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**COMBINED BOARD OF SELECTMAN AND BOARD OF FINANCE  
PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
March 22, 2011**

MAY - 4 2011

TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE  
FAIRFIELD, CT

Pursuant to the call and written notice, the Public Budget Hearing of the Board of Selectman and the Board of Finance was held on Wednesday, March 16, 2011 at 7:00 pm 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**

Paul Hiller, Chief Fiscal Officer and Clerk of the Board of Finance  
Kenneth Flatto, First Selectman, Town of Fairfield  
Sherri Steeneck, Board of Selectmen  
James Walsh, Board of Selectmen  
Linda Gardiner, Budget Director, Town of Fairfield  
Bonnie McWain, Director of Finance, Board of Education, Town of Fairfield  
Richard White, Director of Public Works, Town of Fairfield

Vice Chairman Bellitto, Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

**Mr. DeWitt moved and Mrs. LeClerc seconded to go into Private Executive Session for the purpose of discussing ongoing labor negotiations and pending litigation with Richard Saxl, Town Attorney and Mary Carroll-Mirylees, Director of Human Resources, Town of Fairfield.  
Motion passed unanimously.**

**Mr. DeWitt moved and Mr. Brachfeld seconded to come out of Private Executive Session at 7:45 pm.  
Motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Flynn congratulated First Selectman Flatto on his appointment by Governor Danel Malloy to his new position and Mr. Flatto was thanked for his service to the Town by all present.

The following budgets were then heard by the Boards:

- 3010 Finance:** Representing the Finance Department was Paul Hiller.  
Mr. Hiller reported that the Secretary B position formerly in this budget has been moved to the Building Department budget (\$20,148).  
**Public Comment**

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None

**3030 Purchasing:** Representing Purchasing was Twig Holland, Director of Purchasing.

Ms. Holland reported that this budget includes more money for education and membership that was cut from this budget last year.

**Public Comment**

None

**1050 Administrative Services:** Representing Administrative Services was Twig Holland, Director of Purchasing.

Ms. Holland reported that this budget contains an increase in the line item for courier funding.

**Public Comment**

None

**1030 Town Clerk:** Representing the Town Clerk was Betsy Browne, Town Clerk.

Mrs. Browne stated that this budget contains an increase of 1.72% over last year's budget request. Mrs. Browne also noted that she is comfortable with this year's estimate of \$1.2M for conveyance taxes. Mr. Tetreau asked Mrs. Browne for a schedule of short sale values. Mrs. Brown, in response to questions from the Board, reported that printing and binding costs are up \$3,000 based on estimated required absentee ballots which cost \$.34 each. Mrs. Brown also reported that a municipal election costs about \$23K.

**Public Comment**

None

**3050 Tax Assessor:** Representing the Tax Assessor was Thomas Browne, Tax Assessor.

Mr. Browne stated that his budget request is down about 24% due to revaluation being done this past year. Mr. Browne reported that he has just received an enormous amount of commercial end and high end residential appeals and, therefore, he requested an additional \$10K in the appraisal budget. Mr. Browne also stated that he has put a request in this budget for a ½ time position to make the current ½ time position for a clerk in his department a full time position, Mr. Browne further explained that the position shared by his department and the Tax Collector's department is not working as well as previously planned and both departments need a full time person for their respective departments.

**Public Comment**

None

**3090 Tax Collector:** Representing the Tax Collector was Stan Gorzelany, Tax Collector.

Mr. Gorzelany reported that this budget is 5% higher than requested last year due to the request for making the current ½ time position a full time position as mentions by Mr. Browne earlier. Mr. Gorzelany reported that on-line tax payments are running about 2% of total.

Mr. Hiller reported that the Town is in negotiations for a new tax system to be added onto the MUNIS system and it is anticipated that by the end of the calendar year significant changes in the tax system will be made especially with on-line payment options.

**Public Comment**

None

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

Mr. Leslie reported that this budget is 5.86% higher than last year's request. Mr. Leslie also reported that software maintenance costs are being absorbed in the fees and professional services account. Mr. Leslie also reported that his department is working on the disaster recovery system at Fairfield Woods Library.

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Chairman Flynn requested Mr. Leslie to prepare a report of the breakdown of costs increases by area/type including any fees being absorbed from other departments and identify those departments. Chairman Flynn also asked Mr. Leslie to prepare a report breaking out reclassification of line items in his budget.

