

The **Board of Finance** held a regular meeting on Tuesday, October 22, 2009 in the lower meeting room at Town Hall South, 3 Main Street, Newtown, CT. John Kortze called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** John Kortze, James Gaston, Marty Gersten, Joseph Kearney, Harry Waterbury and Michael Portnoy

**ALSO PRESENT:** First Selectman Joseph Borst, Finance Director Robert Tait, Public Works Director Fred Hurley, twenty five members of the public and one member of the press.

**VOTER COMMENTS:** **Ruby Johnson, 16 Chestnut Hill Road** spoke about the return on investment for the Sandy Hook Streetscape. She said that economic development does not lower taxes but spurs residential growth. How much will Fairfield Hills spur growth? How much is it going to cost to buy land for the senior center? Fairfield Hills Authority presented to the Legislative Council that upfront lease money, in the future, is expected to be \$5,730,000.00. The Selectmen have the power to spend that money any way they wish. (Att. A&B) **Michael Burton, 107 Glen Road**, said that the Sandy Hook Streetscape has been on the books for five years. The first phase was complete four or five years ago. The second phase is pushed back. It is time the Town stepped forward and get this done. The return on investment is \$65 dollars for every \$1 dollar that the Town spent on the sidewalk project. The Town will stand to gain \$14,000,000 in private investment if the phase II project was done. We need to remember all parts of town that need improvement. It doesn't matter which is done first, the waterline or the sidewalks.

**Deborah Zukowski, 4 Cornfield Ridge Road** is concerned that some CIP requests remove money from the operating budget while some CIP projects offer a return on investment. The next budget season will lose services because there are added operational costs. She wants the Board of Finance to investigate methods for reducing the impact of the money transferred to the operational budget. Another concern is that there will be shock at the time of getting real numbers on projects as compared to the estimates.

**Kevin Cragin, 22 Georges Hill Road** is a Fire Commissioner for the Town of Newtown and the Chairman for the Board of Fire Commissioners and requested the Board of Finance consider the request for \$1.5 million for the Hook & Ladder building. The building is a Town owned building and has been in disarray for over 23 years. The building is unsafe to use. There is in excess of \$2.5 million worth of equipment in the building. The Board is very concerned about putting brand new fire trucks into that building in the near future.

Mr. Kortze stated that the Board of Finance is addressing what the Selectmen have requested. He asked Mr. Cragin if this is the first time Hook & Ladder has been presented in the CIP in recent memory. Mr. Cragin stated they stopped putting it in four or five years ago because there has been communication

difficulty in the past between Hook & Ladder and the Selectmen at the time. Mr. Kortze stated the issue is there, the Board has asked about it and it has not been in the plan.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Mr. Kortze confirmed that the Board received copies of the pension questions that were requested. First Selectman Borst reported that the Town of Newtown Board of Education will be receiving over \$1,000,000 in IDEA funds and an additional \$46,185 for special education. Mr. Tait stated this was calculated during the budget process. Mr. Kortze noted that Gary Davis and Po Murray submitted a list of CIP Recommendations for the Legislative Council Finance Subcommittee. Mr. Davis said it was sent just for informational purposes and feedback, if the Board of Finance has any. Ms. Murray explained the Legislative Council Finance Subcommittee would review some of the recommendations. The Finance Subcommittee needs to make recommendations to the full Council; that has not been done yet.

**ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:** Mr. Gersten moved to approve the minutes of October 13, 2009. Mr. Waterbury seconded. All in favor.

**FIRST SELECTMAN REPORT:** First Selectman Borst reported the Town will receive a \$63,000 credit from CL&P for incorporating efficient utilities in the Newtown Municipal Center. The National League of Cities in conjunction with CGI Communications will develop an economic development video for the Town of Newtown at no cost that will be linked into the Town website. This will help in economic development, showing the history of the Town, the living conditions, the schools and the businesses in town.

**FINANCE DIRECTOR REPORT:** none

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Discussion and possible action:**

- 1. CIP - Selectmen: All questions and answers submitted to the various department heads and commissions are attached to the minutes.**

**Fairfield Hills Authority** – (Att. C&D) Bob Geckle and Walt Motyka reported on the CIP requests with an overview of what's been done and what will be done in the future with the infrastructure. The CIP request would complete the inner circle. Ms. Murray asked if FFHA had considered demolishing the dilapidated buildings prior to completing the permanent infrastructure. Mr. Geckle explained they are finishing the core, demolishing the buildings within that area for the 2010-2011 CIP. Mr. Geckle said they have to bid the work, a process that takes a couple of months. The position of the Authority is to move forward over the five year period and demolish the buildings. Mr. Hurley said there are people who are bringing tools and aggressively breaking into the buildings. Chief

Kehoe believes the crime will get worse before it gets better and encourages the town to take the buildings (attractive nuisances) down. Mr. Geckle stated 35%-40% of the FFHA operational budget is for security. Demolition of all buildings would total approximately \$15,000,000. The savings would be approximately \$240,000 to do all buildings at the same time. Mr. Hurley stated doing all buildings at one time would be a nightmare, with all the activities taking place, sports, hiking and the Newtown Youth Academy. Mr. Gaston asked if they considered using the money to take the buildings down before completing the core. Mr. Motyka said the area is occupied and permanent services need to be brought to the area. Ms. Murray asked if the Public Works Department will perform the infrastructure work. Mr. Hurley reported the Public Works Department did work previously to help get the Municipal Center up and running. The CIP request is increased because the FFHA will have to hire outside contractors for future work. Ms. Murray asked how much the Greenwich Hall project cost. Mr. Geckle answered that the cost was roughly \$3.2 million of which roughly \$2 million was for the demolition. First Selectman Borst reported the Town is going with the second lowest bidder for the demolition of Litchfield Hall. The Selectmen prioritized taking down poles and then the demolition of buildings. Mr. Kearney complimented Mr. Geckle, Mr. Motyka, Mr. Studley and the entire Fairfield Hills Authority on the presentation. Mr. Gaston suggested putting the presentation on the website.

