

**BOARD OF FINANCE
Public Budget Hearing
March 9, 2013**

2013 MAR 18 P 1:12

TOWN OF HILL AND RECORDS

ATTEST
TOWN CLERK

Members Attendance:

PRESENT

Elaine Hammers, Chairman
Paul Lavoie, Vice Chairman
Cindy Penkoff, Alternate
Dave Rutigliano
Tom Tesoro
Andrew Palo
Vincent DeGennaro, Alternate

ABSENT

Steven Lupien
Susan LaFrance, Alternate

The Second Public Hearing on the First Selectman's Proposed Budget for 2013-2014 was called to order at 10:00 AM at Madison Middle School. All those present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Chairman welcomed all to the second Board of Finance Public Budget Hearing.

Name/Address/Comment

Steven Castro
Bull Frog Lane

- Does not favor use of capital budget for costs that he feels should be part of operating expenses.
- Not in favor of moving projects from Operating Expense to Capital Expense for bonding.
- Does not feel that First Selectman and decision makers have the bonding control.

Jen Kehley – letter attached hereto and made a part hereof
20 Hill Circle

President Daniels Farm PTA

- Wants to see BOF support the technology funding. Schools are looking to PTA for funding.
- Would like to see "Smart Boards" in all classrooms; these provide dynamic and interactive tool for teachers.
- Appears to be a great inequality across the elementary schools.

Cindy Katske
129 Meadowview Drive

- Supports addition of guidance counselors.
- Feels that the existing caseload for each counselor is too high.

Lannie McHugh
132 Fresh Meadow Drive

- Wants to see bonding for technology on the schedule.
- Wants focus of Board to be on operating budget

Richard White – letter attached hereto and made a part hereof
169 Church Hill Road

- Technology budget, item 522204 - \$50,000 software support licensing item for Munis, town Charter states that we provide a bid waiver for all professional services and software contracts over \$10,000; limited to one bid waiver per vendor every 3 years; would like a copy of the bid waiver that covers this technology purchase and ask when it will be put out to bid by the new language.

- Agendas and documentation do not appear on website as provided for in the town charter;
- Q-send web hosting – eliminate the website and no longer need to post agenda; would save \$10,000.

The Chairman indicated that following individuals submitted letters that are attached hereto and made a part hereof

Theresa Capizzuto – 212 Putting Green Road
 Cathleen Kosak – 59 Brookside Drive
 Joan Parenti – Old Hollow Road
 Christina Miller – 15 Haylot Road

Tony D'Aguila
 29 Valley View Road

- Feels that the Chairman did not properly disclose the Board of Education budget request.
- Debt service was not approved the BOE.
- BOF published the hearing schedule and all but the BOE was held during the day, when people are at work. The only way they could attend the meetings was to take a day off from work or a sick day. This process shows disrespect for the tax payers.

Steve Castro
 Bull Frog Lane

- Does not support bonding; effectively, we are financing the operating budget.
- Maintenance of roads should be in operating budget.
- Questions why tax collection efforts have not been upgraded.

Richard White
 169 Church Hill Road

- Feels that the BOE budget should be funded as presented.

Lannie McHugh
 132 Fresh Meadow Drive

- PTA spends a lot of money in the school system which they are not allowed to do under current tax laws.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 AM

Respectfully submitted


 Phyllis Collier, Board of Finance Clerk

Phyllis Collier

From: Christina Miller <lueckemiller@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, March 08, 2013 7:48 AM
To: Phyllis Collier
Subject: Technology

March 8, 2013

Dear Board of Finance members,

I am unable to attend the upcoming Board of Finance meeting, however I am writing to you in support of technology funding in our schools. As a parent of children at Daniels Farm Elementary, it is a shame that our PTA funds this year and last have had to go towards equipping our classrooms with the necessary technology to keep our schools competitive in today's world - since the district has failed to do so. The technology at DFS in particular is significantly behind the times, with chalkboards still in many classrooms. I was just at a recent PTA meeting where one of our new kindergarten teachers, with 11 years experience in SMART board teaching, demonstrated how she has implemented this amazing technology in her kindergarten classroom at DFS. Every parent in the room was mesmerized with the technology and the ability of this tool to engage even the youngest students in learning. Currently only our 5th grade classrooms and now our kindergarten classrooms, thanks to the PTA have SMART boards. Trumbull must start to prioritize the technology purchases our classrooms need so we don't continue to fall behind. Our PTA can not sustain the purchases of technology, nor should that be the responsibility of a PTA.

Thank you for your time,
Christina Miller
Daniels Farm Elementary School Parent

Phyllis Collier

From: Joanie Parente <rparente1@att.net>
Sent: Friday, March 08, 2013 12:03 AM
To: Phyllis Collier
Subject: Trumbull's need for increased technology spending

March 8, 2013

Dear Board of Finance members,

I am writing to you in support of technology funding for our schools during this ongoing budget process. I encourage you to support the proposed bonding of Project Catapult and technology spending at the elementary level and across the district, since this expenditure has now been removed from the operating budget.

Our family of six moved to Connecticut two years ago from Westchester, New York. We chose Trumbull in large part because we had heard great things about the schools. While we are so impressed with Trumbull's outstanding teachers and staff, we were quite surprised and dismayed at how far Trumbull lagged behind in technology. It was very disappointing to see the extremely outdated DFS computer lab, which is, at best, mildly functioning. It was also a bit of a shock to see the state of the Hillcrest computers, which are extremely outdated.

