

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
May 23, 2022

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQRUPSI6Mek>

A meeting of the Town of Fairfield was held on Monday, May 23, 2022 at 8 PM via Webex/phone.

The meeting was called to order at 8 PM by Moderator Mark McDermott.

PRESENT: 40 ABSENT: 0 VACANCY: 0

PRESENT: Bateson, Furey, Longo, Ruggiero, Gerber, McCormack, Perham, Steele, Durrell, Galdenzi, Lambert, Pistilli, Karson, Kelly, Spolyar, Zezima, Diaz, Garskof, Siebert, Wolk, Berecz, Gale, Graceffa, Havey, Kuhn, McDermott, Vergara, Wackerman, Ference, Iacono, Messina, P. Tallman, Brown, Georgiadis, Horton, Scinto, Astarita, Britton, Petise, S. Tallman

ITEM NO. 1 ON CALL: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE

Moderator McDermott led the Body in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Cindy Perham announced the appointment of Bill Gerber to fill the vacancy of Hal Schwartz in Dist. 2.

Consent Calendar: The Moderator announced that items 5, 7, 9 & 12 were eligible for the Consent Calendar.

Jay Wolk, District 5 said he was very happy to see the work on the Rooster River flood project finally coming to fruition.

VOTE: The Consent Calendar was unanimously approved.

ITEM NO. 2 ON CALL: APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF APRIL 25, 2022 & MAY 2, 2022

Cindy Perham, District 2 moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

VOTE: The minutes of the meetings of April 25, 2022 and May 2, 2022 were approved with 39 in favor and 1 abstention (Gerber).

ITEM NO. 3 ON CALL: TO CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION
RECOMMENDED BY THE TOWN PLAN & ZONING COMMISSION:
“RESOLVED, THAT THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD OPT OUT OF THE STATE-
MANDATED PARKING REGULATIONS AND DEFAULT LANGUAGE FOR
ACCESSORY APARTMENTS, PURSUANT TO PUBLIC ACT 21-29.”

Liz Zezima, District 4 moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

Tom Lambert, District 3 said he would vote no simply because it restricts housing further, but it opens accessory apartments further which he supports.

VOTE: The motion to opt-out of the state-mandated parking regulations and default language for accessory apartments was approved with 37 in favor and 3 opposed (Lambert, Graceffa, Georgiadis).

ITEM NO. 4 ON CALL: TO CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION
RECOMMENDED BY THE FIRST SELECTWOMAN: “RESOLVED, THAT A
CERTAIN AGREEMENT NEGOTIATED BY AND BETWEEN THE TOWN OF
FAIRFIELD AND THE FAIRFIELD POLICE UNION, CONNECTICUT
ORGANIZATION FOR PUBLIC SAFETY, LOCAL #530 CONCERNING

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CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR THE PERIOD COMMENCING JULY 1, 2022 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2025 BE, AND HEREBY IS, RATIFIED.”

Jeff Steele, District 2 moved this item as distributed with the call, duly seconded.

VOTE: The agreement between the Town of Fairfield and the Fairfield Police Union Local 530 was approved by unanimous voice vote.

ITEM NO. 5 ON CALL:

TO CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN: “RESOLVED, THAT THE FIRST SELECTWOMAN BE, AND HEREBY IS, AUTHORIZED TO ENTER INTO THE PROPOSED MOU AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT FOR THE FAIRCHILD WHEELER DETENTION PROJECT FROM ARPA FUNDS DEDICATED TO ROOSTER RIVER FLOOD MITIGATION [ARPA ROOSTER RIVER ACCOUNT #14501010- 59996-81007 - ROOSTER RIVER DETENTION AREA].”

This item was on the Consent Calendar.

ITEM NO. 6 ON CALL:

TO HEAR, CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE: “RESOLVED, THAT THE BOND RESOLUTION ENTITLED, ‘A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$1,949,778 FOR THE COSTS OF TOWN-WIDE FACILITY SYSTEM UPGRADES AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION, BE, AND HEREBY IS, APPROVED.”

Laura Karson, District 4 moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

VOTE: The bond resolution for the town-wide facility system upgrades was approved by unanimous voice vote.

ITEM NO. 7 ON CALL:

TO HEAR, CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE: “RESOLVED, THAT THE BOND RESOLUTION ENTITLED, ‘A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$7,000,000 FOR THE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE EMERGENCY RADIO PROJECT, AUTHORIZING A GRANT TO REIMBURSE \$3,500,000 OF SUCH APPROPRIATION, AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION,’ BE, AND HEREBY IS, APPROVED.”

This item was on the Consent Calendar.

ITEM NO. 8 ON CALL:

TO HEAR, CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE: “RESOLVED, THAT THE BOND RESOLUTION ENTITLED, ‘A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$2,250,000 FOR THE TIDE GATE SYSTEM PROJECT AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION,’ BE, AND HEREBY IS, APPROVED.”

Karen Wackerman, District 7 moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

Conservation Director Tim Bishop said this project will allow for increased flood protection, control and capacity especially in response to future storm forecasts. DEEP, SHPO and USACE approvals are also necessary.

Jill Vergara, District 7 asked for an explanation of “other considerations” in the 14 points. Mr. Bishop explained the integrity of the earthen dike should be investigated as part of the project to be sure it’s not compromised by vegetation.

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VOTE: The bond resolution for the tide gate system was approved by unanimous voice vote.

