

**COMBINED BOARD OF SELECTMAN AND BOARD OF FINANCE  
PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING  
MINUTES OF MEETING**

**MARCH 13, 2014**

Pursuant to the call and written notice the Public Budget Hearing of the Board of Selectman and Board of Finance was held on Thursday, March 13, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. in the Board of Education Administrative Offices, Seminar Room 300,501 Kings Highway East, Fairfield, Connecticut.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Thomas Flynn, Christopher DeWitt, James Walsh, Ken Brachfeld, Mary LeClerc, Robert Stone, Catherine Albin and David Becker.

**ABSENT:** James Brown

**ALSO PRESENT**

Michael Tetreau, First Selectman, Town of Fairfield  
Christin Mc Carthy Vahey, Board of Selectman, Town Of Fairfield  
Robert Mayer, Chief Fiscal Officer, Town of Fairfield  
Linda Gardiner, Budget Director, Town of Fairfield  
Caitlin Bosse, Controller, Town of Fairfield and Clerk of the Board of Finance (BOF)  
Thomas Conley, Building Official, Town Of Fairfield  
Michael Zembruski, Director of Solid Waste and Recycling, Town Of Fairfield  
Joseph Michelangelo, Director of Public Works, Town of Fairfield  
Edward Boman, Assistant Director, of Public Works, Town Of Fairfield  
Scott Bartlett, Superintendent of Public Works, Town of Fairfield  
William Hurley, Engineering Manager, Town of Fairfield

Chairman Flynn called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Retired Building Official, James Gilleran led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Flynn congratulated James Gilleran, former Building Official, on his retirement and thanked him for his hard work on behalf of the Town of Fairfield. He also congratulated Thomas Conley, new Building Official, and wished him the best of luck in his new position.

The following budgets were heard by the Boards:

**PUBLIC WORKS**

**5050 Building**

Thomas Conley, Building Official, presented this item and noted the following to the Boards: He thanked Mr. Mayer and his entire staff for making his transition effortless.

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Mr. Conley noted there are large projects on the horizon but no dates or times have been determined yet. As a result of new FEMA Regulations, they are expecting more revenue and anticipate approximately twenty (20) to forty (40) house lifts in the beach area. A permit fee of \$230,000 for Sacred Heart Business School and due to damage from Storm Sandy brought up revenue. The revenue is higher by \$400,000 from last year.

In response to Mr. Brachfeld's question regarding what they had averaged in the past three years from \$36,000 and now down to zero, Mr. Conley noted it was due blight penalties, which they will be reassessing.

Mr. Walsh noted blight revenue received should go into an emergency account to make funds available for emergencies.

Selectman Tetreau agreed and noted the challenge is to write it up so it doesn't turn the Town into a landscaping company. He believes the blight ordinance fees should not come from residential properties it should come from commercial properties. The goal is not to collect fines. The Town can't collect revenue until properties are sold and there is no way of forcing the payment.

Board members were in agreement and fully support Mr. Walsh's comment.

Mr. Conley stated there is a tremendous amount of work as well as Code reviews that have gone through the building department. The amount of new inspections went up between 10-15% this year. This gave him the opportunity to thank his staff for their hard work, especially his secretary.

The Boards questioned the 3% increase in salaries. Mrs. Gardner stated this is a one-step increase with no contractual increase. Mr. Mayer noted the new building inspector was hired at a higher step than what was budgeted.

Mr. Conley noted there was an IT transfer and should see a reduction in the IT department.

Following discussion, Chairman Flynn requested a follow up on any instances where software was taken out of the IT budget and transferred it to the department as well as a complete schedule of software items and amounts.

**6070            Solid Waste and Recycling**

Michael Zembruski, Director of solid Waste, presented this item to the Boards. He noted there is an increase in revenue, which was based on 36,000 tons of tonnage.

In response to Mr. Walsh's question why the recyclable rebate went down by 50% from last year, Mr. Zembruski noted they are down 50% in revenue but up \$140,000 in expenses. The haulers are now taking recyclables to All American Waste in Stratford and shipping it to Shelton, where the Town splits the revenue.

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Mrs. Vahey would like to see more recycling and less tonnage and asked how to encourage residents to recycle.

Mr. Zemruski noted the new coordinator will address and push the cause by going out in the field and meeting with residents, commercial haulers and schools.

Mr. Zemruski also noted the 2% decrease is associated with the Town not contracting with CRRA next year. Also, the new coordinator was hired at a lower level.

In response to Mrs. Vahey's question regarding what the contract requirement is in terms of tonnage. Mr. Zemruski noted the contract is still under negotiations. They will be joining with a group of municipalities like CRRA. Also, by encouraging other towns to partner with them, they should see a tip fee increase.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**5011 Public Works Administration**

Joseph Michelangelo, Director, presented this item to the Boards and reported the following: Public Works Administration is mostly salary (96%). This represents a 1.6% increase over the FY 2014 budget.

He addressed Chairman Flynn's question regarding the reasoning for more overtime earnings. He noted this year's spike is largely due to the Marina Manager's position, which was vacant for five months and the Recycling Coordinator, which was vacant for three months. The two vacant positions fell on public works administration staff, which they based on the amount of hours needed.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**5030 Public Works Operations**

Joseph Michelangelo, Director, and Scott Bartlett, Supervisor, presented this item to the Boards. The following was noted: The department request represents a 13.3% over the FY 2014 budget. The increase is due to the paving account and salary adjustments resulting from the settlement of a four year contract (6.25% overall).

