

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the Board of Finance was held on Tuesday, February 20, 2024. Attendance was by Zoom and in person. Present at City Hall were Mayor Elinor Carbone, Comptroller John Monks, and Board of Finance Members Deborah Iannacito, Laurene Pesce, Wendy Traub, and James Wright. Board of Finance Members Chris Beyus and Christopher Anderson joined via Zoom.

Mayor Carbone called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVE MEETING MINUTES**

On a motion by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mrs. Pesce, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Regular Meeting Minutes from January 16, 2024.

**CITY PERFORMANCE REPORTS**

On a motion by Mrs. Traub, seconded by Mr. Wright the Board voted unanimously to accept the Budget Performance Reports through December 31, 2023, for the City.

**BOARD OF EDUCATION PERFORMANCE REPORT**

On a motion by Mrs. Pesce, seconded by Mr. Beyus, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Board of Education Budget Performance Reports for January 2024. Mrs. Pesce asked why several lines were close to expended, or over expended at this point in the year. Mayor Carbone told the Board that since the Board of Education wasn't here, she could get the questions to them for an answer at the March 19, 2024, meeting.

Mr. Anderson joined at 5:07 p.m.

Mayor Carbone told the Board that there have never been any procedures for Finance to review and approve the Board of Education Budget Performance Reports. She would like to have a policy in place where the City and Board of Education both must meet with the Board of Finance to go over the adopted budgets and show where they have made the cuts and what is your final amended budget. She would like to have quarterly meetings with the Board of Finance and the Board of Education to be able to answer questions that arise regarding the Budget Performance Reports. That would bring us right back into Budget adoption.

**BUSINESS BY DEPARTMENT HEADS**

On a motion by Mrs. Traub, seconded by Mr. Wright, the Board voted unanimously to consider business by department heads.

**Comptroller John Monks** told the Board that they are hoping to have the preliminary audit balance to the auditing team by the end of February. Mr. Monks also said that they are going to be getting the City Budget Performance Reports from January and February to the Board for review at the next meeting. Mayor Carbone told the Board that the City is on an extension for the Audit. She explained that hiring a Budget Manager, Erika Johnson, has freed up the Comptroller and Deputy Comptroller to be able to focus on the audit. Mayor Carbone told the Board that the Budget Subcommittee and the Boards will be seeing Ms. Johnson and Mr. Monks a lot as the presentations of the Budget come out. Mrs. Pesce asked how long the audit extension is for and Mr. Monks told her until the end of the month. Mayor Carbone said that the City will need another extension, and once the numbers are to the auditors that will determine how much of an extension they will be seeking. Mr. Beyus would like to have the Budget Manager attend the Board of Finance meetings in the future, Mayor Carbone said that Ms. Johnson will be at the City Council and Finance Budget meetings, along with the Budget Subcommittee to answer questions and present the budgets.

**BUSINESS BY MAYOR & MEMBERS**

On a motion by Mrs. Traub, seconded by Mr. Beyus, the Board voted unanimously to consider business by the Mayor and members of the Board of Finance.

**Mr. Wright** asked for an update on the Yankee Pedlar and if the demolition of the Torrington Company was on schedule. Mayor Carbone told him that there was a 120-day extension for commitment for funding for the Pedlar, with 30-day reports back to the City. Mrs. Iannacito asked when the 120 days started, Mayor Carbone told her that it started February 6, 2024, and will end June 5, 2024, with the first 30-day check-in being March 4, 2024. Mr. Beyus stated that the courts favor the defendant and will give them the benefit of the doubt. Mayor Carbone said that the Torrington Company demolition is making headway, everything is coming down brick by brick to see what can be salvaged. She said that there should be a huge change within the next 60 days with the buildings coming down. Mrs. Pesce asked if it was good news that Torrington Savings Bank was involved with the potential lending for the Pedlar, Mayor Carbone said that the letters that were presented were presented late. The letter stated that they have we would be interested in talking about potential interest in lending on this property.

**Mrs. Pesce** asked if there were new procedures in place after the audit discussion where there were findings, Mr. Monks told her that they are enforcing internal control procedures, which are reviewed and approved before being put through the system. Mayor Carbone said that there are new procedures in place and being enforced with Procurement regarding the ARPA funding. Mrs. Pesce asked if the City must pay the Tax Collector all the additional monies have been resolved for that year, and do you anticipate this again, Mayor Carbone

told her that is the Tax Collection Budget, and there is a line item for Additions/Deletions, that line item is the lawful corrections on assessments. Any piece of property over 1 million dollars becomes a lawsuit which can take months or even years. Mayor Carbone said that it isn't until the second and third year that you see those corrections taking place. If there is a determination that the assessment will be lowered the taxes will either go back to the taxpayer or get credited on the Grand List for the following year. Mrs. Pesce asked why the Board hasn't seen the line-item transfers to the Board for approval like in the past, Mayor Carbone explained that in FY22 they had left those line items whether it was a deficit or a surplus they were left there were no transfers, that's how we ended the year. In FY23 the Board will be seeing those line item transfers for approval. Mr. Monks said that when they become available, they will come to the Board as soon as possible. Mayor Carbone explained that if you look at the adopted, amended, and actual budgets will match. Mayor Carbone said that if you are not reading the whole budget and audit, you wouldn't understand the deficits which would be offset by a surplus. Mrs. Pesce said that the almost \$800,000 deficit was jarring. Mayor Carbone responded that there was a \$1.4 million surplus, despite the \$788,000 deficit in those line items. Mrs. Traub asked if they do interdepartmental transfers not being done, do we do departmental transfers if they are in a deficit. Mayor Carbone explained that they had a surplus of almost \$400,000 in the Police department, if this is a surplus seen year after year then that is something that can be looked closer at. If there is complete devastation in one department, there would be a request back to the Board of Finance for the authority to cover that shortfall, these are something that would happen annually, not month to month. Mrs. Pesce asked if the City was coming up on another property revaluation, Mayor Carbone said that the midterm revaluation starts October 1, 2024. Mayor Carbone added that last year there was \$470,000 in lawful corrections stemming from the Assessment appeals with a lot of lawsuits. She said that the Assessor's Office will oversee looking at the revaluations very carefully and not just accepting them. She said that for any properties coming in over a million, they will take a closer look to see what could turn into a lawsuit and a lawful correction. Mrs. Traub asked if the Assessor's Office could use the lawsuits to see what they are missing, Mayor Carbone said that they would be looking at those, as they had over 30 appeals after the revaluation which was five years ago. It has been a paper review of the sales of neighboring properties, especially after the sales of homes increased in 2020.

**Mrs. Iannacito** asked if the Board of Education meeting would be a question-answer or just a presentation, and what should the Board expect from that meeting, Mayor Carbone told her that the Board of Education would be asking to do a \$50,000 surplus transfer into the Capital Plan, do a presentation on the Capital Plan for FY24/25 and also be available to answer questions on the Budget Performance report.

**Mayor Carbone** told the Board that the Budget Adoption Schedule is set and will be sent to all Board members. The Level 1 Budget should be sent out to Board members by the end of this week.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mrs. Iannacito, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 5:48 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by*  
Heather Abraham, Asst. City Clerk

ATTEST:

  
CAROL L. ANDERSON, CITY CLERK