**Police Department** – (Att. D) Chief Kehoe introduced Commissioner Brian Budd, Captain Rios and Officer Kulgren. Chief Kehoe reiterated the space needs for the Police Department. Chief Kehoe stated that Mr. Geckle recommended six different sites, five at FFH, one just outside of FFH to consider for a new building. The amount requested in the CIP is a placeholder and is a maximum cost (\$12,000,000 was originally requested). The architect used has done over forty five police departments in CT and MA. The request is based on a new building. The Selectmen reduced the request \$2,000,000 because they felt it was too high per square footage.

Mr. Borst said that he has visited Hook & Ladder. He thinks if the Police Department moves out of the building the Hook & Ladder Fire House can move there.

Chief Kehoe doesn't think there will be additional operating cost with a new building but costs may be less in a new building that is 'green'. It was their understanding that they had to start at the end of the new CIP, when year five opened up they put in their request. The Police Department will make due in the current building. However, there are new State mandates that will change operational requirements and make it more difficult. Building onto the current building would mean two stories up and two stories down. The requested facility is for a thirty year facility, at build out this facility will

be sufficient. The FBI recommends 2.5 officers per 1,000 residents. Mr. Gaston would like to see that report. Chief Kehoe explained that officers were added to the force due to community demand: two officers for traffic enforcement, three school resource officers and one officer that works only in narcotics. Newtown is within the statewide average for officers vs. the size of town.

**Board of Fire Commissioners** - Mr. Cragin stated that there has been no correspondence with the BOFC about moving Hook & Ladder to Fairfield Hills. Also, nobody has spoken to them about moving to the Police Station should the PD move. Mr. Burton noted that the CIP request was submitted to the Selectmen and the Selectmen cut it. Rob Manna spoke as an official from Hook & Ladder and presented the history of Hook & Ladder (Att. F) and requested the support of the Board of Finance for a new fire house. Mr. Gersten asked if the Selectmen would reconsider this request if Hook & Ladder reapplied, Mr. Borst responded he would be willing to reconsider but couldn't speak for the other Selectmen. If a new fire house was approved it would take about 18 months to complete. Ms. Murray asked if property Hook & Ladder is looking at isn't approved, are they looking anywhere else such as Fairfield Hills. Mr. Manna answered that Fairfield Hills is enough at the edge of the district it would bring them to the border of Botsford and Sandy Hook and response times to the opposite edge of the district would increase dramatically.

**Public Works** – Mr. Hurley explained the lifetime of a bridge is fifty plus years. Road work can be shortened or lengthened but bridges cannot. The road plan can be followed more closely by pulling bridges from the operational budget. The bridges need to be done, they are a priority. Engineering studies will be done closer to the projects. The Public Works Department cannot do the bridge work because cranes and specialized culverts are required and the work is too time consuming. The department is not big enough to do all the maintenance work that needs to be done in town. Mr. Hurley stated a \$200,000,000 asset on a fifty year replacement program it would cost \$4,000,000 a year. The bridges do not meet current design standards, they are too narrow, there are accidents at each bridge and there are material deficiencies on the bridges. Ms. Murray asked why the requests for the road projects are identical to the last request. Mr. Hurley answered that the project wasn't funded. The \$850,000 budget money is to be spent on a bridge on Castle Meadow and a dam at Old Mill. Mr. Hurley explained that the hours the Public Works Department spent at FFH are not in an electronically retrievable form, but all paperwork. All the worksheets and load sheets would have to be looked at for every day. Mr. Gaston said that future technology will help to track this type of work.

**Parks & Recreation** - Mr. Kortze asked about 27 Church Hill Road. Mr. Borst stated it is still under negotiation. Mr. Marks stated that the Parks &

Recreation Commission supports the School Boards effort to purchase this property because it would help access to the fields, it improves the traffic flow. Mr. Gaston asked if field usage back up can be supplied. Mr. Gersten asked if the seniors are being addressed at all. Mr. Borst answered no, they are willing to wait for their own building. Ms. Mangold noted that the Community Center would have programs offered to seniors. The Parks & Recreation will be addressed at a future meeting.

- 2. Transfers:** Mr. Gaston moved the transfer from Contingency (01570-2000) to Contractual Services (01490-4060) in the amount of \$28,700. Seconded by Mr. Gersten. Mr. Tait explained that the Land Use Department neglected to put money into a PO at the end of the last fiscal year to carry over for Conservation Wetlands Inventory. The money went back into the general fund and now needs to be transferred to cover the commitment. All in favor.

The \$50,000 transfer from Contingency to Transfer out - Cap. Projects was tabled.

### **Unfinished Business**

Discussion and possible action:

- 1. Update on teacher negotiations** - Mr. Portnoy reported that the teachers voted 87% in favor of the agreements. The Board of Education will discuss this at their next meeting.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Mr. Borst noted that the pension answers that were supplied to the Board earlier were premature. Mr. Tait said he had prepared a forecast of debt service schedules assuming some CIP amounts. He used \$10,000,000 in each year underneath our cap.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Having no further business, the Board of Finance adjourned their regular meeting at 10:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Susan Marcinek, Clerk

- Att. A & B: Ruby Johnson handouts
- Att. C: CIP Recommendations from Gary Davis & Po Murray
- Att. D & E: Fairfield Hills presentation
- Att. F: Newtown Police Department Facility Needs Assessment
- Att. G: Hook & Ladder History
- Att. H: CIP Questions and Answers

Board of Finance  
October 22, 2009