

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
May 5, 2014

The Annual Budget Meeting of the Town of Fairfield was held on May 5, 2014 at Fairfield Warde High School, Melville Avenue, Fairfield, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 P.M. 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, Semmel, Smey, Way, Gottlieb, Marks, Marmion, Wolk, Zezima, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Newman, Pires, Schwartz, Braun, Durrell, Li, McCarthy, Melaragno, Iacono, Jacob, McArdle, Pontrelli, Cafferelli, Farnen, Neuberger, Perugini, Ryan

ABSENT: Tymniak

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

Moderator McCullough asked the Body to remember in its thoughts the family of former RTM member and Town Attorney Noel Newman who passed away Sunday.

MOTION: Ed Bateson, District 3 moved to suspend Rule 26 in order to hold unlimited political caucuses, duly seconded by Hal Schwartz, District 7 and carried unanimously.

ITEM NO. 2 ON CALL: TO CONSIDER AND ACT UPON 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

Hal Schwartz moved and Hank Ference seconded the budget for discussion purposes.

Hal Schwarz, District 7 said the budget is sound and reasonable as presented by the elected officials. He thanked the BOS and BOF for their hard work and indicated his support for the budget with no further cuts.

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Joe Palmer, District 4 thanked everyone for their work and indicated members of the Republican Party want to propose a further reasonable reduction of 1.95%. Mr. Palmer feels this is an exercise in judgment for what is best for the Town. We want to attract and create a healthy balance within the Town, so we need to go a little further, build confidence in our taxpayers. These are affordable alterations in which several departments will make sacrifices.

MOTION: Joe Palmer, District 4 moved to reduce Dept 58900 Board of Education budget by \$500,000, duly seconded.

Sheila Marmion, District 6 said the budget represents short and long term commitments including the education system. There has been a high level of engagement from the public based on the number of emails they have received. The entire town benefits from strong schools, senior center and libraries and feels the town's health could be affected by this reduction moving forward.

John Donovan, District 1 supported the cut stated we need to hold the line on budget growth. He referred to the MA Education Act and said that spending does not equal performance. The role of the RTM is to determine appropriations for the next year and force accountability.

Josh Garskof, District 5 asked CFO Bob Mayer how this cut would change the tax bill on an average home to which Mr. Mayer replied \$25 per household. Mr. Garskof stated he was opposed to the motion.

Phil Pires, District 7 asked how this would impact the schools to which Dr. Title Supt. of Schools stated the areas affected will be Technology and Maintenance although they have tried to make improvements to these areas. No one wants to cut programs. He stated that 80% of the budget is salaries and benefits. Mr. Pires said he could not support the motion.

David Mackenzie, District 3 said we have a tax problem in this town with taxes going up 30% since 2008. He asked the Body to show fiscal responsibility by endorsing the motion.

Bill Gerber, District 4 felt the Republican caucus is losing sight. He said we need to consider why young families move to this town and why the Grand List has gone up 400% since 1990.

Jay Lipp District 1 said we must think of people who are unemployed or underemployed. Everyone knows someone who cannot afford a tax increase. He is pro student, pro educator, and pro efficiency.

Hal Schwartz, District 7 felt the RTM was here to represent their district and not micromanage departments. The BOE budget goes up because more people come here for education.

Kevin Hoffkins, District 7 asked Joe Palmer where efficiencies could be found. Mr. Palmer deferred to Dr. Title who indicated that outsourcing payroll, changes in pension plans, food services could result in potential savings.

Mr. Hoffkins stated this is the 4th year the Republicans have come forward to cut BOE budget without specific cuts. Mr. Palmer clarified that they could not recommend where specific cuts could be made as it is only one line item.

Laura Devlin, District 3 indicated that we have to find a balance between taxes and services. Affordability is the real issue.

Ellen Jacob, District 9 said they have an obligation to take care of their districts as well as the town. It is not the same for each district as people struggle to pay their taxes.

Julie Gottlieb Dist 6 noted that the Prismatic study was performed before Newtown and several unfunded mandates have been implemented. She felt that the reductions by the BOS & BOF were sufficient.

Michael Herley, District 1 asked Dr. Title what the potential savings were for outsourcing of lunch services, number of net new students anticipated for next year and potential savings.

Dr. Title stated Greenwich outsourced its payroll services but at this time it is unclear what savings there would be. Food services does not impact the budget. Each retirement is worth \$36,000. Stable enrollment is predicted and there is no increase in certified staff.

