

MINUTES
Board of Finance
and
Town Council Finance Committee
Business Education Initiative and Board of Education Budget Hearing
February 10, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Elaine Hammers called the Budget Hearing to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall, Trumbull, Connecticut. All those present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

PRESENT

Elaine Hammers, Chairman
Paul Lavoie, Vice Chairman
Andrew Palo
Roy Molgard
Lainie McHugh
Bill Haberlin, Alternate
Karen Egri, Alternate
Vincent DeGennaro, Alternate

ABSENT

Thomas Kelly

The Town Council Finance Committee did not have a quorum with only two members present.

PRESENT

Cindy Penkoff
Vicki Tesoro

ABSENT

Mark LeClair, Chairman
Lori Rosasco Schwartz
Mary Beth Thornton
Bethany Llodra Gilman, Alternate
Daniel Marconi, Alternate

Also present: Maria Pires, Director of Finance; Dr. Gary Cialfi, Superintendent of Schools; Sean O'Keefe, Business Manager; Debra Herbst, Chairman, Board of Education; Dr. Michael McGrath, Assistant Superintendent; Jeff Hackett, Technology Manager; TCT/BEI; Kate Donahue, TCT/BEI; Byron Campbell, TCT/BEI; Marc Guarino, Principal Trumbull High School; Valerie Forshaw, Principal Madison Middle School; Stafford W. Thomas, Jr., Principal Hillcrest Middle School

The First Selectman presented the highlights and key elements of the proposed 2016 budget of \$160,347,023, which represents an increase in expenditures of 2.17%, as follows: 1.42% Board of Education; .28% increase Pension contributions; -.06% decrease in debt service, and .54% for the remaining expenses, which also includes contractually obligated wage increases. This budget represents an overall 2.19% tax increase.

He went on to add that although taxes have increased on an average of 2% a year for the last 6 years, the Town has contributed \$33,495,000 into the pension fund. He noted that we have moved new employees to a Defined Contribution Fund, not a pension fund, and this year we were able to fully fund the ARC for both the Town and Police Pension funds for this year.

The First Selectman indicated that there are several reorganizations in the budget that will not only save the taxpayers money but improve their services. This includes adding a new Director to oversee the Parks and Recreation Departments.

In addition, the increase in the Commercial Grand List has also resulted in additional income.

Trumbull Community Television / Business Education Initiative

Kate Donahue and Dan Neuman presented the highlights of these programs. Ms. Donahue indicated that for TCT they are looking for an additional \$5,000 for videographers and an additional \$17,500 to increase the producer's hours.

Mr. Neuman indicated that for BEI, they are looking for an additional \$2,600 for program supplies and \$2,300 for transportation.

Board of Education

Dr. Cialfi presented the 2015-2016 Budget for the Board of Education and highlighted the following:

- Objective – positioning all students for success in their transitions through the school system
Budget reflects declining student population of 149 with a decrease of 5 teachers
- Budget is under 3% due to very recent district efficiencies: self-insured medical/dental plan; energy conservation; performance-based contracting; retro-commissioning
- District goal is to strengthen practices that will allow student learning and development to increase. Increase "Rigor".
- Resources required would include professional development; textbooks, curriculum writing and revision; progress monitoring systems and testing materials; new teacher and administrator supervision, etc.
- Budget priorities include: safety and security; student support – academic, social and emotional i.e. intervention specialists; expand resources to help students meet challenges of increased Rigor; reduce pay to participate fees with a 3 year phase out plan.
- Budget increases include: salaries, benefits; transportation; energy; text material; portion of pay to participate and .15% miscellaneous.
- 4 areas needed additional funding after the last budget but there were compensating factors, for a net reduction of \$95,846.
- The total new hires 12.49, which includes those added after the 14-15 budget was approved.
- Professional Development training totals \$40,000.
- The First Selectman cut the 2.94% budget request by .6% to 2.34% or \$570,000.

The Chairman of the Board of Education, Debra Herbst, expressed her disappointment with the decision to reduce the request, since the Board worked very hard to keep it below 3%.

The Board of Finance indicated that they would like to hear how the BOE would compensate for the reduction of \$570,000 recommended by the First Selectman.

The Board of Finance asked for a detailed explanation regarding performance contracting. A copy of the power point presentation will be given to them prior to the next meeting.

The Chair asked for a breakdown of reimbursements received over the past several years for out of district placements, to be provided before the next meeting and who receives the reimbursements.

Mr. O'Keefe indicated that new hires are going into a defined contribution plan. They have funded to date about \$7500. Employee has 5% withheld and it is matched 5%.

Mr. O'Keefe indicated the transportation cost increase of \$367,955 can be explained as follows: \$168,000 over the 14-15 budget actuals; regular transportation increased \$104,000, which has a contractual increase of 3.5% and monitors for \$98,000, and could go to \$190,000.

Mr. O'Keefe indicated the fuel account was moved from Santa Fuel to Ct Gas and they will realize a savings of \$200,000.

The cost of substitutes has increased by 20.22%; the surrounding districts are paying more and we need to be competitive so we have gone from \$80 to \$85 per day.

Mr. Guarino indicated that Advanced Placement training is needed to conduct advanced placement courses. It is important to have more than one teacher available to teach the AP classes so we can encourage more students to take those classes and provide for additional staff in the event of an emergency.

He went on to add that transitioning students need support in different ways and the interventions are meant to be resources so all students can succeed. They work in a lab environment and communicate with teachers regarding the students' needs.

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Phyllis C. Collier
Board of Finance Clerk