, Bateson, Devlin, Ference, Mackenzie, McCullough, Dean, DeMartino, Gerber, Palmer, Waldron, Garskof, O'Brien, Smey, Way, Gottlieb, Marks, Marmion, Wolk, Zezima, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Newman, Pires, Schwartz, Braun, Durrell, Li, McCarthy, Melaragno, Iacono, Jacob, McArdle, Pontrelli, Tymniak, Cafferelli, Farnen, Neuberger, Perugini, Ryan

ABSENT: Semmel

ITEM 1 ON CALL: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE

Moderator McCullough asked the Body to remember in its thoughts the family of Hank Ference whose mother recently passed away and the family of Police Commissioner Sidney Postol who passed away today. The Body congratulated Jennifer Hochberg on her recent engagement.

ITEM 2 ON CALL: APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MARCH 24 MEETING

The minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

ITEM NO. 3 ON CALL: TO HEAR, CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN: "WHEREAS, THE SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY, AS AGENT FOR THE SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS AND PARTICIPATING MUNICIPALITIES, HAS UNDERTAKEN THE PERMITTING, CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF A REGIONAL FACILITY FOR THE COLLECTION OF HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE AND CONDITIONALLY-EXEMPT SMALL QUANTITY GENERATOR BUSINESS WASTE AT ITS HEADQUARTERS AT 90 SARGENT DRIVE IN NEW HAVEN; AND WHEREAS, THE MUNICIPALITIES PARTICIPATING IN THE FACILITY ARE ABLE TO HAVE RESIDENTS DROP OFF THEIR HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE ON SATURDAY MORNINGS FROM 9:00 A.M. - NOON AND CONDITIONALLY-EXEMPT SMALL QUANTITY GENERATORS DELIVER BUSINESS WASTE ON SATURDAY MORNING BY APPOINTMENT FROM 7:00 A.M. - 8:30 A.M. FROM SPRING THROUGH FALL FOR PROPER PROCESSING, TRANSPORTATION, AND DISPOSAL; AND WHEREAS, THE FACILITY IS OWNED, MANAGED AND OPERATED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PARTICIPATING NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD DECLARES ITS COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE PARTICIPATION IN THE REGIONAL HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS

WASTE COLLECTION CENTER FOR A MINIMUM THREE-YEAR PERIOD (JULY 1, 2014 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2017), AND CONFIRMS ITS INTENT TO CONTRIBUTE FINANCIALLY FOR THE OPERATION, PROCESSING, TRANSPORTATION, AND DISPOSAL OF HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE; AND FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT FIRST SELECTMAN MICHAEL C. TETREAU BE, AND HEREBY IS, AUTHORIZED TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY FOR THE OPERATION OF THE FACILITY. SUCH AGREEMENT WILL PERMIT THE AUTHORITY TO ACT AS ITS AGENT TO MAINTAIN THE FACILITY, TO CONTRACT WITH A VENDOR FOR THE TRANSPORTATION AND DISPOSAL OF WASTE, TO RECEIVE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM GRANT SOURCES, TO ENTER INTO AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER MUNICIPALITIES, AND TO OPERATE THE FACILITY.”

The Moderator moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

VOTE: The resolution to enter into a household hazardous waste agreement was approved by unanimous voice vote.

ITEM NO. 4 ON CALL: ACCEPTANCE OF .12 ACRES LOCATED AT 224 RIVERVIEW CIRCLE FROM LILLIAN E. FAZEKAS. SAID PROPERTY TO BE DONATED SUBJECT TO EXISTING REAL PROPERTY TAXES

This item has been withdrawn by the Town Attorney as negotiations are ongoing.

ITEM NO. 5 ON CALL: TO HEAR AND CONSIDER FOR THE FIRST TIME THE FOLLOWING AMENDMENT TO CHAPTER 51 OF THE FAIRFIELD TOWN CODE, ENTITLED, “BLIGHT PREVENTION,” AS SPONSORED BY PETER AMBROSE, DISTRICT 2, EDWARD BATESON, DISTRICT 3, SHEILA MARMION, DISTRICT 6, AND HAL SCHWARTZ, DISTRICT 7:“**§ 51-2 DEFINITIONS.** FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER, THE FOLLOWING WORDS, TERMS AND PHRASES SHALL HAVE THE FOLLOWING MEANINGS ASCRIBED TO THEM IN THIS CHAPTER. ~~BLIGHT PREVENTION OFFICERS THE TOWN OFFICIAL DESIGNATED BY THE FIRST SELECTMAN TO ACT AS BLIGHT PREVENTION OFFICER.~~ THE TOWN OFFICIAL OR OFFICIALS DESIGNATED BY THE FIRST SELECTMAN TO ACT AS BLIGHT PREVENTION OFFICER(S). THE BUILDING OFFICIAL, FIRE MARSHAL AND DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SHALL BE ELIGIBLE TO BE A BLIGHT PREVENTION OFFICER. THE FIRST SELECTMAN SHALL DESIGNATE UP TO THREE (3) BLIGHT PREVENTION OFFICERS; AND ONE OF THESE TO DIRECT THE BLIGHT PREVENTION OFFICERS.”

