

**BOARD OF FINANCE
MONTHLY MEETING –JANUARY
January 7, 2014**

******DRAFT******

The Monthly Meeting of the Board of Finance was held on Tuesday, January 7, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. at the Board of Education Offices, Seminar Room 295A&B, 501 Kings Highway East,, Fairfield, Connecticut.

MEMBERS PRESENT

David Becker, James Brown, Christopher DeWitt, Thomas Flynn, Mary LeClerc, Robert Stone, James Walsh, Catherin Albin and Kenneth Brachfeld

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Robert Mayer, Chief Fiscal Officer, Town of Fairfield
Caitlin Bosse, Controller, Town of Fairfield and Clerk of the Board of Finance
First Selectman Michael Tetreau, Town of Fairfield
Kevin Kiley, Board of Selectman
Dr. David Title, Superintendent BOE
Andrea Leonardi, Director of Special Education & Programs-BOE
Doreen Munsell, Director of Finance-BOE
Phillip Dwyer, Chairman-BOE

ACTION TAKEN

1. On a motion from the Board, the minutes of the meetings of the organization meeting of the Board of Finance from Dec. 3, 2013 and the minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Finance from Dec. 3, 2013 were a vote of 7 yeas, 0 nays, 2 abstention (Albin, Becker).

Chairman Flynn called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

BOE Chairman Philip Dwyer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Flynn asked for a moment of silence in memory of Jude Fitzgerald and Kiva Barry (two finance department employees) 's Mother, who passed away last week.

AGENDA

1. To approve the minutes:

Organizational Meeting of the Board of Finance form Dec. 3, 2013
Regular Meeting of the Board of Finance from November 6, 2013

On a motion from the Board, the minutes of the Organizational meeting and the Regular meeting of Dec. 3, 2013 were approved with a vote of 7 yeas, 0 nays, 2 abstention (Albin, Becker).

2. To hear a FY2014 Financial Update from Dr. David Title, Superintendent of Schools

Dr. David Title, Philip Dwyer, Andrea Leonardi and Doreen Munsell presented this item to the Board.

Dr. Title stated that after reviewing costs and calculations in early December for the filing of excess costs State Grant Monies, a number of budget line items in the Special Education Budget are showing significant overages at this point, and with continued spending going forward to the end of the school year, Dr. Title is anticipating an estimated budget deficit of 1.2 -1.6 million dollars at the end of the fiscal year.

Dr. Title presented a handout to the Board showing the Special Education Budget and the line items as to where they are currently and the projected surplus/overages.

Dr. Title informed the Board that he has put a freeze on non-essential spending at the BOE; deferring technology purchases, eliminating all conference spending and has asked all departments and schools to look for savings within their budgets to help alleviate the deficit. Dr. Title noted that he is deferring spending as much as possible however he sees no way that he will be able to find the total costs to cover the overage, and, with all these efforts in place, Dr. Title anticipates a savings of @ \$300,000 - \$500,000 that would be used against the Special education deficit. Dr. Title made it clear that the school budget could not withstand this deficit on its own.

Dr. Title noted that there are other line items within the BOE budget that will have surpluses, however these surpluses are used to cover overages in other line items and could not be used to help on this issue.

It was also noted that the Board of Education had just received this information today and has not met to discuss this issue nor had the opportunity to discuss any actions.

It was also noted that there have been no discussions with the First Selectman and or the CFO as to this deficit as it has just been brought to their attention.

Dr. Title noted that the BOE is required to be in the black in their budget at the end of the fiscal year per State Statute.

It was noted that 17 additional/unforseen new students were acquired in the Special Education Budget this year –this is driving the costly increases.

Discussion ensued regarding the Projected Excess Costs reimbursement figures that will be received from the State, and although Dr. Title stated we might capture some additional dollars with increased students, Ms. Leonardi is confident of these projected reimbursement figures.

Mr. Dewitt questioned if we have not received this year's grant monies are we using last years monies or are we underfunding till the dollars are received. –Ms. Munsell noted that we underfund until monies are received.

Mr. Becker asked if there was a firmer time line or plan in place.

Mr. Dwyer stated that the BOE just received this information and has not met to discuss the issues, but will be meeting very shortly and work with Dr. Title.

Ms. LeClerc noted the mitigating rising costs in Special Education and asked if the BOE has considered alternatives.

Ms. Leonardi noted that Fairfield takes great pride in their Special Education programs and noted that there is a greater need these days for students, new programs are being developed but with expanding needs for the student population these programs are becoming more expensive. It was also noted that the BOE requested an increase in area last year but was denied the increases and that the BOE will once again come before the board during the budget season to request additional funding.,

Ms. Leonardi noted that every community in the immediate area is showing spikes in Special Education and that new students are entering into these programs on a faster basis and communities are struggling with programs and costs associated with the additional students and their individual needs.

Dr. Title reiterated that he will be asking for additional funding in Special Education during the budget process this year as these costs need to be covered.

Mr. Walsh questioned why this issue was not brought before the Board sooner as members have not had the time to review and analyze this information.

Mr. Flynn noted that he became aware of this issue last week and requested that it be presented as soon as possible therefore it was presented tonight after it was just hours ago presented to the BOE Members.

Mr. Walsh inquired if the BOE could force more spending cuts to get this budget in the black.

Mr. Dwyer stated that they would minimize the direct impact on student programs and will work with Dr. Title and the administration to try and find additional cuts.

Mr. Walsh noted that the BOE budget must be closely watched and that updates must be given on a regular basis and that a lot of attention and diligence must be made on this issue.

Mr. Stone questioned whether these costs are for public students only or are private students also included in these programs and costs. It was noted that private school students are included in Special Education programs and costs.

Ms. Albin reminded the Board that in 2008 the BOE was approached by than First Selectman Flatto to help fund a shortage in the Town budget and that the BOE fully cooperated with this request.

Chairman Flynn asked that the BOE first look “in-house” for savings and spending cuts; asked for continued communication, including weekly spending reports and an action plan that will be presented and reviewed –line by line cuts and savings at the next quarterly review meeting.

Chairman Flynn also asked that the Town start looking at options to help the BOE on this issue.

3. To review and discuss the Public Act 13-60
CFO Robert Mayer presented this item to the Board.

It was noted and agreed that this act has confusing language and more clarification on the language of this bill should be obtained so that Board members have a better understanding of this Act and it's requirements.

It was noted that the Town and the BOE should worked together in cooperation in consolidating common services to find savings.

4. To discuss the 2014 Budget Hearing Schedule
No exceptions or concerns were made regarding the 2014 Budget Hearing Schedule
5. To discuss, consider and act upon any communications
Nothing to discuss

Mr. Flynn asked if the Auditor would be available at the February Meeting and Clerk Bosse confirmed the Auditor would be at the February meeting.

On a motion made by Mr. Brown, seconded by Mr. DeWitt and passed unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine S. Boccamazzo
Recording Secretary

Board of Finance *****DRAFT*****

Minutes of The Monthly Board of Finance Meeting

December 3, 2103

Mr. DeWitt moved and Mr. Becker seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah J. Garavel
Recording Secretary