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RTM WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

Town of Branford

Neil E. Griffin
BRANFORD TOWN CLERK

Peter Black, Josh Brooks, Chris Hynes, Alisa Waterman
John Hartwell, Chair



REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING *MINUTES*

March 5, 2025

7:00 PM, Community House, 46 Church Street

The Ways & Means Committee held its regularly scheduled session on March 5th, 2025 at the Community House. Also in attendance were First Selectman Jamie Cosgrove, RTM members Tracy Everson, Frank Twohill, Ray Ingraham, and Adrian Bonenberger, as well as Finance Director Jim Finch.

1. Roll Call - all member present
2. Approved minutes from 12/4/2024
Moved by Representative Waterman, seconded by Representative Brooks. Approved 5-0
3. To consider, and if appropriate, recommend a transfer request from the Finance Director for FY2025 as follows:

Increase:

10190000-480296	Fund Balance	\$481,516
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Increase:

10149040-588802	Contingency	\$481,516
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Resolved: that the RTM consider and if appropriate increase appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2025 General Fund Budget from \$135,311,096 to \$135,792,612. This increase will be funded through an appropriation from fund balance and will be used to supplement the contingency account to cover retroactive wages.

At the request of Chairman Hartwell prior to discussing this specific agenda item, Finance Director Finch reviewed with the committee a one page summary of fund balance movements taken recently by the Board of Finance that would be addressed during the meeting (see "Finance Director Finch fund balance overview.pdf"). It showed that the undesignated fund stood at \$53.7M in June 2024, which would be reduced by \$9.1M through BOF appropriations if approved by the RTM, further restricted by \$6.1M in BOF "assignments" (promises of future appropriations if needed), and added to by \$8.5M coming from the Medical Self Insurance Fund. The net result is that the undesignated fund would have \$46.9M available.

Agenda item #3 was then discussed and approved.

Moved by Representative Black, seconded by Representative Brooks. Approved 5-0

4. To review a report from the Finance Director discussing actions to consider in advance of the budget hearings and to act on the following items:

A. General Fund

Increase:		
10190000-480296	Fund Balance	475,000
Increase:		
10150000-5991XX	Transfer Out – Police Technology Fund	475,000

Corresponding Fund Creation and Transfer FY 2025

Increase:		Amount
7XX-90000-490010	Transfer In from General Fund	475,000
Increase:		
7XX-42010-579150	Technology Acquisitions	475,000

Resolved: that the RTM consider and if appropriate increase appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2025 General Fund Budget from \$136,092,612 to \$136,567,612. This increase will be funded through an appropriation from fund balance and will be used to establish a Police Technology Fund.

Finance Director Finch shared his projection for a new Police Technology Fund along with a breakdown of Axon dashboard cameras, tasers, and body cameras (see “Finance Director Finch 3/5/25 backup for transfers.pdf”).

Moved by Representative Black, seconded by Representative Brooks. Approved 5-0

- B. To consider, and if appropriate, approve a transfer and resolution to supplement the BOE Lease Fund for School Technology:

General Fund

Increase:		
10190000-480296	Fund Balance	250,000
Increase:		
10150000-599127	Transfer Out – BOE Lease Fund	250,000

Resolved: that the RTM consider and if appropriate increase appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2025 General Fund Budget from \$136,567,612 to \$136,817,612. This increase will be funded through an appropriation from fund balance and will be used to increase the contribution to the Lease Fund for BOE computer devices (see “Finance Director Finch 3/5/25 backup for transfers.pdf”)

Moved by Representative Black, seconded by Representative Brooks. Approved 5-0

C. To consider, and if appropriate, approve a transfer and resolution to supplement the Coastal Resiliency Fund:

Coastal Resiliency Fund:

Resolved: that the RTM consider and if appropriate increase appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2025 General Fund Budget from \$136,817,612 to \$137,567,612. This increase will be funded through an appropriation from fund balance and will be used to supplement the Coastal Resiliency Fund.

General Fund

Increase:		
10190000-480296	Fund Balance	750,000
Increase:		
10150000-599134	Transfer Out – Coastal Resiliency Fund	750,000

(see “Finance Director Finch 3/5/25 backup for transfers.pdf”)

Moved by Representative Waterman, seconded by Representative Black. Approved 5-0

D. Review and discuss the following resolutions/transfers by the Board of Finance assigning a portion of fund balance for identifiable needs for which an accurate cost estimate is unavailable. No votes taken.

James Blackstone Memorial Library

- \$400,000 to create a reservation of fund balance for anticipated repairs to Blackstone Library.

E. Engineering

- \$1,690,000 to create a reservation of fund balance for the Engineering Department’s anticipated match requirements.

F. Board of Education Federal Funds

- \$3 million to create a reservation of fund balance to assist the town in establishing a plan to gradually reduce the reliance of these programs on federal funds if this funding is reduced or withdrawn completely.

5. To consider, and if appropriate, approve the following resolutions and transfers using reserves to reduce liabilities and to smooth out costs that experience a high level of volatility:

Police Pension Fund

Medical Self Insurance Fund

Increase:		
40290000-480296	Fund Balance	8,500,000
Increase:		
40290000-XXXXX	Transfer Out General Fund	8,500,000

General Fund – Transfer to Increase Pension Contribution

Increase:		
10190000-480296	Fund Balance	6,500,000
Increase:		
10149010-523120	Retirement - Police	6,500,000

Resolved: That the Ways & Means committee recommends to the RTM an increase in appropriations from \$137,567,612 to \$144,067,612. This increase will be funded through an appropriation from fund balance and will be used to supplement the Police Pension Fund.

(see "Finance Director Finch 3/5/25 backup for transfers.pdf")

Review and Discuss: That the Board of Finance assigns \$1,000,000 to create a reservation of fund balance for future health insurance costs.

Moved by Representative Black, seconded by Representative Hynes. Approved 5-0

6. To consider, and if appropriate, approve the following proposed bond resolution:

RESOLVED: That the resolution entitled: "RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$5,300,000 FOR THE FIRE EQUIPMENT PROJECT AND THE FINANCING OF SAID APPROPRIATION BY THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OF THE TOWN AND NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF SUCH BONDS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$5,300,000 THEREFORE" be recommended for adoption by the Representative Town Meeting.

(see "Finance Director Finch 3/5/25 backup for transfers.pdf" for full text of bonding resolution)

Motion to dispense with reading the full resolution:

Moved by Representative Brooks, seconded by Representative Hynes. Approved 5-0

Motion to approve:

Moved by Representative Hynes, seconded by Representative Black. Approved 5-0

7. Other business

Chairman Hartwell pointed out that the scheduled April 9th W&M meeting conflicts with the full RTM meeting that same day and needs to be canceled. The committee agreed to leave open the option of meeting on April 2nd to hear budget presentations as well as using the scheduled meeting on May 7th if needed.

Respectfully Submitted
John Hartwell
Chair, RTM Ways & Means Committee