

**COMBINED BOARD OF SELECTMAN AND BOARD OF FINANCE
PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING
MINUTES OF MEETING
MARCH 16, 2010**

Pursuant to the call and written notice, the Public Budget Hearing of the Board of Selectman and the Board of Finance was held on Tuesday, March 16, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Board of Education Administrative Offices, Seminar Room 300, 501 Kings Highway East, Fairfield, Connecticut.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairman Thomas Flynn, Robert Bellitto Jr., Ken Brachfeld, James Brown, Christopher DeWitt, Kevin Kiley, Mary LeClerc, Robert Stone, Michael Tetreau

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Kenneth Flatto, Sherri Steeneck, Board of Selectmen, Town of Fairfield
Paul Hiller, Chief Fiscal Officer and Clerk of the Board of Finance
Linda Gardiner, Budget Director, Town of Fairfield
Richard Saxl, Town Attorney, Town of Fairfield
Bonnie McWain, Director of Finance, Board of Education, Town of Fairfield

Chairman Flynn called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**Mr. Dewitt moved and Mr. Brown seconded to go into Private Executive Session for the purpose of discussing legal issues with the Town Attorney.
Motion carried with a vote of 9 yeas, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.**

**Mr. DeWitt moved and Mr. Bellitto Jr. seconded to come out of Private Executive Session.
Motion carried with a vote of 9 yeas, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.**

The budgets were reviewed as follows

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1030 Town Clerk: Representing the Town Clerk was Betsy Browne, Town Clerk.
Mrs. Browne stated that the estimate for conveyance taxes is \$1.265M based on the increase over last year's totals and trending over the first six months of this year. Mrs. Browne also stated that she is comfortable with the remaining revenue items.

Public Comment

None

3050 Tax Assessor: Representing the Tax Assessor was Thomas Browne, Tax Assessor.
Mr. Browne stated that his department is in the final stages of data collection for the re-evaluation and the analysis should begin in April.

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Public Comment

None

- 1010 First Selectman:** Representing First Selectman was Kenneth Flatto, First Selectman. Mr. Flatto, in response to a question from the Board concerning the amount in line 810-000 (Education & Memberships) explained that this item contains money for dues that the Town pays to CCM (at \$38K annually), the U.S, Conference of Mayors, etc. Mr. Flatto also informed the Board that the increase in the Payroll Lines for the Selectmen are the result of reinstating a portion of the two Selectmen's salaries that they voluntarily gave up for last year. Mr. Flatto noted that the costs for the Operational Audit are not included in this budget.

Public Comment

None

- 1050 Administrative Services:** Representing Administrative Services was Twig Holland, Director of Purchasing. Ms. Holland reported that Line 53310 is for copier leases.

Public Comment

None

- 1070 Registrar of Voters:** Representing the Registrar of Voters was Matthew Waggner and Roger Autuori, Registrars of Voters. Mr. Autuori reported that the Secretary of State will no longer provide for portions of the new voting system therefore this budget was increased by \$20K to cover those expenses.

Public Comment

None

- 1090 Zoning Board of Appeals:** Representing ZBA was Joe Devonshuk.

Public Comment

None

- 1110 TPZ:** Representing TPZ was Joe Devonshuk. Mr. Devonshuk reported that the revenue estimate is down due to the economy. Mr. Devonshuk also stated that his department is in the process of doing an overview of the Commerce Drive area and that will be a part of an amendment to TPZ policies.

Public Comment

Ken Cammaro, Carroll Road

In regards to Fees and Professional Services, this department is trying to build awareness in town to have TPZ manage uses in town and this will cost more money that has been previously budgeted but it is well worth the effort. The focus should be on the whole town not just downtown, and head toward smart building for the future. The Town, TPZ, and the Selectmen need to start thinking of how to build this blueprint.

Stanton Lesser, Split Rock Road

This is the only body in town that can create money in town.

Linda Crowley, 12 Lalley Blvd.

Obsolete, older building in town have character that new buildings just don't have. We don't need to bring in someone from out of town to run our town.

- 1130 Probate Court:** Representing Probate Court was Kate Maxham.