The Moderator moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

MOTION: Tom McCarthy, District 8 moved to insert the words “shall be” after Officials in the first sentence.

Hal Schwartz, District 7 asked the Town Attorney if this is necessary since it is a definition.

Town Attorney Stanton Lesser explained that since it’s a definition it is not necessary and does not change the meaning one way or the other.

WITHDRAWAL: Mr. McCarthy withdrew his motion based upon the Town Attorney's explanation.

ITEM NO. 6 ON CALL: TO CONSIDER AND DISCUSS, INCLUDING RTM COMMITTEE REPORTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC, PROPOSED APPROPRIATIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$286,015,872 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR OF JULY 1, 2014 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2015, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE, FOR ANY LAWFUL PURPOSE. THE TOTAL PROPOSED BUDGET AS APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE IS AS FOLLOWS:

Board of Finance Recommended Budget	\$286,015,872
Less: Non Current Tax Year Revenue	<u>(25,423,521)</u>
Net Revenue to be raised by Current Year Taxation	260,592,351
Plus: Senior Tax Relief	4,255,002
Plus: Reserve for Uncollected Taxes/Other Credits (Estimated)	<u>4,420,423</u>
Gross Amount to be Raised by Taxation (Estimated)	\$269,267,776

Moderator McCullough thanked the Town administration, department heads and finance administration of both the Town and BOE for their hard work during the budget process. She thanked the members of the public for being engaged and participating in the budgetary process as well.

Ed Bateson, District 3 said the RTM has received hundreds of pages of materials and emails so he would like to go to public comment first.

Sheila Marmion, District 6 said she wants to hear the public speak, but wants to discuss potential cuts so they have something to speak to.

Hal Schwartz, District 7 asked the Moderator if there are no recommended cuts tonight would the public still have the opportunity to speak at the May 5th meeting to which Moderator McCullough replied yes.

Heather Dean, District 4 asked if there was a motion to go right to public comment to which Moderator McCullough replied there were no recommendations from a member so she is going to public comment.

Josh Garskof, District 5 asked if the meeting would be closed after public comment to which Moderator McCullough explained that the Body would still be able to comment.

Ms. Dean asked for clarification if after public comment the Body makes recommended reductions, would there be public comment. Moderator McCullough stated the public would still have the opportunity to comment.

Jay Wolk, District 6 felt it would be a waste of time since no one knows if there will be a cut to the BOE.

Joe Palmer, District 4 said the public needs to speak and the RTM needs to see where people stand on the budget as the members are still collecting data and public feedback is very critical to their decision making. It does not preclude any reductions.

Julie Gottlieb, District 6 explained that the RTM was supposed to have their rationale for further reductions tonight but is not fulfilling that responsibility.

Mr. Bateson did not feel this is a waste of time as listening to the public is part of the RTM's homework.

Allen Marks, District 6 said to simply listen to the public is not a discussion and what the RTM has to say is a part of it.

MOTION: Joe DeMartino, District 4 moved to hear public comment on the budget, duly seconded.

Mr. Schwartz said the BOS & BOF have been working on this for 9 weeks. He asked the RTM to support the elected officials who have forwarded this budget and to support it as presented.

Carol Way, District 5 explained that although she has either attended or reviewed all the budget meetings, there were also TPZ meetings going on at the same time which has not afforded them the opportunity to discuss the budget with other members and feels it is appropriate to make decisions next week.

Ellen Jacob, District 9 explained the importance of hearing from the public in order for the RTM to do the best job for them.

Jeff Steele, District 2 said that although it is a tradition of presenting cuts at tonight's meeting it is not a rule. Public input is a large part of the discussion.

Michael Herley, District 1 said that there have been questions submitted by this Body that are still awaiting responses.

Ms. Dean thanked the people who attended tonight's meeting. She said that past practice was reductions were presented at tonight's meeting and we would find out how those reductions would affect services. She expressed her support for the budget in its entirety.

Mr. Wolk said the majority of emails have been in support of the BOE and library budgets. We need to hear and discuss planned cuts tonight.

VOTE: The motion to hear public comment was approved with 39 in favor and 10 opposed.

IN FAVOR: Donovan, Herley, Lipp, Meyer, Sundman, Ambrose, Burshtein, Schindler, Steele, Varian, Bateson, Devlin, Ference, Mackenzie, McCullough, DeMartino, Palmer, O'Brien, Way, Marks, Marmion, Zezima, Hochberg, Pires, Schwartz, Braun, Durrell, Li, McCarthy, Melaragno, Iacono, Jacob, McArdle, Pontrelli, Tymniak, Cafferelli, Farnen, Neuberger, Perugini, Ryan

OPPOSED: Dean, Gerber, Waldron, Garskof, Smey, Gottlieb, Wolk, Hoffkins, Newman, Pires

Speaking in support of the Board of Education budget were Matthew Hutzemann, Trudi Durrell, Sharon Strelzer, John Mitola, Carol Guernsey, Carolyn Trabuco, Danielle Rhodes, Kelly Dunn, Lisa Havey, Kristen Vinocour, AnnMarie Harper, Dorene Herron, Sarah Jannott, Steven Baker, Ai Nguyen, Gina Luczaj, Kristen Tharrington, Nancy Ross, and Kenneth Lee.

