

**BOARD OF FINANCE
TOWN OFFICE BUILDING
40 OLD FARMS ROAD
WILLINGTON, CT 06279**

BUDGET MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 28, 2019
7:00 PM

**Minutes are not official until approved at the next regular meeting*

Members Present:

Jim Bulick, Chairman
Mike Makuch, Vice Chairman
Bill Rankin – Alternate
Peter Tanaka
Randy Belair
Laurie Semprebon

Members Absent:

Barry Wallett
Fred Schoen

Also Present:

Erika Wiecenski, First Selectwoman
Donna Latincsics, Business Manager
Tish Ignatowicz, Treasurer
Superintendent Phil Stevens
Board of Education Chairwoman Michelle Doucette Cunningham
Various members of the Board of Education
Various members of the public.

Chairman Jim Bulick called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

SEATING OF ALTERNATES:

Laurie Semprebon moved to seat Bill Rankin in place of Barry Wallett. Randy Belair seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, P. Tanaka, L. Semprabon, M. Makuch, B. Rankin) 0 No.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

February 14, 2019 Budget Meeting. – Corrections suggested, then needs to be submitted to the Town Clerk. Board will vote on the minutes next meeting.

February 21, 2019 Budget Meeting. – Corrections suggested, then needs to be submitted to the Town Clerk. Board will vote on the minutes next meeting.

PRESENT TO SPEAK:

Sara Parcell of Timber Lane: “It’s nice to see everyone here, thank you so much. I've been coming to a few of the board of ed meeting and expressing my opinions. Speaking to a lot of people about CAL as was suggested from the board of ed I am definitely for the budget that we’re hoping to adopt tonight. There are a couple positions on the table, one is Librarian the other is the Makerspace Enrichment Teacher. So there’s a lot of talk about how badly those positions are, the Makerspace positions is a wonderful position, in this town we don’t have the money for specialty teachers so say your child wanted to be in a shop class for something having to do with technology. We can’t afford that in this town so they came up with the Makerspace position which is basically a catch all for all the specialty classes. So it has saved our town so much money. And what we’ve dug at these meetings is just how much excitement these kids have for it. I know that the students are really so, so enthusiastic about the school because of this program. Now onto another subject is the numbers in the budget and what I noticed was that the increase in the health insurance right is about \$200,000 and that would be about the cut in those 2 positions approximately. And I’m very pro children as I think all of us are and should be. Regardless of our financial situation because we’ve all been in ight times and we’ve had kids go through the system or nieces and nephews and we want the best from them. And at the end of the day we’re paying that \$200,000 and taking it away from our kids, we would be taking it away really from children. So I’m just asking for you to have some understanding with that weh you look at our budget. I also know that there have been a lot of things done to save money. When I first moved into this town there was a list if things we had to buy for the class rooms and it came

to about \$80 which doesn't seem like a lot but when you're talking about a tax increase which isn't what I'm suggesting, I'm just saying right now based on that balance and that the kids don't need all of those extra things that a lot of families can't afford. So right now I can tell you right now that my family saves about \$80 a year on just a great plan like that. At the end of the day we really do have to think about our kids, nothing else, just our kids, that's what this budget is about. So I just really want to thank you all and just you know be thoughtful, we do really need to bring it back to our kids. Thank you so much."

The Board thanked Sarah Parcell.

Judy Threatt of Birch Meadow Lane "I appreciate the opportunity to speak tonight, I'm here to support the Board of Ed and their budget that they're proposing. I understand that the Board of Finance said 0% increase but I think that a 0% increase is a unquestionable function of state ability when it's really not because 0% increase would require the board to not have any increases in their fixed cost. So the reality is they have so much increase in their fixed cost this year, they have \$200,000 in health care alone. Now the only way they could accommodate this would be to make major cuts, they made all those major cuts last year there's nothing left to cut. That budget last year was mean. The only way to accommodate a 0% increase would be to cut multiple positions, to cut all supplies, to cut new books, and to really cut into the services that the school provides and it's really not a sustainable thing. So then next year we'll have a 0%, next year we've already cut above and beyond then we have to go and cut more positions. And then what? It's not sustainable to have a 0% increase every single year, year after year for the Board of Education, it doesn't accommodate any increases in their fixed costs. This is about the kids. This budget is about almost maintaining everything they've had this year but a little bit less and I support them in going forward with this. And I've seen the work behind the scenes, they did the work, it's not like they're just getting up and saying "hey I want this much money" no they did a ton of hard work. They looked at everything and were very thoughtful. Thank you."

The Board thanked Judy Threatt

NEW BUSINESS:

Board of Education Budget

Superintendent Stevens presented the Willington Public School Budget in detail. They are requesting \$8,767,117, \$465,303 (a 5.6% increase) over last year's budget of \$8,301,814.

Contractual salary payments are lower this year than last year due to retirements and seniority mix, but benefits (health insurance), mandated special education costs, and support services (magnet school tuition, teacher retirement, IT) have increased.

Jim Bulick argued that most people have been getting Cost of Living Raises, roughly 2-3%. A 5.6% increase is not sustainable.

Grant monies have decreased, and this trend is expected to continue.

School population is essentially flat. The range of variation the past 5 years is from a low of 431 to a high of 440. The Board of Education is projecting 436 pupils next year.

Less money is expected to be returned to the town this year, perhaps nothing (\$0).

The Board of Finance thanked Superintendent Stevens for his presentation.

The Business Manager was still working on the budget numbers and Superintendent Stevens was expected to get an updated budget package out to our board early in the week of 4 March.

Treasurer Position

Selectwoman Wicenski notified the board that our Treasurer is interested in applying for the full time accounting position at the Town Office. This could present a potential conflict of interest since it is not good management practice to have the same person watching the money coming in and going out. The Board suggested special controls, policies, or procedures be developed and special reporting to ensure our good standing with our auditors Chairman Bulick recommended a report to be given at each Board of Finance meeting going forward in the short-term as we have a duty of oversight.

Mike Makuch moves that the BOS reports to the BOF weekly. Peter Tanaka Seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, P. Tanaka, L. Semprabon, M. Makuch, B. Rankin) 0 No.

Connecticut Budget News

No new news has been reported.

OLD BUSINESS:

Not Discussed

CORRESPONDENCE:

Jim Bulick will be out next week and Mike Makuch will be Chairman for the 3/14 meeting.

GOOD AND WELFARE:

The Board thanked Tish Ignatowicz for all of her hard work.

The Board thanked Phil Stevens again for his presentation.

Peter Tanaka moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 p.m. Bill Rankin seconded the motion.

Vote: Yes (J. Bulick, P. Tanaka, L. Semprabon, M. Makuch, B. Rankin) 0 No.

Respectfully submitted,

Guinnevere Almquist, Recording Secretary