



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK  
Board of Finance

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302 Main Street • Old Saybrook, Connecticut 06475-1741

BOARD OF FINANCE VIRTUAL JOINT MEETING WITH  
THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES

**February 16, 2021 6:30 p.m.**

BOF Attendant Members

David LaMay, Chairman  
Carol Rzasa, V. Chairwoman  
Tom Stevenson  
Barry O'Neill  
Rick Swan  
Paul Carver  
Bruce Carlson

Absent Members

In Attendance

Carl Fortuna, First Selectman  
Scott Giegerich, Selectman  
Matthew Pugliese, Selectman  
Lee Ann Palladino, Finance Director; Treasurer  
Gerri Lewis, Clerk

Chairman LaMay called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and welcomed Bruce Carlson to his first meeting as a member of the Board of Finance.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance:**

Chairman LaMay led the pledge.

**3. Minutes**

A motion to accept the minutes of February 2, 2021 was made by Ms. Rzasa, seconded by Mr. O'Neill and passed 7-0-1.

A motion to accept the minutes of February 9, 2021 was made by Ms. Rzasa, seconded by Mr. Swan and passed 7-0-1.

#### **4. Comments from the Public**

Chairman LaMay read a letter into the record from Susan Eleanor LaPlace.

At this time, Selectman Fortuna presented the budget approved by the Board of Selectmen to the Board of Finance as follows:

He noted that the Board of Selectmen approved a \$47,187,717 budget for fiscal year 2022, an increase of \$167,292, or .36% over last year.

Selectman Fortuna said due to the town's stable financial situation they were able to project a slight decrease in the mill rate from its current 20.05 to between 20.00 and 20.04. He noted that the mill rate increased from 19.75 to 20.05. He said this year is the second time in four years that the town has been able to lower the mill rate. He said that in spite of the coronavirus, the town has good tax collection numbers in both January 2021 and July 2020. To date he noted about 95 percent of the budgeted revenues have been collected. The town's grand list increased by about \$6 million, leading to a revenue increase of approximately \$120,000.

The town budget also assumes \$463,000 in anticipated funds coming from the state, an increase of \$88,000 from last year, even while revenues from interest rates reached an all-time low.

He noted that the town's debt service is projected to decline \$2,851 as compared to last year. He said the town budget increased \$104,801, a .61 percent increase over last year. The major driver of the increase is a \$154,000 increase in salaries, \$127,000 of which is attributed to public safety.

Additional costs include \$5,000 for translation services for the Department of Youth and Family Services and increased hours for a position in the library. The budget provides \$242,857 for public works projects in the year 2022, including \$135,000 for the gutters at the Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center.

The Board of Education requested an increase of \$65,342, or .24 percent, in this year's budget, for a total of \$26,771,365. The main driver of this was an increase in salaries for educators and staff.

Selectman Fortuna noted that they continue to appropriately invest in capital projects, and they continue to invest in having healthy reserves for all departments.

He told the board that budget books will be available within the week. They would be available for pick up or mailed or delivered.

Mr. O'Neill noted that there was a lot of savings in the budget. He suggested that consultants should come in to evaluate the Department of Police Services and do a study. Ms. Rzasa agreed with Mr. O'Neill. She noted that it shouldn't be adversarial. Mr. Swan noted that there are other departments that should be looked at as well.

Chairman LaMay wondered who would request the funds for this kind of project.

Selectman Fortuna noted that he wanted time to think about it and perhaps meet with the Chief and Chairman of the Police Commission.

Chairman LaMay asked about the balance in the Debt Service budget, to which Selectman Fortuna replied \$450K.

Chairman LaMay asked about the balance in the Capital non-recurring account to which Ms. Palladino noted that it is \$600k as of July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Stevenson inquired about the process for a raise. Mr. Swan inquired about the Park & Rec study. Selectman Fortuna noted that they voted to increase some fees.

Selectman Giegerich commented how proud he was to be a part of this process. Always appreciate the efforts of everyone involved.

Chairman LaMay thanked everyone and reminded them of the Public Hearing to be held virtually on March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

This meeting was recorded on the Town's YouTube video website.

## **5. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by Chairman LaMay, seconded by Ms. Rzasa at 7:48 p.m. and was so voted unanimously.

Submitted:

Gerri Lewis