

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
April 6, 2015

A meeting of the Town of Fairfield was held on Monday, April 6, 2015 at 7 PM at McKinley School, Thompson Street, Fairfield.

The meeting was called to order at 7 PM by Moderator Pamela Iacono.

PRESENT: 37 ABSENT: 12 VACANCY: 1

PRESENT: Donovan, Herley, Meyer, Sundman, Ambrose, Burshtein, Steele, Varian, Bateson, Ference, Mackenzie, McCullough, Dean, Gerber, Palmer, Waldron, Garskof, O'Brien, Smey, Way, Gottlieb, Marks, Wolk, Zezima, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Newman, Pires, Durrell, McCarthy, Melaragno, Iacono, Jacob, McArdle, Pontrelli, Tymniak, Perugini

ABSENT: Lipp, Cargill, DeMartino, Semmel, Siebert, Schwartz, Braun, Li, Cafferelli, Farnen, Neuberger, Ryan

VACANCY: for Schindler

ITEM NO. 1 ON CALL: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE

ITEM NO. 2 ON CALL: TO CONSIDER PROPOSED APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR OF JULY 1, 2015 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2016 AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE, FOR ANY LAWFUL PURPOSE IN THE AMOUNT TO BE DETERMINED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE.

Allen Marks moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

First Selectman Tetreau gave an overview of his \$291,088,646 recommended budget representing a 1.64% increase and a tax rate of 24.8 mills. The Town budget is a .77% increase at \$130,240,585 which includes increased funding for paving, library, funding for a strategic plan, Revaluation, additional support for Conservation, Health and Finance and an increase in Senior Tax Relief.

\$160,848,061 for the BOE is a 3.29% increase. The BOE increase represents 84% of the overall budget increase. The total BOE increase is \$5,130,000. Certain school expenses in the Town budget total \$23,912,676 for debt service, workers comp, insurance, school nurses, crossing guards, DARE, school security guards, unemployment insurance and purchasing, finance and public works services. Total school expenses are \$184,760,737.

The pension ARC is lower by \$2.2 million; debt service is lower by \$1.1 million; risk management, OPEB and workers comp are lower by \$500k, \$400k and \$200k, respectively.

A newly negotiated Employee Group Waiver Program (EGWP) saves \$720,000 annually. Energy conservation measures will save \$2.5 million annually. The recommended budget includes additional staffing – 2 PT health aides, 1 FT Finance position, and 1 PT Conservation position.

The median household would see an increase of \$140 in its tax bill with this recommended budget.

REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING

April 6, 2015

John Donovan, District 1 asked the cost and if there will be public input in the strategic plan to which Mr. Tetreau replied yes they would reach out to the community for input. GBRC provided some guidance regarding the cost of the plan for which \$100,000 has been budgeted.

BUDGET DRIVERS

Michael Herley, District 1 noted last year after the budget meeting the tax increase was at 1.96% but it rose to 2.04% at the BOF meeting. He asked that we have all numbers in place as close as we can so we are not adding basis points at budget adoption. Mr. Tetreau noted that at one point during their deliberations the BOS was at 1.52%.

Mr. Herley asked if there are any new health insurance numbers they be provided by the Town budget meeting. Mr. Tetreau said they anticipate the March numbers prior to that meeting.

Tom McCarthy, District 8 questioned the reduction to retiree benefits by the BOS.

CFO Bob Mayer explained the final number from the actuarial was received and approved by the BOS. New mortality tables were also recommended by the actuary. Savings were also realized due to the EGWP that was negotiated.

Joe Palmer, District 4 questioned the "all other" line in budget drivers. Mr. Mayer explained that among other items it included \$571k for IT, \$314k for contract services, \$900k for DPW, Revaluation, strategic plan and maintenance and repairs. He also noted that 36 employees now participate in the 401a plan.

Ellen Jacob, District 9 thanked Mr. Mayer for presenting the budget in Excel and questioned the contingency and supplemental contribution to surplus.

Mr. Mayer explained the fund balance policy was passed by the BOF. Currently fund balance is 7.64% the \$650k contribution would bring it to 7.65% as the projection is to bring in \$650k more in revenue than what is expended. This contribution will keep surplus where it needs to be. First Selectman Tetreau further explained the rationale with increasing some revenue lines where excess revenue would go to fund balance. Mr. Mayer said the department budgets do not have built in cushions. Snow removal and licensing issue costs were at \$1 million at quarterly review.