Jay Wolk, District 6 said he was adamantly opposed to the reduction.

Catherine Albin, BOF member said the BOF passed the BOE budget intact. She felt further reductions would eventually damage the school system.

Laurie. McArde, District 9 said as a teacher and parent she is very supportive of education, but she has consistently heard from residents in her district about high taxes. She would like to make a difference by reducing spending.

Tom McCarthy, District 8 noted this is limiting the size of the increase to the BOE budget and not a cut.

Jeff Steele, District 2 said everyone believes this town needs to be affordable while maintaining services and amenities. We all look for ways to keep our spending in check, but he will not make a decision based on one side or the other. Legally, the RTM cannot cut the BOE budget; rather it is a reduction in the request. He will leave the decision to Dr. Title and the other experts.

Kathy Braun, District 8 said even with a reduction it is still an increase over the prior year. She reminded the Body that there are education costs on the Town side of the budget as well.

Heather Dean, District 4 said the majority of people move to town for the schools. 2/3 of the emails received were in support of the BOE budget. She will support the budget in its entirety.

Peter Ambrose, District 2 said Fairfield attracts families because of the quality of the education system as well as the diversity of the town. He is striving to find a balance for all citizens as many are struggling to pay their taxes. He is confident that Dr. Title and the BOE can find ways to absorb this reduction.

Speaking in opposition to the reduction were Steven Sheinberg, Khorshed Randeria, David McKinnis, Carlisle Spivey, Matt Hutzelmann, Tara Cook-Littman, Sharon Strelzer, Carol Guernsey, BOE member Mar Patten, Tina Rembish, Eugene Hoffman, Patti Donohue, Trudi Durrell, Michelle Mitola, Kristen Therrington, Neal Fink, BOE member John Convertito, Zhanna Funaro, Steven Baker, Kelly Dunn, Bill Hopf, Adam Kuhr, Christine Vitale, Carolyn Trabuco, Leonora Campbell, Melissa Rosenbluh, Mary Hogue, Deborah Owens, Lisa Havey, Jennifer Maxon Kennelly, Kenneth Lee, Mike Kutsch, Peter Rupert, Gina Luczaj, Ann Harvey, Jessica Gerber.

Speaking in support of the reduction were John Levinson, Virginia Sanford, Jan Reber, Urban

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Leimkhuler, John Wynne, Steve Elworthy, Theresa Ross, Brian Gates.

MOTION: At 10:50, Michael Herley, District 1 moved to suspend Rule 36 in order to convene past 11:00 and take up new business after 11:30, duly seconded and carried with 47 in favor and 2 opposed (Newman, Schwartz).

Allen Marks, District 6 said the emails he received were 6-1 in favor of keeping the BOE budget intact. These cuts have a noticeable impact and the budget is already a compromise.

Pamela Iacono, District 9 said although it is difficult, she is supportive of this reduction. As a former member of the BOE she believes this will hurt programs, but she also believes in Dr. Title. She said we need to focus on our long-term liabilities and get them under control.

MOTION: Joe DeMartino, District 4 moved the question, duly seconded.

VOTE: Motion to call the question carried with 34 in favor and 15 opposed .

IN FAVOR: Donovan, Herley, Lipp, Meyer, Sundman, Burshtein, Schindler, Steele, Varian, Bateson, Devlin, Ference, Mackenzie, McCullough, DeMartino, Palmer, O'Brien, Smey, Way, Newman, Braun, Durrell, Li, McCarthy, Melaragno, Iacono, Jacob, McArdle, Pontrelli, Cafferelli, Farnen, Neuberger, Perugini, Ryan

OPPOSED: Ambrose, Dean, Gerber, Waldron, Garskof, Semmel, Gottlieb, Marks, Marmion, Wolk, Zezima, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Pires, Schwartz

VOTE: Motion to reduce the BOE budget by \$500,000 passed with 27 in favor and 22 opposed.

IN FAVOR: Donovan, Herley, Lipp, Meyer, Sundman, Ambrose, Burshtein, Schindler, Bateson, Devlin, Ference, Mackenzie, DeMartino, Palmer, O'Brien, Way, Braun, McCarthy, Melaragno, Iacono, Jacob, McArdle, Pontrelli, Cafferelli, Neuberger, Perugini, Ryan

OPPOSED: Steele, Varian, McCullough, Dean, Gerber, Waldron, Garskof, Semmel, Smey, Gottlieb, Marks, Marmion, Wolk, Zezima, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Newman, Pires, Schwartz, Durrell, Li, Farnen

At 11:10 PM, Moderator McCullough called for a 10 minute recess. The meeting resumed at 11:20 PM.