Public Comment

None

1210 Historic District Commission

Public Comment

None

1230 Conservation: Representing Conservation was Annette Jacobsen and Stanton Lesser, Chairman, Conservation Commission

Mr. Hiller distributed letters from William Fitzpatrick III and John Fallon regarding the restoration of the Wetlands Compliance Officer position to this budget. It was reported that line 53200 covers soil scientists, surveys, inland wetland compliance issues, etc. and the consultant is on the performance bond. In response to a question from the Board on the reason for the growth for this item in the last several years, Mr. Lesser explained that the consultants have been hired to make sure the Town returns performance bonds to the applicants as required. Mr. Lesser also noted that this department has not yet found a cheaper way to accomplish this task. Mr. Hiller added that the performance bond money is currently being held in the General Fund Account.

Public Comment

None

1250 Shellfish: Representing Shellfish was Annette Jacobsen and Ed Crowley, Chairman of the Shellfish Commission.

Public Comment

None

1270 Legal Services: Representing Legal Services was Town Attorney Richard Saxl.

Mr. Saxl reported that line 53200 has funds for union negotiations that are to take place this year.

Public Comment

None

1290 Misc. Contingencies: Representing Miscellaneous Contingencies was Kenneth Flatto.

Mr. Flatto reported that this budget item is used for unexpected special items, special services,, etc. and it grew out of negotiations and land acquisition items in the past.

Public Comment

None

1350 Community and Economic Development: Representing Community and Economic Development was Mark Barnhart, Director of Community and Economic Development.

Mr. Barnhart stated that the main focus of this department is to help keep small businesses in Town.

Mr. Flynn asked Mr. Hiller to provide the Board with a report on the Community Development Block Grants.

Public Comment

None

1370 Harbor Management Commission: Representing the Harbor Management Commission was Mary von Conta, Chair.

Public Comment

None

1390 Land Acquisition: Representing Land Acquisition was Stuart Manly, Chair

Public Comment

None

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3010 Finance: Representing the Finance Department was Paul Hiller. Mr. Hiller reported that due to budget cuts and early retirements, he lost his secretary last year and he now shares a secretary with Mr. Devonshuk (Mr. Hiller has her services 2 days a week), and the First Selectman sends in one of his staff one day a week to assist. Mr. Flynn asked Mr. Hiller to look into getting an additional analytical position in an effort to get information out in a more timely fashion in the future.

Public Comment

None

3030 Purchasing: Representing Purchasing was Twig Holland, Director of Purchasing. In response to a question from the Board, Ms. Holland reported that the overtime account in this budget was due to 3 building committees projects that require attendance at all of their meetings which are held in the evening.

Public Comment

None

3090 Tax Collector: Representing the Tax Collector was Stan Gorzelany, Tax Collector. Mr. Gorzelany stated that on-line payments are increasing slowly. Mr. Flynn asked Mr. Hiller to provide the Board with data on the impact of the lien sale in FY2010 on FY2011 revenues.

Public Comment

None

3110 Information Technology: Representing IT was Don Leslie, Director of Information Systems.

In response to a question from the Board, Mr. Leslie discussed hardware issues in regards to servers for disaster recovery, emergency services, etc. Mr. Leslie stated that he has some concerns with the current location of the servers in the basement of Town Hall and the Police Department since each location is in a designated flood plain area. Mr. Leslie noted that the Fairfield Woods Library is the only location with servers above ground and it is his plan to locate the servers at the branch library as the source for disaster recovery backup. In response to a question from the Board on the increase in line 58100, Mr. Leslie reported that he is a firm believer in education and he feels strongly that with all of the new systems being implemented in Town now, it is important to have the people using the system adequately trained on its operations. Mr. Leslie noted that the new MUNIS system is very powerful and the need to install upgrades is constant and the users need to be trained on Crystal Reports, etc. so the Town gets the results that are expected from the new system.

Public Comment

Gerry Lombardo, Director of Parks and Recreation

Please keep training in the budget because it is really needed by the users in order to understand the system.

3130 Board of Finance: Representing Board of Finance was Paul Hiller, Clerk of the Board of Finance.

Mr. Flynn expressed his opinion that the funding for the Operational Audit should be in this budget.