ITEM NO.9 ON CALL: TO HEAR, CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE: “RESOLVED, THAT THE BOND RESOLUTION ENTITLED, ‘A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$450,000 FOR THE COSTS OF THE TRANSFER STATION REPAIR PROJECT AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION,’ BE, AND HEREBY IS, APPROVED.”

This item was on the Consent Calendar.

ITEM NO 10 ON CALL: TO HEAR, CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE: “RESOLVED, THAT THE BOND RESOLUTION ENTITLED, ‘A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$4,125,000 FOR THE COSTS OF THE ROGER LUDLOWE MIDDLE SCHOOL TURF FIELD PROJECT AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION,’ BE, AND HEREBY IS, APPROVED.”

Jill Vergara, District 7 moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

Amendment: Ms. Vergara moved the following underlined language be inserted in paragraph 1 of the bond resolution: As recommended by the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen, the Town of Fairfield (the “Town”) hereby appropriates the sum of Four Million One Hundred Twenty-Five Thousand and 00/100 Dollars (\$4,125,000) for the costs to convert the existing multipurpose fields at the Roger Ludlowe Middle School to artificial turf using either acrylic-coated sand (Envirofill) infill or thermo-plastic elastomer (TPE) infill and to install new lighting at the fields that meets the specifications of the International Dark Sky Association, and all related engineering, administrative, financing, legal, contingency and other soft costs (the “Project”), duly seconded.

Pamela Iacono, District 8 asked Mr. Calabrese for confirmation whether adding this language specifying these products would not result in a potential price increase to which Mr. Calabrese confirmed that is correct based on his estimates.

Ms. Iacono read an email with bond counsel’s opinion, “While we do not usually like such specificity in bond resolutions there is nothing prohibiting the suggested conditions to the project, when other clients have dealt with turf specifications the understanding as to turf or grass and or turf specifications has been just that – an understanding between the approving bodies and responsible municipal department and not a specific condition of the bond resolution.” Ms. Iacono said in this case the approving body, the RTM, is very clear on the record that we want it to be one of these aforementioned products in this amendment, and that this was something that both sides of the aisle were in agreement with for the good of the town. She said the place for this specificity is to state it for the record, not in the bond resolution. Ms. Iacono said that she appreciates the Moderator’s reaching across the aisle for support for the amendment, and that in the interest of bipartisanship, she supports the motion, but in keeping with bond counsel’s advice, we should not get in the habit of adding such specificity in a bond resolution.

Ms. Vergara said this was a very good example of working together. There was ambiguity regarding encapsulated crumb rubber and the specificity was warranted.

Hannah Gale, District 6 was appreciative of the residents who asked the RTM not to approve the fields as these plastics are potentially harmful.

VOTE: The amendment passed with 39 in favor and 1 opposed (Gale).

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Ms. Vergara said she appreciated Ms. Gale's concerns, but she saw during the pandemic how necessary it was for kids to be outside playing sports and socializing with their teammates. Field availability needs to increase. She hopes the Town does a cost benefit analysis as grass is the best alternative for fields and we are probably in a better position than other towns; we need to seed, irrigate and maintain our fields.

Karen Wackerman said she recognizes the importance of our fields, but is concerned about the environmental and health impacts.

Sharon Pistilli, District 3 said given the cost considerations she would rather have more grass than artificial turf fields for our kids to play on.

Public Comment: Dylan O'Connor spoke in favor.

Dru Georgiadis, District 9 agreed there are environmental and health concerns surrounding plastic materials used for artificial turf fields.

Alex Durrell, District 3 asked why a regulation baseball field cannot fit there. Anthony Calabrese said it is a northeast orientation.

Peter Tallman, District 8 asked if they could get a waiver from the CIAC to which Mr. Calabrese replied yes.

VOTE: The bond resolution as amended in the amount of \$4,125,000 for the artificial turf field was approved with 37 in favor and 3 opposed (Galdenzi, Gale, Georgiadis).

ITEM NO. 11 ON CALL:

TO HEAR, CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE: "RESOLVED, THAT THE BOND RESOLUTION ENTITLED, 'A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$22,701,443 FOR THE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH PHASE I OF THE AIR CONDITIONING UPGRADE PROJECT AT VARIOUS SCHOOLS, AUTHORIZING GRANTS TO REIMBURSE \$1,116,320 OF SUCH APPROPRIATION AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION,' BE, AND HEREBY IS, APPROVED."

Lisa Havey, District 6 moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

VOTE: The bond resolution for phase 1 of the air conditioning upgrade at various schools was approved by unanimous voice vote.

ITEM NO. 12 ON CALL:

TO HEAR, CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE: "RESOLVED, THAT THE BOND RESOLUTION ENTITLED, 'A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$1,094,485 FOR THE COSTS OF THE REPLACEMENT OF THE HVAC ROOFTOP UNITS AT FAIRFIELD WARDE HIGH SCHOOL FITTS HOUSE AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE A PORTION OF SUCH APPROPRIATION,' BE, AND HEREBY IS, APPROVED."

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ITEM NO. 13 ON CALL: THE MODERATOR HAS REFERRED AN ORDINANCE CREATING AN ARTS COMMISSION, SPONSORED BY JEFF STEELE, DISTRICT 2; SHARON PISTILLI, DISTRICT 3; MARCY SPOLYAR, DISTRICT 4; HANNAH GALE, DISTRICT 6; JILL VERGARA, DISTRICT 7 & KAREN WACKERMAN, DISTRICT 7 TO THE LEGISLATION AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE UNDER RULE 32 OF THE RTM RULES TO REGULATE.

The Moderator announced L&A will consider this item next month.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth P. Browne, MMC, MCTC
Town Clerk