Chairman Flynn stated because the transfers for this budget are not included, this year is understated by four years' worth of salary increases.

The Boards discussed and questioned last year's raised contracted services and the positions which were cut from the budget.

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Mr. Bartlett stated his personnel can do the work outside contractors can do and based on the economy, it's a good model. The BOE is also following suit.

In response to Mr. Dewitt's question regarding the \$4m paving request, which was reduced to \$3m, Mr. Bartlett noted after the transition from bond to budget they would be at \$3.75m. Also, it was reduced to \$2.7m last year they requested a \$250,000 increase, which on paper transfers to \$1.250m.

In response to Mrs. Vahey's question regarding how Q-Alert will impact the workload and what this means as far as the flow of business, Mr. Bartlett reported residents can call/email and chart their response in terms of communication levels. Also, the workload doesn't diminish but there is administration efficiency in terms of tracking back to residents.

Mr. Tetreau also referenced Q-Alert. He noted it's been running in-house and expects it on the Town website within the next 4-5 months. This will allow residents to forward their complaints/issues directly to, in this case, DPW, which will be addressed on a timely basis.

Chairman Flynn questioned the asphalt funding and what the current plan is to get to the funding level that was discussed in previous years on paving.

Mr. Tetreau noted the goal is to continue new increases each year within the 250/500 range, until they can reach \$3.75m.

Mr. Bartlett noted his goal is to seal good roads and catch up on poor roads.

The Boards discussed side walk replacements and requested a new budget line item for sidewalks.

Mr. Walsh noted he would like to see dump trucks go back into the operating budget so it's expensed and used, as opposed to bonded every year.

**5070            Engineering**

William Hurley, Engineering Manager, presented this item to the Boards. The department request represents a 3.9% increase over FY14, due to salary adjustments for the settlement of a three year contract.

Mrs. Gardner noted the combined settlement amount is 6.5% with an average of 3.7%.

Chairman Flynn requested a schedule of each budget item going forward next year and to include percentage differential under personnel summary.

Board members questioned the IT software and what comes out of "capital" versus "fees".

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Selectman Tetreau noted if it's a new purchase for software it won't come out of the IT budget. It occurred for the first time in this budget and that is why it went under capital; if it's a maintenance fee it would come out of IT in over a year.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

**4070 Street Lighting**

Edward Boman, Assistant Director, presented this item to the Boards. He noted the following: The rate differential is due to distribution paid to the UI Company and the 5-6 new lights installed on an annual basis. Integrys Energy will provide power until December 31<sup>st</sup> at 6.33 c/kwh and UI has a balance of 27c/kwh, showing no projected changes in that area. However, from January to June 2015, the cost of electricity will go up. Yankee recently closed their power plant, pushing the price of natural gas up dramatically. All electricity will need to be replaced and the nuclear plant will come from natural gas. He also noted, after meeting with the electric consultant, they will be lucky to get a price at 8.8c/kwh in 2015 versus 6.0c/kwh in 2014. Also, there are ten towns putting bids out to contract at a higher rate, which should lower prices.

Chairman Flynn requested a brief memo showing what changes/increases were last year to current year.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

**13013010 WPCA**

Joseph Michelangelo, Director of Public Works, presented this item to the Boards. He noted the following: \$5.2m was largely supported by sewer use fees. The residential/commercial industrial properties have a slight increase from last year. This was brought before the WPCA Commission at their January meeting, where the requested items were approved.

Chairman Flynn noted the payroll line shows a 4.8% increase, which is misleading. He requested clarification regarding the 2014 actuarial expense versus 2015. He also requested a full P and L on WPCA revenue/expense.

Mrs. Vahey asked for an update on future improvements to expect.

Mr. Michaelangelo stated the Town is required to come up with a Facility Plan for Waste Water Treatment once every twenty to twenty five years. This helps evaluate and outline improvements to address the needs of the town. The last time this took place was 1996. As part of the State DEEP permit, once the town reaches 90% of their average daily flow they look at the system to help plan on how to reach 100%. A Draft RFP is in place and will be discussed at their next

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meeting. Also, a clean water fund for grant money was submitted last September and is hoping the DEEP will support it.

The Boards questioned if it is funded and included in the waterfall schedule for bonding.

Mr. Michelangelo noted none of the WPCA future projects are programmed in the waterfall schedule.

He also stated the town of Cheshire just started a waste water treatment plan upgrade for \$32m. and it's not unusual for a plant this size to invest millions of dollars.

After discussion:

The Boards had concerns why it wasn't brought before the capital planning workshop and not included in the waterfall schedule. They requested confirmation on the \$3m reserve fund, as discussed.

Chairman Flynn requested an update at the next quarterly review meeting to show where the WPCA is in this process and more information on what the process will be. Also, if there is a range that is supplied to administration can it be included in the waterfall schedule for a placeholder for planning purposes too, knowing that it's a preliminary number until such time a real number can be provided.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

There being no further business to come before the Board David Becker moved and Mary LeClerc, seconded to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Josephine M. Keogh  
Recording Secretary