Mr. Leslie also reported that he intends to bring at least one of the conference rooms at Independence Hall up to IT speed for the \$5K requested in the Capital Budget.

Mr. Hiller, in response to questions from the Boards, reported that computer leasing options could be looked into but, in the past, were found not to be advantageous for the Town to pursue.

**Public Comment**

None

**3130 Board of Finance:** Representing the Board of Finance was Paul Hiller.

Mr. Hiller reported that the increase is due to contractual increases for the auditors.

**Public Comment**

None

**3150 Unemployment Compensation:** Representing Unemployment Compensation was Paul Hiller.

Mr. Hiller reported that this budget contains a 36% increase. Mr. Hiller reported that the Town receives bills on an irregular basis for extended benefits under federal guidelines and this budget is a reflection of the current economic times. Mr. Hiller further explained that seasonal workers for the Town cost the majority of this budget but there are no benefits paid to these employees.

Chairman Flynn requested Mr. Hiller to prepare a report breaking out what various departments are costing the Town in this area and how many are seasonal employees.

**Public Comment**

None

**Selectman's Salary and Town Clerk's Salary**

Mr. Hiller distributed a survey of area municipal salaries from CCM and reviewed it with the Board. Mr. Hiller noted that the BOF sets salaries for the upcoming term before the term begins according to state Statutes and is ratified by the RTM. Mr. Hiller also noted that the increase is done in two tiers.

Chairman Flynn asked Mr. Hiller to ask the Town Attorney if the salaries can be changed every year instead of the current two tier method and report his finding back to the BOF.

**Public Comment**

None

**Public Executive Budget Session – Discussion**

**Balance in Internal Service Fund**

Mr. Flatto reported that the health insurance trend in February was much better than in previous months. Mr. Flatto noted that as of July 1, 2010 the balance in the fund was \$5.2M and the balance as of June 30, 2011 could be \$4.4M and could go down further to \$3.9M if the budget is passed as presented. Mr. Hiller distributed updated information previously requested by the Boards and reviewed the reports with the Boards.

Chairman Flynn asked Mr. Hiller to distribute a report of the draws for Risk Management over the past 2 years as well as a report of trend lines on Worker's Compensation town medical based on actual through February 28<sup>th</sup> and AON estimates for FY10-11 which were distributed last week.

In response to questions from the Boards regarding how the Town and Boe could achieve better planning, Mr. Hiller reported that this item is based on trends. Chairman Flynn noted that the volatility is caused by recalculating every month. Mr. Flatto noted that the goal is to be no worse than the balance at

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June 30, 2011 in the ISF. Dr. Title reported that the vote on the agreement of how to spend the \$450K to be left in the BOE budget by placing this item in the Capital Improvement Projects budget for computer switching items is to be added to the BOE meeting agenda for March 29, 2011 and Dr. Title is recommending that the BOE vote be positive.

Mr. Brachfeld said that, in his opinion, this is the same as if the BOF issued a \$450K bond to put money directly into the ISF and he is very uncomfortable about doing this. It was noted during the discussion that followed that no one wants to do this again next year and/or the year after that.

A discussion followed on the possibility of adding projects in the proposed budget that are estimated at a cost over \$50K into a bonding resolution in an effort to add funding to the balance in the ISF as is being done with the \$450K switching project from the BOE budget. Mr. Flatto pointed out that the Rating Agencies don't see the budget numbers for next year, the Town just needs to show the Rating Agencies that it is working on the problem. Mr. Hiller noted that only one of the three agencies has highlighted this as a potential problem.

Mr. Flatto stated that, in his opinion, if the Worker's Compensation item was moved out of the ISF, this problem would go away. Mr. Flatto also said that this has been done in many AAA communities and he is very comfortable with doing it this way.

Chairman Flynn asked Mrs. Gardiner to email the adjustments spreadsheet to the BOF tomorrow if at all possible.

Chairman Flynn asked Mr. Hiller to get a reconciliation of the Recreation Department's Revolving Fund to the Boards as soon as possible.

Chairman Flynn also noted that his first priority is to shore up the ISF by \$1.3M in order to do no harm. Mr. Flatto stated that a supplemental Bond Resolution can be done if additional funds are needed.

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