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**Board of Finance
Budget Hearing Minutes**

**Monday, March 8, 2025
Town Hall Auditorium 7:00pm**

- Present:** Chairman Glenn Patterson, Ronald R. Fedor, Bill Sheehan, Michael Rocchetti, Robert Tuneski, Josh Kelly, Joseph Filippetti
- Elected:** Rob Brule, First Selectman
- Staff:** Kimberly Allen, Finance Director; Christine Johnson, Library Director; Marc Balestracci, Chief of Police, Lt. Nicole VanOverloop, Lt. David Ferland, Lt. Patrick Flanagan, Admin Sgt Michael Fedor, Diane Driscoll, Office Coordinator Police Department; Michael Howley, Interim Director of Fire Services, Stephen Dubicki, Fire Marshall and Linda Finnegan, Office Coordinator Fire Services; Rebecca Hall, Admin Assistant Finance Office/BOF Recording Secretary
- Other:** Mim Wagner, President Library Board of Trustees
1. **Establishment of a quorum and call to order:**
A quorum was established and a call to order was established at 7:00pm, March 3, 2025.
 2. **Public comment:**
 - a. Helen Kwasniewski, Waterford resident discussing her concern regarding response for emergencies from Quaker Hill Fire Department (QHFD). Ms. Kwasniewski noted two (2) recent responses for fires in her neighborhood in Quaker Hill that fire houses other than QHFD responded. She expressed her concerns with lack of staffing in the QHFD and suggested residents in Quaker Hill receive tax refund from the town due to this lack of staffing.
 - b. Bryan Sayles, Waterford resident read aloud a letter to the Board of Finance regarding the lack of staff being assigned to the Quaker Hill and Goshen Fire Departments. Letter attached to minutes.

An opening statement regarding the budget process was made by Glenn Patterson, Chairman.

Standing Motion: was made by Bill Sheehan and seconded by Joseph Filippetti to tentatively approve the budget requests for FY25/26. Bill Sheehan will make motion on all budgets and Ron Fedor will second the motion.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

Review the Appeal by the Board of Finance to the Board of Selectman reduction of the FY26 Contingency Budget from \$273,000 to \$265,000 at the February 12, 2025 Board of Finance Meeting.

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Joseph Filippetti to reorder the agenda and move this item to #9.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

3. Library Budget:

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to approve the Library budget request for FY25/26 in the total amount of **\$1,012,780** designated by the Series Subtotals above.

Opening Comments from Library Director, Christine Johnson, highlighting the library's community programs, the past year's foot traffic, and updates for the upcoming fiscal year. There was discussion regarding the reduction of staff hours by 4 hours weekly on Thursday evenings. Director Johnson indicated that the reduction in staff hours should not impact their services. The Board members asked how the Library tallies the number of Waterford residents who physically utilize the facility. Although there is an electronic counter at the entrances, there is no way of identifying users who enter the library.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

4. Police Department Budget:

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to approve the Police Department budget request for FY25/26 in the total amount of **\$7,250,097** designated by the Series Subtotals above.

Chief Balestracci gave an opening statement reflecting on FY25 on behalf of the Waterford Police Department. He noted that the FY26 budget is rooted in fiscal responsibility with officer development as their #1 priority in the department. Three (3) new police officers were added last year and the department is able to keep the replacement overtime flat. When asked if the current budget limits the needs of the department, the Chief responded no, that all their needs are met with the budget requested.

Vote: 6-0-1

Abstained: Ron Fedor

Motion: Passed

5. Emergency Management:

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Robert Tuneski to move this item to the Board of Finance Regular Board Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 12, 2025 to reschedule this Budget Hearing.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

6. Fire Services Budget:

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to approve the Fire Services budget request for FY25/26 in the total amount of **\$3,958,130** designated by the Series Subtotals above.

The Interim Director (ID) of Fire Services, Michael Howley, opened discussion on the Fire Services Budget by noting key points in the progress of the department over the past several years. The most discussed topic of the hearing was staffing: recruitment, retention and overtime pay. It was pointed out by Michael Rocchetti that because a firehouse is "closed" does not mean there is no coverage in that area. ID Howley confirmed that statement and added that the full staffing of 5 fire houses in town would be a million dollar cost to include approximately 15 new firefighters. New London County fire stations work under an automatic/mutual aid program in all fire departments. Josh Kelly requested more data and clarification from ID Howley and staff regarding fire calls in FY23 and "to date" as only FY24 data was provided in the budget request. Mr. Kelly requested data on calls such as times and days at each fire house in town. ID Howley advised the Board that 62% of fire calls are EMS calls.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

7. Board of Finance Budget:

Josh Kelly Moved the Question.

