

**Finance Committee of the Trumbull Town Council  
2012-2013 Budget Public Hearing  
March 31, 2012**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairwoman Debra Lamberti opened the Public Hearing at 1:36 p.m. at the Town Hall, Trumbull, Connecticut.

**Present:**

Debra Lamberti, Chairwoman  
Tony Scinto, Vice-Chairman  
Mark LeClair  
Vicki Tesoro  
Gregg Basbagill  
Ann Marie Evangelista

**ABSENT**

John DeVecchio, Jr.  
Jane Deyoe

**Also Present:** Mr. Carl Massaro, Town Council Chairman.

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There were seven (7) from public present to speak:

1. Dawn Cantafio of 72 Tait Road spoke to the BoE budget request by the Superintendent of Schools at 4.25% to 4.5% and how it would provide for ADK (All day Kindergarten) to become a reality in the Trumbull school system. The First Selectman and the BoF eliminated the ADK program by supporting a 3.47% budget increase and questioned how the Town could consider a program without proper funding? ADK is almost \$1 million for 400 kindergarteners, teachers and half day paras, questioning how the program would be funded. With a surplus from a previous year, pre-buy supplies one year and hope to have enough for the following year, or use a 1% carry over. Comments had been made that the state may mandate ADK, we also know that the state is trying to mandate an increase of the number of credits all high school students will need to graduate. This means there will be a need to increase teachers at the high school and course offerings for 2,200 students. Discussion at budget hearings with regard to the current system are as follows: Some 8<sup>th</sup> graders don't have a reading class, 29 students in English classes at the middle school, if the student population increases so will the class size, high school students who can not take science classes because there are not enough teachers and guidance counselors who have double the work load that neighboring schools have. She would like to see some of those concerns addressed before another program is implemented without proper funding. I believe if we could afford ADK then the First Selectman and the BoF should have supported the BoE recommendation. If we can not afford the program then it must be a 'want' not a 'need' and asked the committee to support the 3.47% increase and advocate that students at all levels need funding for a better future.
2. Veronica Lenzen of 52 Woodhaven Road spoke to being well aware and well informed with regard to the budget process and that the council has no control of what the BoE does with their money and is not here today to ask the council to do anything about that and spoke in favor giving the BoE the 3.47% increase so the BoE can do with it what they deemed is most important.
3. Kerry Malzewski of 163 Blackhouse Road stated that she had been very involved in this process from the beginning and spoke in favor keeping the 3.47% in place so that the BoE can do what is best for the kids in the Town.
4. Shannon Laquoi of 51 Koger Road spoke in favor of supporting the BoE budget so the BoE can take into consideration all the needs of the Town and can do their best with their budget.
5. Cindy Katske of 129 Meadowview Drive is a Tri-President of the Trumbull PTSA and is here to advocate for the education budget, specifically the lack of funding for ADK, most would agree that ADK would be good for the children of Trumbull, although is not certain that ADK is a need for Trumbull in the current economic environment. If ADK is determined to be a need it should be funded properly without funding gimmicks and in a manner that is sustainable. The BoE increase of 3.47% passed by the BoF does not provide enough funding for ADK, on top of the core budget and restorations. The First Selectman has said they are \$200,000 away from

funding ADK, but wonders what will not be funded for that to happen. Restoration items important enough to be included in the education budget include elementary school secretaries, interns, middle school reading teachers and THS teachers. Those items can not be funded with the addition of ADK and a 3.47% increase. Which of those restoration items will be cut and hopes the council will find the answers before a vote is taken. Using unspent funds to fund ADK is not a wise move and essentially removes an expenditure from the budget creating a funding cliff for next year. Please think of how we will fund ADK next year and beyond. In next year's budget the teachers will receive a combined general and step increase of 2.33% and the administrators will similarly receive an increase of 1.75% from 0% this year. How will that impact next year's budget with no revaluation? If we are going to fund a new initiative such as ADK it must be done through a manner which is sustainable. She is concerned if ADK is funded and restoration items are cut the needs of THS will continue not to be met, the enrollment has grown but the number of teachers has not commensurately. As a result classes have been cut, students have not been able to enroll in classes they need to fulfill science requirements to get into top colleges and science classes are larger than what the state says is safe. THS will likely continue to not have a full time technology teacher despite a real need. Ms. Katske requested that the BoE be funded to support core, the selected restorations and to fund ADK without any gimmicks. If we are a Town that supports education then let's provide funding to sustain the outstanding school system we have built.

6. Tony D'Aquila of 28 Valley View stated that for more than ten years he has noticed and influx of families into town from New Canaan, Westport, Darien and even NY City, many have one common trait such as spending money. These are the people who insisted on renovating the THS as a renovate as new at \$67 million even as the Madison Middle School roof was and is leaking and insisted on tearing down the THS auditorium and building a new theatre that seats 1,100 people, when an auditorium not a theater is all that the THS needs, these were the people who insisted on building a new swimming pool at the THS when the THS's curriculum did not include swimming and insisted on spending \$1 million on ADK when the benefits to the students disappear at the third grade. These are the people who the Town officials listen to; the Town officials do not listen to the senior citizens. The Boe insisted on increasing the budget 5.5% despite the urging of decreasing the cost of government by operating efficiently and effectively. The past few years the seniors have experienced severe financial distress from a failing economy and high real estate taxes, this week the resolution will debate a resolution to reduce the number of installments that the senior can pay their car taxes, from 2 to 1 installment. The senior citizens must now find the funds to pay the Town a balloon payment for their car taxes on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The Town claims the delinquency of the January car taxes is the reason to change the tax collection methods, this does not seem credible. When asked why they did not automate the delinquency notices of they replied they are thinking about it. The seniors want the Town to stop thinking about and start taking action. The Town needs to operate efficiently and effectively. 8,500 seniors live in Town and want to be treated fairly, with compassion and sensitivity and urged the council not to disappoint the seniors, the seniors in this Town do not forget and do vote.
7. Matt Caron of 4391 Madison Avenue thanked all the members for their service to the Town asked to support and pass the current budget as proposed.

The Chair thanked all those present for their attendance and their comments.

The Town Council Budget Vote Session has been changed to April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Hall Council Chambers.

There being no further members of the public to speak the Chair closed the Public Hearing at 1:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Margaret D. Mastroni