As highlighted by the recent Gibson report, the technology in our schools is woefully behind the times. DFS in particular is still home to chalkboards, perhaps the only school in the district to still have them. The plan to gradually install SMART Boards across the district was stalled many years ago as we tightened our budgets and cut technology funding.

Most of our DFS teachers make due with smaller white boards on easels. Our 5th grade classrooms do have SMART Boards, and DFS was able to purchase four additional SMART Boards this year for our kindergarten classrooms. This purchase was partially funded by the PTA.

Trumbull must start to prioritize the technology purchases our classrooms need, including SMART Boards, and a solid, sustainable plan to implement these district-wide. Our children live in a technology-rich world: we need their classroom experience to model this environment. It is time to consider the impact this lack of classroom technology has on the learning experience for our students. I hope you will consider this in your discussions.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joanie Parente

DFS Parent

March 7, 2013

Dear Board of Finance members,

I am writing to you in support of technology funding for our schools during this ongoing budget process. I encourage you to support the proposed bonding of Project Catapult and technology spending at the elementary level and across the district, since this expenditure has now been removed from the operating budget.

As highlighted by the recent Gibson report, the technology in our schools is woefully behind the times. DFS in particular is still home to chalkboards, perhaps the only school in the district to still have them. The plan to gradually install SMART Boards across the district was stalled many years ago as we tightened our budgets and cut technology funding.

Most of our DFS teachers make due with smaller white boards on easels. Our 5th grade classrooms do have SMART Boards, and DFS was able to purchase four additional SMART Boards this year for our kindergarten classrooms. This purchase was partially funded by the PTA.

Schools and teachers are now looking to the PTA to help fill the void left by a lack of funding for technology in our schools. The DFS PTA is lucky to have a generous group of parents who attend events like last year's successful Auction Night, and contribute to our annual Family Fundraiser to help us to raise money. Other schools in the district are faced with the same dilemma. A school district like Trumbull should provide this necessary technology to our teachers and students, not the PTA.

The elementary classroom is the ideal location for this SMART Board technology. It is an interactive, dynamic tool for our teachers. One of our kindergarten teachers recently demonstrated the capabilities of her new SMART Board at a PTA meeting. Parents left the classroom in awe of the change this one tool can bring to the classroom. If you haven't seen a SMART Board in use, I urge you to visit an elementary classroom to see how it can change the entire learning experience, for both teachers and students. I invite all members of this board to visit our school to see the SMART Boards in classroom use. Please feel free to contact our PTA President Jen Kehley at: jenkehley@hotmail.com to coordinate a demonstration.

Trumbull must start to prioritize the technology purchases our classrooms need, including SMART Boards, and a solid, sustainable plan to implement these district-wide. There is currently great inequality across the elementary schools. While Frenchtown has digital SMART Boards in every classroom (although they too, are now 10 years old), most DFS classrooms have chalkboards. I would liken that to a 60-inch HDTV vs. a 13-inch black and white. You still can see the show, but it is definitely much more engaging and dynamic on the big screen. Our children live in a technology-rich world: we need their classroom experience to model this environment. It is time to consider the impact this lack of classroom technology has on the learning experience for our students. I hope you will consider this in your discussions.

Thank you,

Cathleen Kosak

DFS Parent

March 7, 2013

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Thank you.

Tracy Capizzuto

DFS Parent

March 7, 2013

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Thank you.

Jen Kehley
DFS Parent

Richard W. White
169 Church Hill Road
Trumbull, CT 06611
March 9, 2013

Good morning and thank you for your time holding this public hearing.

I'd like to draw your attention to the Technology Department (01012600), item **522204** of the budget; specifically the \$50,000 MUNIS software licensing and support item. I'd also like you to review Chapter 3, Section 6, Paragraph G, Sub-Paragraphs 3 and 7 of our new Town Charter. The administration is required to provide a bid waiver for all professional services and contracts over \$10,000 and is limited to one bid waiver per vendor every three years.

There are many, many municipal software vendors that would like the opportunity to bid for this town service. I'd like to request a copy of the bid waiver that covers this technology purchase and ask when this contract will be put out to bid as required by our new Town Charter.

I'd like to draw your attention to the Planning and Zoning Department (01014200) items **522202** and **556601** of the budget. I'd also like you to review the minutes from the November 8, 2012 Board of Finance meeting and I'd like you to review Chapter 3, Section 6, Paragraph G, Sub-Paragraph 6 of our new Town Charter.

As a recent example, on November 8th, you transferred monies that were intended to clean up blighted properties to pay for professional development. This does not meet the new "rate and nature" paragraph of our town charter. Yard work has nothing to do with training for our professional staff. Money should have been transferred from the General Fund to cover the training and the blighted property money should have been returned to the General Fund at the end of the fiscal year.

I understand that the administration has provided the Board of Finance with a legal opinion that this new language in our charter is superseded by older language in our charter. I find that bizarre, especially given this board's recent decision to ignore another section of our charter because it is old and wasn't materially changed by our very recent charter revision.

I'd like to draw your attention to the Technology Department (01012600), item **522204** of the budget; specifically the QScend Web Hosting for the Town Website. I'd also like you to review Chapter 2, Section 5, Paragraph B of our new Town Charter. I believe that this new section (one of the very few changes that I supported) was initially proposed by Mrs. Penkoff. The administration repeatedly fails to post agenda and minutes to the Town Website as required by both State Statute and our new Town Charter. Supporting documents and materials also never appear on the Town Website as required by our new Town Charter. Fortunately State Statute offers a possible solution: eliminate the Town Website entirely.