Speaking in support of the BOE and library budgets were Leann Ratner, Robin Orriss, and Khorshed Randeria.

Speaking in support of reducing the overall budget were Virginia Sanford, Brian Gates, James Bohan, and Bud Morten.

Speaking in support of the library budget were Kristen Tierney, Chair of the Library Board of Trustees, and Jennifer Butler.

Speaking in support of the senior center and library budgets was Mary Skarstrom.

Speaking in favor of the overall budget were Andrew Graceffa, Steven Sheinberg, Ann Harvey, Christine Vitale, Bill Hopf, Traci Garceau, Zhanna Funaro, and Mary Hogue.

John Donovan, District 1 said we need metrics from each department to help find efficiencies such as outsourcing food services and payroll. There is a middle ground to provide better services.

Michael Herley, District 1 asked what type of assessment is planned and how will it differ from the last revaluation.

Assessor Don Ross explained that a full data collection is planned. Bids went out for full data and limited collection revaluations.

Mr. Herley asked if the money is in contingency to which First Selectman Tetreau indicated that the money for revaluation is a two-year process with half the money in for this upcoming year. It was moved from the Assessor's Office to contingency. Mr. Ross indicated that the last full measure was in 1993. Mr. Tetreau said this is a "knock on every door" more extensive and more in depth process. Mr. Ross added that there is an appeal process every year. Mr. Tetreau said that if the \$425,000 is not approved then a lower level data collection would be done but this gives residents a higher level of confidence.

Mr. Herley asked if a public hearing has been held to which Mr. Tetreau replied not at this point.

Jay Wolk, District 6 stated that he keeps hearing there's an influx of people moving from Fairfield but to the contrary there's an influx of families with young children moving in to town while people are moving from New York and New Jersey.

Bill Gerber, District 4 stated the current mill rate is lower than it was in 1993; property values have skyrocketed from 1990s – 2000s. We are increasing spending on our kids at the rate of inflation.

Gaylord Meyer, District 1 asked if it costs \$425,000 for a full data revaluation and 20% allow access into their homes does it make sense to spend that amount of money on it.

Mr. Tetreau stated we want to raise the confidence level from our residents and want to do everything we can to get the data right so residents have confidence in it.

Ms. Meyer asked how many people allowed access into their homes in the last revaluation.

Mr. Ross explained that data questionnaires are mailed out and if no response is received someone comes out to the property. If there is no response we use the information we have available and exterior list.

Ms. Meyer hoped there would be plenty of public notice. Mr. Tetreau explained that the revaluation process will start in FY15 and continue into FY16. The new values will be reflected in the July 1, 2016 tax bills.

Tom McCarthy, District 8 said that no one wants to cut services from our Town departments or schools, but we need to find a balance. He has not made a decision as to what kinds of reductions should be considered, but the decision is more complex than just saying I support the budget as is.

Laurene O'Brien, District 5 said that although she is a numbers and logistics person these bound budget books do not lend themselves to analysis. She asked if there are fewer BOE insurance claims are those funds used elsewhere.

Supt. of Schools David Title explained that once the amount is set for the year that is what is funded regardless of the claims activity for the year. Any changes in experience wait until the next budget cycle. Once it is funded it stays in there; there's an MOU between the supt. of schools and first selectman at the time that decision was made.

Ms. O'Brien said she does not want to see programs cut, but she does have concerns about efficiencies and would request a bipartisan group be formed to address the budget more efficiently.

Chris Tymniak, District 9 asked what the Town's responsibilities are with regard to the Affordable Care Act.

CFO Robert Mayer said the reinsurance fee is \$63 per employee and dependent and is reduced to \$44 January 1, 2015.

Mr. Tymniak asked if the reinsurance rate is \$52.50 as of 1/1/2015 and \$10.50 in FY16. Mr. Mayer replied no, the rates are \$63 and \$44. The dates Mr. Tymniak referenced are the payment dates for the \$63. The BOE pays \$218,000 related to the reinsurance fee.

Mr. Tymniak asked if the Town is paying a health insurance provider fee. Mr. Mayer indicated that the Town does not pay the 3% because we are self insured not fully insured.

Mr. Tymniak asked if a health care audit has been completed. Mr. Mayer reported that the BOE did an audit July 1, 2013 with its transfer to CIGNA. Although the Town has not done a formal audit in recent years, the Human Resources and Finance Departments have done sample audits for retirees and active employees. Currently they are in the process of a full dependent eligibility audit. Mr. Tymniak felt by conducting a formal audit savings would be found.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business and upon made, duly seconded and carried unanimously, the meeting adjourned at 10:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth P. Browne
Town Clerk