Mr. Palmer asked if Storm Sandy reimbursement impacted the budget. Mr. Mayer indicated \$250k more was recovered and expenses from the consultants have been more than anticipated. Mr. Palmer asked where it is booked to which Mr. Mayer replied it is recorded as a receivable at the time it is expensed.

1010 FIRST SELECTMAN'S OFFICE

Ed Bateson, District 3 asked why fees & professional services increased so much to which Mr. Tetreau replied it is the funding for the strategic plan.

1270 LEGAL SERVICES

Phil Pires, District 7 recused himself and left the room.

Mr. Bateson requested a spreadsheet with a breakdown of expenses which Town Attorney Stanton Lesser indicated he would provide.

REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING

April 6, 2015

Jeff Steele, District 2 requested Attorney Lesser attend an executive session with L&A regarding pending litigation so they know the capacity we will need to pay. Atty. Lesser said he would be able to speak in generalities.

Mr. Pires returned to the meeting at this time.

1230 CONSERVATION

Tom McCarthy, District 8 asked about the new staff request

Annette Jacobson, Conservation Administrator explained three full-time positions were requested but the priority is the full-time Wetlands Compliance Officer. Following the BOF vote there is still funding in the proposed budget for a PT Wetlands Compliance Officer.

3010 FINANCE

Pamela Iacono, District 9 asked Mr. Mayer if this was the same position that was sought last year to which Mr. Mayer replied in the affirmative. There will be follow up questions for Finance at a later meeting after review of the information received this evening.

3110 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Donovan asked why the department budget increased so much. Mr. Mayer said an inventory was taken and we have been significantly underpaying for licenses particularly for Microsoft. A contract has been negotiated to bring the Town current along with three years of upgrades so we are paying 1/3 over the next 3 years.

5030 PUBLIC WORKS OPERATIONS

Mr. Palmer asked if the extreme winter brought the asphalt paving line item up to \$3.1 million. DPW Director Joe Michelangelo said there is a full plate of paving and some isolated streets that are in need of repair. They will continue the plan for two large vehicles in the capital plan and two in the budget next year.

Chris Tymniak, District 9 questioned if the list of streets could be finished this year since the price of asphalt is down.

Scott Bartlett, Asst. DPW Director said the price has remained the same so there's no significant savings.

Mr. Bateson questioned the utility cost breakout for FTC. Mr. Tetreau explained there is no change in the lease, but because of their expansion there will be additional revenue and expenses. This will aid in tracking the utility expense. Mr. Michelangelo said that electric consumption went down but the rates went up.

Mr. Bateson asked about the increase in contracted property services which will save overtime costs, but asked if this will effect labor agreements. Mr. Bartlett said it is a work in progress, but by moving employees from one area where they could perform a task more cost effectively and efficiently it benefits them and the Town.

Mr. McCarthy asked where additional offset savings to the contracted property services will be. Mr. Bartlett said there are savings in buildings & grounds, special department supplies and seasonal payroll.

REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING

April 6, 2015

Josh Garskof, District 5 asked if paving is fully funded. Mr. Bartlett said this is a good maintenance number for preserving the streets.

Mr. Steele asked if crude costs affect their budget to which Mr. Bartlett said the Town works off the State contract.

Laurene O'Brien, District 5 asked if the huge chunks of curbing will be replaced. Mr. Bartlett said there is money in the materials budget for the curbs. The Town owns a machine that makes the curbing in place.

5070 ENGINEERING

Mr. Bateson questioned the capital outlay. Town Engineer Bill Hurley said the large format plotter is no longer supported by HP and has outlived its service life of 8 years.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

First Selectman Tetreau explained that the current Town Attorney revisited Section 5.2 of the Town Charter regarding compensation and reviewed the former Town Attorney's opinion as well. According to his opinion, the BOS can set the salary so they have asked two members each from the BOF and RTM to sit on the committee to review compensation. The BOS will follow the recommendation which is expected by June 1st. Representatives Bateson and Pires will represent the RTM on the committee.

ITEM NO. 3 ON CALL: TO CONSIDER THE SELF-SUPPORTING FUNDS IN AN AMOUNT TO BE DETERMINED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE FOR THE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR OF JULY 1, 2015 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2016.

There was no discussion regarding this item.

Since there were no requests for other Not for Profit Agencies, only Pequot Library has been requested to appear at the April 7th meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business this evening the meeting will reconvene tomorrow at 7 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth P. Browne, CMC, MCTC
Town Clerk