

**BOARD OF FINANCE  
PUBLIC EXECUTIVE BUDGET SESSION  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
MARCH 27, 2014**

**\*\*\*\*DRAFT\*\*\*\***

Pursuant to the call and written notice, the Public Executive Budget Hearing of the Board of Finance was held on Thursday, March 27, 2014 at 7:30 pm in the Board of Education Administrative Offices, Seminar Room 300, and 501 Kings Highway East, Fairfield, Connecticut.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Thomas Flynn, James Brown, Catherine Albin, Robert Stone, Ken Brachfeld, David Becker, James Walsh (7:42), Christopher DeWitt (7:47)

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Mary LeClerc

Chairman Flynn called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm.

Budget Director, Linda Gardiner led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Flynn asked for a moment of silence in honor of the two fire fighters who lost their lives yesterday fighting a fire in Boston.

Chairman Flynn noted that the Board has reviewed all departments' budget requests; has reviewed all details and line items and tonight will be reviewing the Revenue portion of the Town budget and open discussion by Board Members only on the entire budget.

CFO Mayer stated that all but 4 requests from the Board of information have been satisfied. Outstanding requests include: WPCF bond schedule; Cloud Evaluation; New Library Fine Evaluation and Town Clerk conveyance tax breakout- commercial versus residential.

**REVENUE**

CFO Bob Mayer and Budget Director Linda Gardiner gave an overview report of the Revenue line items to the Board.

Mr. Walsh noted a discrepancy in the amount of the Lease for the Chelsea Restaurant; Ms. Gardiner will investigate.

In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Mayer noted that interest income ytd a/o March 20<sup>th</sup> is \$650,000.

Chairman Flynn noted that this Board's discussion on setting the new mill rate will occur after this year's budget is set; and the Board would like information on the calculations on taxes-specifically the collection rate before this time.

Members discussed the Bond Premium and the debt schedule.

Chairman Flynn opened the floor to Board Members who would like to comment on this year's entire Budget request.

Jim Walsh stated that he had two big concerns with the budget presented:

- Internal Service Fund going in the wrong direction (BOE) ...how to address this issue?  
Mr. Walsh feels we should address this issue but the budget might have change with outcome of decisions on this funding
- Supplemental School Security budget added in addition to the budget requested  
Mr. Walsh agrees this is a very important issue and deserves to be funded,

However, Mr. Walsh makes it very clear he is not in favor of increasing this year's budget, in fact he will be looking to make cuts within the budget proposed, wants to keep increase minimal.

Discussion began on the Internal Service Fund and Mr. Mayer presented the Board with new forecasts on this fund with information he was just provided. Board members discussed the effect of the negative direction the ISF is going; to address it and how to plan for it; effects, if any, on the town credit ratings; how to budget and BOE control of this fund.

In response to questions from members and on request from the Board, Dr. Title, Superintendent of Schools, BOE, Town of Fairfield addressed the Board on the status of the Internal Service Fund and the budget and control of this fund.

Ken Brachfeld stated he also has concerns with the Internal Service Fund and feels we should address the issue, possibly make cuts elsewhere throughout the budget to fund this and do it gradually over a few years.

Christopher DeWitt stated that he has concerns also about the BOE deficiencies in this budget; noted the volatility of this budget and once again struggles with this year's budget request.

Mr. DeWitt also makes it clear he is in support of the School Security plan but is not in favor of increasing the budget as he also will be looking for cuts throughout the budget, wants to keep increase minimal.

Mr. DeWitt also mentioned that he would like clearer understanding of personnel levels –especially prudent should any adjustments be made when the Board Of Selectmen Vote on Budget request.

Cathy Albin stated that since the Board of Selectmen could be making adjustments to this budget request prior to the BOF vote, it is very difficult to have discussions at this time since no one can predict changes that will occur with the BOS vote. Ms. Albin also states that she is not in favor of increasing this budget.

Robert Stone questioned costs to have classes with very low enrollments (2-5 students).

In response, Dr. Title again addressed the Board, upon its request, to address Mr. Stone's concerns.

David Becker stated that he feels that this budget request is too high as it stands; also that he is in support of the new School Security proposal however has great concerns on the funding effect this new plan will have on the budget. Also states he has concerns on the Internal Service Fund and is in favor of finding reductions in this budget request.

James Brown commented that it is this Board's responsibility to continue to secure the AA rating of the Town; notes biggest cost drivers in the budget-salary and benefits and mentions that everyone has to start considering the tax burden versus services options-how much to spend to keep services?

Chairman Flynn commented that the IBNR discussion will continue as it does annually- feels that there is not enough in reserve and is not funded appropriately; feels town need strategic planning; we must start to look at services the Town provides and possible changes to services to keep spending down. Chairman Flynn also notes that it is necessary for this Board to: maintain the Town AAA rating; fund contracts; fund long term obligations and be aware of cost drivers in our budget. Chairman Flynn also states that there need to be Town wide discussions on services that need to be provided and at what costs-- Best way we can fund them.

Chairman Flynn offers thanks to the Administration-both Town and BOE; Board of Selectmen; Finance Department, Ms. Bosse, Clerk of the Board and the Public for all their hard work and efforts during this budget season.

Ken Brachfeld thanks Chairman Flynn for his leadership and service, as well as offers thanks to Gerry Speno from Fair TV for his hard work making these budget hearings available to our residents.

Finally, Chairman Flynn reminds everyone of the open Budget Hearing forum scheduled for Saturday, March 29<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am at the Ludlow Middle School and invited the public to attend and comment on this year's budget.

On a motion by Mr. DeWitt, seconded by Mr. Brachfeld the meeting was adjourned at 8:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine S. Boccamazzo  
Recording Secretary