Public Comment

None

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6010 Health: Representing the Health Department was Sands Cleary, Director of Health. Mr. Flatto explained that the number of nurses in the budget is high because the school nurses are paid by the Town, not the Board of Education, and they report to the Department of Health.

Public Comment

None

6050 Human and Social Services: Representing Human and Social Service was Claire Grace, Director.

Ms. Grace reported that line 52100 is larger this year because she did not have health insurance last year and she does this year. Mrs. Grace also reported that only 2 full time employees receive health benefits and this year's amount is for @18,984 for one employee and \$2,400 for an opt out fee for the other employee. After a lengthy discussion on ADA compliance issues at the Senior Center, Mr. Flynn asked Mr. Hiller if there was a plan for renovating/maintaining the Senior Center and to please provide any information on this item to the Board for their information.

Public Comment

Helen D'Avanzo, 1446 Jennings Road

She has run the tax program at the Senior Center for 5 years and since about November 2008 the Town has been talking about handicap toilets there but nothing has yet been done in that regard. She said that some of the toilets are still the same toilets that were there when it was a grammar school and they are built for elementary school children which makes them difficult for older adults to use. She supports upgrades to the bathroom facilities and other items at the Senior Center.

6070 Solid Waste: Representing Solid Waste was Mike Zembruski.

Mr. Hiller was asked to prepare a document with revenue and expenses for this department on one page to the net amount can easily be seen.

Public Comment

None

7010 Library: Representing the Library was Karen Ronald, Librarian and Brian Kelahan, Chairman of the Library Board.

Ms. Ronald reported that due to budget cuts last year, the part time payroll was cut and any further cuts will affect service hours. Ms. Ronald also asked the Board to keep line 56180 at a healthy level. Ms. Ronald explained that more people are using the library, the staff is ordering less materials, costs for products are up about 10% with higher usage for everything, and database costs are rising quickly. Mr. Kelahan stated that the goal is to renovate the Fairfield Woods Branch Library and do better utilization. Mr. Kelahan stated that he has been talking with the Fairfield Woods Middle School Building Committee to ensure that the school project won't hamper any plans for the library.

Public Comment

Charlotte Garrell, Chairman, Friends of the Fairfield Public Library

She thanked the Board for their support of the library and asked them to please continue their support and she would welcome them all as members of the Friends of the Fairfield Public Library.

Krista McCarthy Vahey, RTM District 6

She supports the long range plans for the branch library.

7030 Penfield Pavilion Complex: Representing Penfield Pavilion Complex was Gerry Lombardo, Director of Recreation.

Public Comment

None

7050 Parks and Recreation: Representing Parks and Recreation was Gerry Lombardo, Director of Recreation, Ellery Plotkin, Chairman, Parks and Recreation Commission. Mr. Lombardo reported that the Tunxis Hill tennis courts can be paid for with a Community Development Block Grant therefore that project was removed from the Capital Requests portion of the budget. Mr. Lombardo reported that the balance on the revolving fund, as of September 30, 2009 was \$228,263 so \$28,263 was transferred to the General Fund account and the balance as of February 28, 2010 was \$528,186. Mr. Flatto suggested reducing the threshold to \$100K-\$150K for this fund. Mr. Plotkin was asked to report back to this Board on a decision on this item to be made at the next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Public Comment

None

7070 Waterfront & Marina: Representing Waterfront & Marina was Gerry Lombardo, Director of Recreation.

Public Comment:

None

7111 South Pine Creek Golf Course: Representing the South Pine Creek Golf Course was Gerald Lombardo, Director of Recreation, Gregg Curley, Golf Commission and Peter Grace, Superintendent, H. Smith Richardson Golf Course.

Public Comment

None

7113 H. Smith Richardson Golf Course: Representing the H. Smith Richardson Golf Course was Gerald Lombardo, Director of Recreation, Gregg Curley, Golf Commission and Peter Grace, Superintendent, H. Smith Richardson Golf Course.

A discussion on the need for the work for drainage at the 10th and 18th holes was held with no resolution.

Public Comment

None

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 p.m.