MOTION: Laura Devlin, District 3 moved to reduce Dept 7010 Library line item 56180 Library Materials by \$75,000 duly seconded.

Ms. Devlin explained that she is a frequent user of the library's resources, but felt the Teen Librarian was an important asset and should remain intact.

Eric Newman, District 7 explained the importance of the library to his grandfather when he came to this country. He is opposed to the reduction.

Julie Gottlieb, District 6 said this would be the funding level of FY00 and asked Karen Ronald, Town Librarian the impact on the Library.

Ms. Ronald said there is an inflationary cost of 2% on average. The entire library materials budget would need to be revisited as it is responsive to the needs of the community including the digital library.

Sheila Marmion asked Mr. Mayer what the tax reduction would be to which Mr. Mayer replied \$3.75. Ms. Marmion asked if this proposed reduction was to all libraries.

Ms. Devlin said this was for the main and branch libraries. She further explained that although it is not popular it will keep the teen librarian position.

Bill Gerber, District 4 asked how many seniors use the library. Ms. Ronald indicated 505 of those who attend programs are seniors. There are 38,000 in their system.

Ellen Jacob, District 9 felt that in order to preserve the teen librarian and senior center director this reduction would be a compromise.

Selectman Cristin Vahey said these cuts are not being equally absorbed by our community as this particular one would have an unequal impact on the community.

Liz Zezima, District 5 said it seems that each cut effects the most vulnerable populations and is becoming taxation without representation.

Heather Dean, District 4 felt we have a fiduciary responsibility in response to the many emails of support for the library that have been received and is opposed to the cut.

Jay Wolk, District 6 felt this cut would hurt seniors and the unemployed who utilize the library services. Pequot Library has said they are part of the library system, but they are not impacted by this cut.

Ms. Jacob noted that Pequot Library is self supporting.

Jennifer Hochberg, District 7 said the library benefits everyone from babies to seniors and explained her use of the library resources when looking for employment. She is opposed to the cut.

Kevin Hoffkins, District 7 said we should not have to choose between a position and materials. This would be a detriment to the town.

Speaking in opposition to the reduction were Bill Russell, Khorshed Randeria, Matthew Hutzelmann, Bill Hopf, Christine Vitale, Library Board Chair Kristen Tierney, Lisa Havey, Melissa Rosenbluh, Liz McLaughlin, Kelly Dunn, Library Board Member Joe Rooney, and Kenneth Lee.

VOTE: Motion to reduce the Library materials budget by \$75,000 passed with 27 in favor and 19 opposed. (Reps. DeMartino, Waldron, Schwartz were not present to vote).

IN FAVOR: Donovan, Herley, Lipp, Meyer, Ambrose, Burshtein, Schindler, Bateson, Devlin, Ference, Mackenzie, Palmer, Semmel, Way, Braun, McCarthy, Li, Melaragno, Iacono, Jacob, McArdle, Pontrelli, Cafferelli, Farnen, Neuberger, Perugini, Ryan

OPPOSED: Sundman, Steele, Varian, McCullough, Dean, Gerber, Garskof, O'Brien, Smey, Gottlieb, Marks, Marmion, Wolk, Zezima, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Newman, Pires, Durrell

MOTION: Ed Bateson, District 3 moved to reduce Dept 5030 Public Works line item 57002 Paving by \$250,000 duly seconded.

Sheila Marmion, District 6 said DPW was asked to provide a plan on paving that they are working on. Paving was specifically moved from bonding to the operating budget and now it is vulnerable to cutting.

She asked DPW Director Joe Michelangelo how this would impact paving.

Joe Michelangelo explained it is not straight depreciation as it would cost more if paving is delayed.

Laurene O'Brien, District 5 said we have always asked DPW to help out with the budget. She is opposed to the cut as it will damage our infrastructure.

In response to Josh Garskof, Mr. Michelangelo explained the microsealing process on Park Avenue. Mr. Garskof said we need to reinvest in our infrastructure and is opposed to the cut.

Pamela Iacono, District 9 felt it was proper to have paving in the operating budget, not bonding and spoke in opposition to the cut.

