

**March 28, 2023  
Board of Finance  
and  
Town Council Finance Committee  
#2 Public Budget Hearing  
2023-2024**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Lainie McHugh called the virtual meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All those present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board of Finance members present / absent:

**PRESENT**

Lainie McHugh  
Paul Timpanelli  
Michael Barker  
Marty Isaac  
Scott Zimov  
Justin Scheuble  
Vincent DeGennaro – Alternate  
Marc Mascola – Alternate  
Christine El Eris – Alternate

**ABSENT**

**The Finance Committee had a quorum:**

Mary Isaac  
Dawn Cantafo  
Nicole Satin  
Michael Buswell, Alternate  
Tony Scinto

Kevin Shively  
Joy Colon, Alternate  
Anthony Dorsey

**Also present:**

Vicki Tesoro, First Selectman; Cynthia Katske, Chief Administrative Officer; Kathleen McGannon, Chief Administrative Officer

**Shannon Diaz**

**415 Dayton Road**

- Keep the BOE Budget as approved by the Board of Education.
- People come to Trumbull for the education system.
- Children have not recovered from problems resulting from remote learning during Covid 19.

**Sara Beck and Sylvie**

**78 Mac Arthur Road**

- No frills budget; keeping to the minimum. Does not think this is what we should give them. They deserve more and she would be willing to pay higher taxes.
- No paper towel or tissues in classroom. No carpet for story time for the kids to sit on; not enough books because class size was increased.
- Teacher needed to set-up a go-fund me page to pay for items.

**Jonathan Diaz**

**43 Lafayette Drive**

- He indicated that everyone concerned, Board of Finance, Finance Committee and Board of Education wants to support Dr. Semmel's budget to its highest amount.
- Still feels there are creative ways to stretch the budget.
- We need to focus on working together as a community.

**Jenn Burke****40 High Ridge Road**

- Please support the BOE proposed budget.
- Removing \$2 million will result in cuts that will be damaging and will never be restored.
- This budget doesn't restore what was lost in the past.
- We have the second lowest per pupil cost in the DRG.
- This budget will give us the only what we need. Any cuts in staffing, programming, music, mental health assistance and interventionists, etc. can only be detrimental.

**Nick Banks****26 Megan Lane**

- He is in full support of the Superintendents budget.
- We are at the bottom of the DRG for per pupil expenditure.
- We have lost teachers and interventionists over the years due to cuts and can't afford to address Issues such as later start times for the students.

**Ted Johnston****100 Oakview Drive**

- Moved to Trumbull for the school system
- We have a quality school system and we spend second to least amount of money per pupil and we are below the state average.
- Affects real estate prices.
- Trumbull school system is rated as an excellent school system. A drop in our rating would affect real estate prices negatively.

**Mehreen Seyal****3131 Avalon Gates**

- Her child fell behind in reading during Covid-19 and then worked with reading specialists.
- Cuts could include loss of specialists.
- They used to live in Fairfield but came here for the school system.
- Supports the increase in the budget.

**Kamille Bork****1435 Huntington Turnpike**

- Moved to Trumbull from Norwalk; waited one year to find the right home.
- Noticed the difference; 2 of her children struggled and specialists were able to assist them.
- Assistance was not available to them in Norwalk.

**Elizabeth Heagney****110 Fernwood Road**

- Moved to Trumbull for the education system.
- Concerned that math and literacy specialists have been cut from this year's budget.

**Sara Broas****25 Doris Street**

- Worried about the impact of these cuts on teachers and the entire system.
- Teachers are the reason for student growth.
- Support staff cuts will put more on to the classroom teacher.
- When 96% of the budget is fixed, i.e. contractual, there is not room to move forward and prioritize.

**Michelle Consolati****695 Orchard Street**

- Families come to Trumbull for the education.
- Hopes you will approve Dr. Semmel's budget.
- Children are still feeling the effects of remote learning during Covid-19.
- To cut this budget would greatly impact the children.

**Laura Arena**  
**15 Old Coach Lane**

- Raised in Trumbull and returned to raise her family.
- A “Reduction in increase” may not be a cut; however, it hinders the BOE in reaching its goals.
- Special education and paras must be provided by the Board of Education and are state mandated.
- Parents are willing to pay more in taxes to support the schools rather than see the BOE budget cut.

**Danielle Carter**  
**11 Black House Road**

- Agrees with the strain that has been put on the teaches.
- Requests cannot be met due to staffing issues.
- Frenchtown has a lot of special needs children; we cannot take care of providing what the children need if we cut staff or cannot increase staff.

**Dani Romano**  
**2 Woodfield Drive**

- She thinks that the teachers look exhausted and are overworked and underpaid.
- Heard that there is a possible 10 teacher reduction for next year.
- We need to make sure we have the teaching staff and support system to assist them.
- Very concerning as a parent to wonder what will be cut for next year, once this school year is ended.

**Dana Aponte**  
**29 Horseshoe Drive**

- Students are trying to catch up since the return to the classroom after Covid and remote learning.
- Teachers are burnt out; we need to support them.
- We need to support the mental health crisis with teachers as well as students.

**Pauline Sturla**  
**7 Woolsley Avenue**

- Moved to Trumbull for the school program.
- Agrees with the fact that teachers are exhausted and cannot expect teachers to do more with less.
- Please accept Dr. Semmel’s budget.
- Per student spending is second to lowest in the area. She does not think that spending less is a good thing, since the children are not getting the same benefits as the children who have gone before them.

**John Kinne**  
**106 Colony Road**

- Please keep the schools strong.
- Take care of the teachers and schools while protecting the value of the homes.
- Student to teacher does matter.

**Katie Smolinsky**  
**724 Fairchild Road**

- Fully supports Dr. Semmel’s budget, as much as it can be funded.

**Chris Hammers**  
**59 Coventry Lane**

- Moved back to Trumbull for the school system.
- Supports Dr. Semmel’s budget.

**Christine Lascano**  
**465 Stonehouse Road**

- She has a child with autism so she came to Trumbull from Boston for the schools.
- Schools are understaffed and burn-out is high.
- If you want children and teachers to succeed we need to fund the Board of Education budget.

The Budget vote will be held Thursday, March 30, 2023 in the Council Chambers at 6:00 pm if anyone wants to attend.

By unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Phyllis C. Collier

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Board of Finance Clerk