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to approve the Board of Finance budget request for FY25/26 in the total amount of **\$83,608** designated by the Series Subtotals above.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

8. Review the Appeal by the Board of Finance to the Board of Selectman reduction of the FY26 Contingency Budget from \$273,000 to \$265,000 at the February 12, 2025 Board of Finance meeting.

Motion by Glenn Patterson and **seconded** by Robert Tuneski to vote to uphold the appeal by the Board of Finance to the Board of Selectman reduction of the FY26 Contingency Budget from **\$273,000 to \$265,000** at the February 12, 2025 Board of Finance meeting.

Vote: 3-4-0 No: Patterson, Tuneski, Rocchetti, Fedor Motion: Failed

9. Contingency Budget:

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to approve the Contingency budget request for FY25/26 in the total amount of **\$265,000** designated by the Series Subtotals above.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

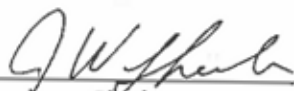
10. Adjournment:

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Robert Tuneski to adjourn the Budget Meeting of the Board of Finance at 10:02pm.

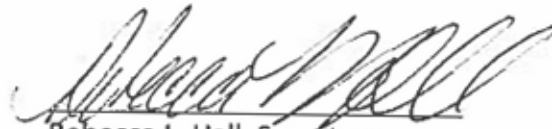
Vote: 7-0-0

Motion: Passed

Respectfully submitted,



Bill Sheehan, Clerk



Rebecca L. Hall, Secretary

March 3, 2025

Waterford Board of Finance
15 Rope Ferry Road
Waterford, CT 06375

Re: Fire Services Budget Request, FY-2026

Dear Board of Finance Members,

The attached, Page one-hundred-twenty-three (123) "FIREFIGHTER SCHEDULE" of the Fire Services Fiscal Year, 2026 Budget Request, shows the Quaker Hill Fire Station being staffed by one (1) PART TIME FIREFIGHTER on Tuesday's, Thursday's, and Saturday's between the hours of 8:00AM and 4:00PM. Is that when fires are supposed to happen?

The Goshen Fire Station will also use one (1) PART TIME FIREFIGHTER while planning all of their emergencies on either Saturday's or Sunday's using the same "bankers' hours", the first 6-months of the year followed by a reduction to only Saturday's the last 6-months of Fiscal Year, 2026. Does that District's residents know to avoid having an emergency of any type all other days?

Oswegatchie's staffing is better but could be described as dangerously insufficient too by using a whopping two (2) PART TIME FIREFIGHTERS.

Jordan and Cohanzie are the winners (not really) as they get four (4) FULL TIME FIREFIGHTERS EACH to cover 24/7.

This all begs the question; Why does Waterford's budget narrative mention fifteen (15) Full Time Firefighters in active roles as first responders, when the FIREFIGHTER SCHEDULE, FISCAL YEAR 25-26 only accounts for a total of eight (8) FULL TIME FIREFIGHTERS?

Finally, given a decade long staffing problem, why does the town continually refuse to afford services to protect the lives and property of taxpayers in Quaker Hill?

Respectfully,



Bryan Sayles
54 Wintergreen Drive
Quaker Hill, CT 06375

**TOWN OF WATERFORD
FY2026 BUDGET REQUEST
DEPARTMENT: FIRE SERVICES**



**FIREFIGHTER SCHEDULE
FISCAL YEAR 25-26**

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Jordan							
Shift	07:30 - 17:30	07:30 - 17:30	07:30 - 17:30	07:30 - 17:30	07:30 - 17:30	07:30 - 17:30	07:30 - 17:30
(2) FT/FF							
Shift	17:30 - 07:30	17:30 - 07:30	17:30 - 07:30	17:30 - 07:30	17:30 - 07:30	17:30 - 07:30	17:30 - 07:30
(2) FT/FF							
Cohanzie							
Shift	07:30 - 17:30	07:30 - 17:30	07:30 - 17:30	07:30 - 17:30	07:30 - 17:30	07:30 - 17:30	07:30 - 17:30
(2) FT/FF							
Shift	17:30 - 07:30	17:30 - 07:30	17:30 - 07:30	17:30 - 07:30	17:30 - 07:30	17:30 - 07:30	17:30 - 07:30
(2) FT/FF							
Oswegatchie							
Shift	8a-4p	8a-4p		8a-4p		8a-4p	8a-4p
((2) PT/FF - Sun., Mon., Wed., Fri., Sat.)							
			8a-4p		8a-4p		
((1) PT/FF - Tues., Thurs.)							
Quaker Hill							
Shift			8a-4p		8a-4p		8a-4p
(1) PT/FF							
Goshen							
Shift	8a-4p						8a-4p
((1) PT/FF - 5/1-10/31)							
Goshen							
Shift							8a-4p
((1) PT/FF - 11/1-4/30)							