Jay Wolk, District 6 asked if this included sidewalks to which Mr. Michelangelo replied no.

Heather Dean, District 4 felt this reduction was pennywise and pound foolish.

Tom McCarthy, District 8 said that although he would like to see more paving, we have bad choices and worse choices to make in order to keep spending tolerable.

Mr. Michelangelo said everyone benefits from good roads. You judge a town by the condition of its roads when you travel. We have 275 miles of roads plus 15 miles of parking lots.

Selectman Vahey said critical infrastructure needs to be funded or you spend more later.

Hal Schwartz, District 7 said we are kicking the can down the road and will have to approve a bonding request if we don't fund paving from the operating budget now.

Ed Bateson, District 3 felt there would be things coming up in the budget that would free up funds that will enable funding in a couple years.

Speaking in opposition to the reduction were Steve Sheinberg and DPW Supt. Scott Bartlett.

Jeff Steele, District 2 said there was a decision to take paving from bonding and fund it through the operating budget. He is opposed to delaying infrastructure improvements.

MOTION: Gaylord Meyer moved the question, duly seconded.

VOTE: The motion to call the question was approved with 41 in favor and 7 opposed (Dean, Way, Gottlieb, Marks, Marmion, Zezima, Schwartz).

VOTE: The motion to reduce line 57002 paving by \$250,000 passed with 28 in favor and 20 opposed. (Mr. DeMartino was not present).

IN FAVOR: Donovan, Herley, Lipp, Meyer, Sundman, Ambrose, Burshtein, Schindler, Bateson, Devlin, Ference, Mackenzie, McCullough, Palmer, Semmel, Way, Braun, Li, McCarthy, Melaragno, Jacob, McArdle, Pontrelli, Cafferelli, Farnen, Neuberger, Perugini, Ryan

OPPOSED: Steele, Varian, Dean, Gerber, Waldron, Garskof, O'Brien, Smey, Gottlieb, Marks, Marmion, Wolk, Zezima, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Newman, Pires, Schwartz, Durrell, Iacono

MOTION: Pamela Iacono, District 9 moved to reduce a Clerk-Typist position in Dept 3090 Tax

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Collector to part time for a net reduction of \$52,000, duly seconded.

Ms. Iacono explained that the Tax Office has started to modernize with online tax payments and other advances so it's time to start restructuring and addressing the union contracts.

Budget Director Linda Gardiner indicated the reduction would affect the following accounts: 3090-51010 (\$43,163) 3090-52200 (\$3,099) 3090-51030 13,985 1330-52100 (\$19,723) for a net reduction of \$52,000.

Allen Marks, District 6 asked what the impact on the Tax Office would be if this reduction were approved.

Tax Collector Cinda Buchter explained when she became Tax Collector two years ago they were transitioning to a new collection system. She strives to make the office more efficient and effective in its customer service. Although online payments are accepted, she cannot force people to use the online system. By reducing the person to part time, the level of duty would be reduced and the public would have to wait in longer lines for service, escrows and delinquent payments would also take longer to process. Human Resources Director Mary Carroll-Mirylees explained the reduction would effectively cut a union position and referenced an arbitration award against another municipality where full-time positions were reduced to part time to save money, but it's union work.

Ed Bateson called for party caucuses at 12:50 AM. The meeting resumed at 1:10 AM.

Ms. Iacono asked CFO Robert Mayer if it would be feasible to take money from surplus in lieu of this reduction. Mr. Mayer explained that the fund balance is 6.49% of expenditures. If it is reduced by \$50,000 the projected fund balance would be 6.48%. The ratings agencies have changed their methodologies; therefore, he does not feel this would have a negative impact on the rating.

WITHDRAWAL OF MOTION: Ms. Iacono withdrew her motion as she did not want to risk the Town's bond rating. She reminded the Body that we need to do something about long-term liabilities and look at restructuring departments going forward.

MOTION: Ed Bateson, District 3 moved to reduce Dept 1270 Legal Services line item 53200 by \$50,000 duly seconded. Phil Pires recused himself and left the room.

Kevin Hoffkins, District 7 asked what the impact of the reduction would be on the department.

Town Attorney Stanton Lesser said he estimated as best he could given the case load. He said it would be a risk, but the Town would have to pay the bills nonetheless.

Mr. Hoffkins agreed it would be a risk and the funds would have to come from Contingency.

VOTE: The motion to reduce the Legal Services budget by \$50,000 was approved with 30 in favor, 16 opposed and 1 recusal (Pires). (Messrs. Varian and DeMartino were not present).

IN FAVOR: Donovan, Herley, Lipp, Meyer, Sundman, Ambrose, Burshtein, Steele, Bateson, Devlin, Ference, Mackenzie, McCullough, Palmer, Semmel, Way, Braun, Durrell, Li, McCarthy, Melaragno, Iacono, Jacob, McArdle, Pontrelli, Cafferelli, Farnen, Neuberger, Perugini, Ryan

OPPOSED: Schindler, Dean, Gerber, Waldron, Garskof, O'Brien, Smey, Gottlieb, Marks, Marmion, Wolk, Zezima, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Newman, Schwartz

MOTION: Peter Ambrose, District 2 moved to reduce Dept 4030 Police line item 57000 by \$70,000 to reflect a reduction of two police cars, duly seconded.

Jay Wolk, District 6 said the Police need 12 cars but we're only funding 8 with this reduction. He asked the impact of the cut.

Sgt. Kalamaris explained there are three levels of vehicles in their fleet – primary, secondary and ancillary. The entire fleet are emergency vehicles; all are prepared as primary with emergency lights. When a vehicle reaches 50,000 miles it goes to a secondary role. Historically, their plan includes 12 vehicles per year. Now that there is more technology and safety equipment in the vehicles, they recognize the cost prohibits supporting 12 cars so they are going with 10. The reduction would impact other departments because they are given to Fire and DPW.

Ruth Smey, District 5 felt the reduction would impact public safety and asked the Body to support the budget request as presented.

Bill Gerber, District 4 asked if this would impact response time. Chief MacNamara said the Police will always respond and are committed to meeting the residents' needs, but this reduction would chip away at their fleet of vehicles.

Laurene O'Brien, District 5 said she has full confidence that the Police will always respond, but felt this would be a foolish cut as it would result in more vehicle maintenance costs.

Chief MacNamara said the department must ensure that the vehicles are up and running as they are operated 24/7.

Heather Dean, District 4 indicated her opposition to the reduction as it deteriorates public services and felt we must reserve what's good and right in our town.

Speaking in opposition to the reduction were Fire Chief Richard Felner, BOE Chair Phil Dwyer, and Melissa Rosenbluh.

MOTION: Bryan Cafferelli moved the question, duly seconded.

VOTE: The motion to call the question was approved with 44 in favor and 2 opposed (Dean and Schwartz.) (Messrs. Herley, Varian, DeMartino were not present to vote).

VOTE: The motion to reduce Dept 4030 Police line item 57000 by \$70,000 failed with 23 in favor and 23 opposed. (Messrs. Herley, Varian, DeMartino were not present to vote).

IN FAVOR: Donovan, Lipp, Meyer, Sundman, Ambrose, Burshtein, Schindler, Bateson, Devlin, Mackenzie, McCullough, Palmer, Semmel, Way, Braun, Durrell, McCarthy, Melaragno, Jacob, McArdle, Pontrelli, Farnen, Ryan

OPPOSED: Steele, Ference, Dean, Gerber, Waldron, Garskof, O'Brien, Smey, Gottlieb, Marks, Marmion, Wolk, Zezima, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Newman, Pires, Schwartz, Li, Iacono, Cafferelli, Neuberger, Perugini

MOTION: John Donovan, District 1 moved to reduce Dept 3110 Information Technology line item 55300 Communications by \$38,000 duly seconded.

Allen Marks, District 6 said we have been discussing finding efficiencies and felt technology would help to find efficiencies.

Jay Wolk, District 6 asked what the impact of the reduction would be on the department.

Don Leslie IT Director explained he has contract obligations and will be increasing internet GB's and would have to take the money from capital.

Mr. Wolk felt the reduction would impact public safety

Sheila Marmion, District 6 felt the RTM was micromanaging departments with these cuts.

MOTION: Brian Farnen moved the question, duly seconded.

VOTE: The motion to call the question was approved with 42 in favor and 4 opposed (Dean, Marmion, Zezima and Schwartz.) (Messrs. Herley, Varian, DeMartino were not present to vote).

VOTE: The motion to reduce the IT Department's Communications line by \$38,000 was approved with 28 in favor and 18 opposed. (Messrs. Varian and DeMartino were not present).

IN FAVOR: Donovan, Lipp, Meyer, Sundman, Ambrose, Burshtein, Schindler, Steele, Bateson, Devlin, Ference, Mackenzie, Palmer, Semmel, Way, Braun, Li, McCarthy, Melaragno, Iacono, Jacob, McArdle, Pontrelli, Cafferelli, Farnen, Neuberger, Perugini, Ryan

OPPOSED: McCullough, Dean, Gerber, Waldron, Garskof, O'Brien, Smey, Gottlieb, Marks, Marmion, Wolk, Zezima, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Newman, Pires, Schwartz, Durrell

MOTION: Tom McCarthy, District 8 moved to reduce Dept 6010 Health line item 51030 PT Payroll by \$15,234, duly seconded.

Hal Schwartz, District 7 asked for the rationale for the reduction.

Mr. McCarthy explained that based on the information provided by the Health Dept at its budget presentation this was based on current trends and an uptick in needs.

Mr. Schwartz said the Health Department presented a plan and asked why it was important at this time.

Health Director Sands Cleary explained the request was in response to legislative changes and the increase in numbers of students who need medications administered. They will not provide nursing level care but will offset some of their functions such as providing clerical support at the high schools.

Julie Gottlieb, District 6 said the original request was for 2 health aides and a nurse to close the gap for the legislative changes, liability concerns and to address more student needs. She enumerated many of the nurses' duties and voiced her opposition to the reduction.

Selectman Cristin Vahey stated that in addition to the duties previously stated nurses play a critical role in suicide prevention.

Speaking in opposition to the reduction was Kenneth Lee.

In response to Ellen Jacob, Mr. Cleary said there are no other bodies to reallocate as all staff are being

utilized. It is difficult to compare school to school coverage in other towns, but they are required to provide services based on the acuity in the school.

VOTE: The motion to reduce the Health Dept budget by \$15,234 was approved with 24 in favor and 21 opposed. (Messrs. Herley, Varian, DeMartino and Li were not present to vote).

IN FAVOR: Donovan, Lipp, Meyer, Sundman, Burshtein, Schindler, Steele, Bateson, Devlin, Ference, Mackenzie, Palmer, Braun, Durrell, McCarthy, Melaragno, Iacono, Jacob, McArdle, Pontrelli, Cafferelli, Farnen, Perugini, Ryan

OPPOSED: Ambrose, McCullough, Dean, Gerber, Waldron, Garskof, O'Brien, Semmel, Smey, Way, Gottlieb, Marks, Marmion, Wolk, Zezima, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Newman, Pires, Schwartz, and Neuberger

Ed Bateson, District 3 indicated that the legislation passed by the General Assembly regarding revaluation delay does not apply to Fairfield. The BOF had discussed the role of the BOF in the revaluation process and whether it would be a limited data collection or full data collection. There were many unresolved issues that were still being investigated.

MOTION: Mr. Bateson moved to reduce Dept 2010 Contingency by \$125,000 to reflect a limited data collection for the revaluation, duly seconded.

First Selectman Tetreau indicated that a full data collection is a more thorough job and want to give all residents the confidence that there is a proper appraisal of their house. By limiting the data collection it is the same approach as last time.

Hal Schwartz, District 7 stated that many members of the RTM spoke to this last year and expressed their concern. He is opposed to the reduction.

Josh Garskof, District 5 asked the Assessor what the difference was between the two options.

Assessor Don Ross explained that the full data collection involves both exterior and interior physical inspections and data mailers. Limited data collection involves exterior inspection and data mailers, digital imaging and periodic physical inspection. Photographic inspections are made the street in a limited collection while in a full-data there is an attempt to inspect the interior.

John Donovan, District 1 questioned whether during a typical full revaluation gaining access to 20% of the residences is a fair audit. He suggested having public hearings so people understand what's taking place and the Town needs to analyze that they only gain access to 20% of the residences.

Laura Devlin, District 3 said they are suggesting further discussion by the BOF as to the difference options.

Carol Way, District 5 asked if there was an additional component assigned to target properties in the beach area. Mr. Ross explained that location is the driving factor in real estate. It is an attempt to reflect market value and no area is targeted. We experienced two major storms and a full data collection has not occurred since 1993. Ms. Way asked if the building permits for newly built properties would be reviewed to which Mr. Ross replied that the staff reviews every permit issued.

Allen Marks, District 6 said that more detail makes sense to him.

Kenneth Lee and Dorene Heron spoke in favor of full data collection.

Bill Gerber, District 4 asked the Town Attorney what the litigation costs and number of claims settled were in relation to the last revaluation. Town Attorney Stanton Lesser said there were 200 court cases and many residents went to the Board of Assessment Appeals. Mr. Gerber questioned exposing the Town to this risk.

Mr. Bateson explained the intent is to limit funding to a limited data collection as the BOF was debating the value of a full data collection. If the BOF decides to go with a full data collection then that's the way it should go.

Mr. Tetreau explained it is a two-year process where the cost is split over two fiscal years. Mr. Bateson said there may be open items with the BOF so we do not know what type of reval will go forward. It could be appropriated in next year's budget, but this would be resolved before the contract is signed.

Mr. Tetreau said the funding determines what type of data collection is used. He cannot sign a contract that is not fully funded.

Sheila Marmion, District 6 said that we are limiting our exposure by going with a full data collection.

Bryan Cafferelli, District 10 questioned Mr. Tetreau's statement regarding signing the contract to which Mr. Tetreau replied that it is a norm in the industry.

Julie Gottlieb, District 6 said this reduction removes the possibility of holding public hearings.

Mr. Bateson said he believes the public would be able to comment at the BOF meeting.

BOF member David Becker felt that either way this would go back to the BOF. Funds for the contract could be included in next year's budget. The debate would not end tonight.

MOTION: Kathy Braun moved the question, duly seconded.

VOTE: The motion to call the question was approved with 36 in favor and 7 opposed (Dean, Garskof, Gottlieb, Marmion, Wolk, Zezima and Schwartz.) (Messrs. Herley, Sundman, Varian, DeMartino, Li, Neuberger were not present to vote).

VOTE: The motion to reduce the Contingency account was approved with 25 in favor, 17 opposed and 1 abstention. (Messrs. Herley, Sundman, Varian, DeMartino, Li, Neuberger were not present to vote).

IN FAVOR: Donovan, Lipp, Meyer, Ambrose, Burshtein, Schindler, Steele, Bateson, Devlin, Ference, Mackenzie, Palmer, Semmel, Braun, Durrell, McCarthy, Melaragno, Iacono, Jacob, McArdle, Pontrelli, Cafferelli, Farnen, Perugini, Ryan

OPPOSED: McCullough, Dean, Gerber, Waldron, Garskof, O'Brien, Smey, Gottlieb, Marks, Marmion, Wolk, Zezima, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Newman, Pires, Schwartz

ABSTAINED: Way

VOTE: The motion to approve the budget as amended to \$284,962,638 was approved with 26 in favor and 17 opposed. (Messrs. Herley, Sundman, Varian, DeMartino, Li, Neuberger were not present to vote).

IN FAVOR: Donovan, Lipp, Ambrose, Burshtein, Schindler, Steele, Bateson, Devlin, Ference, Mackenzie, McCullough, Palmer, Semmel, Way, Braun, Durrell, McCarthy, Melaragno,

Iacono, Jacob, McArdle, Pontrelli, Cafferelli, Farnen, Perugini, Ryan

OPPOSED: Meyer, Dean, Gerber, Waldron, Garskof, O'Brien, Smey, Gottlieb, Marks, Marmion, Wolk, Zezima, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Newman, Pires, Schwartz

Hal Schwartz asked what the tax increase was now after starting at 2.38% when the meeting started. Mr. Mayer said it is 1.96%. Mr. Schwartz said the RTM has saved the taxpayer \$48.

Peter Ambrose said that the Body sat here for 8 hours deliberating but they have been involved in the budget process for several months. The RTM members do not get paid for their work, but they do it because they love this town.

ITEM NO. 3 ON CALL: TO CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE SELF SUPPORTING FUNDS
IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,259,258 FOR THE WATER POLLUTION
CONTROL AUTHORITY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR OF JULY 1, 2014
THROUGH JUNE 30, 2015.

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

VOTE: The motion to approve self supporting funds in the amount of \$5,259,258 for the WPCA was approved by unanimous voice vote. (Messrs. Herley, Sundman, Varian, DeMartino, Li, Neuberger were not present to vote).

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business and upon motion made, duly seconded and carried unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 3:17 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth P. Browne
Town Clerk

Recorded by: Kyle Fournier