

**BOARD OF FINANCE
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
March 23, 2013**

Saturday, March 23, 2013 at 9:30 a.m. at the Senior Center, Mona Terrace, Fairfield, CT 06824

Members of the Board of Finance present were Chairman Flynn, Mrs. Albin, Mr. Bellitto, Jr., Mr. Brachfeld, Mr. Brown, Mr. Stone, Mr. Walsh.

Members of the Board of Selectmen present were Mr. Tetreau and Mrs. McCarthy-Vahey.

Chairman Flynn called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

AGENDA

Chairman Flynn welcomed everyone to this special open public forum and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Chairman Flynn then explained that this meeting was planned due to the current economic situation. Chairman Flynn noted that evening meetings are not always convenient for some people so this daytime meeting was planned to give everyone an opportunity to have a say on the budget for the next fiscal year.

Chairman Flynn explained that the main charge for the BOF is to approve Town spending and appropriations. Chairman Flynn asked everyone to limit his or her comments to 2 minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Elizabeth Dillabough, 109 Matilda Place

Robert Sussman, 83 Harwich Road

Please support the library budget as the library is an essential community resource. Please do not cut the library budget.

Fred Nangle, 151 Woods End Road

Support the BOE budget as cuts would impact many aspects of life in Fairfield not just education

Susan Bellissimo, 175 Millspaugh Drive

Support BOE budget as presented.

Bob Frigo, 39 Campbell Road

A larger space is needed for this meeting! We need to use objective measurements and best practices; challenge town leaders to take a long term look.

Caroline Trombley, 49 Old Farm Road

She is a strings teacher in the Fairfield school system and she asked that the music program not be cut in the BOE budget.

Donna Schmardele, Music Curriculum Coordinator, BOE

She asked for no cuts to the music program. She said that if 4th grade strings is cut, the

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result will be a 66% cut to instrumental time for strings students in the elementary schools. She also said that small group lessons are critical to those students.

Bob MacGuffie, 144 Mayweed Road

Obamacare is too costly in mandates and taxes.

Mike Varga, 595 Rock Ridge Road

Cuts to the BOE budget would have negative results on our children.

Vincent Maiolo 141 Homeland Street

Consider holding any increase to a maximum of 2%; everyone needs to sacrifice in these difficult times; resident for 41 years.

Madeline Marone, 27 Churchill Street

High School student; grandmother is Carolyn Richmond, served on RTM for many years, retain foreign language program; don't cut AP classes.

Elizabeth & Isadora Siquenza, 26 Adelaide Street

Please support the BOE budget and especially the strings program.

Veronica Monahan, 635 Galloping Hill Road

Fairfield is losing new residents to other communities due to high property taxes. Please lower taxes.

Walter Bernd, 99 Parkwood Road

Education is the future for everyone; consider privatizing some departments in town.

Matt, 317 Pansy Road

If you think the taxes are too high, then leave town; support the BOE budget.

Anne Estelle, 494 Pequot Court

She has lived here since 1967 and asked why our taxes have never gone down; each tax increase causes the value of your home to go down' neighboring communities taxes are 20% lower than Fairfield.

Robin Strong, 254 Cedar Road

Increased property taxes will squash real estate values in Fairfield; it is our responsibility to address these issues sooner than later.

Virginia Sanford, 1831 Hillside Road

Watch the budget increase; reduce the cost of administration in both town and BOE; taxes are way too high; her taxes have increased 100% in 5 years; lower the mill rate.

John Koren, 568 Harbor Road

He has resided here for 25 years; he wants to retire here; throwing money at the education budget does not make a better education; higher taxes reduce home values.

Alloe Stokes, 37 Christmas Tree Lane

Taxes are too high especially with services provided; not properly planning for families moving here.

Jeremy Frost, 1000 Harbor Road

He supports the last few comments and he hopes the tax increase is kept to a maximum of between 2-3%.

Mary Hogue, 165 Stonewall Lane

16 year resident; moved here for the schools and beaches; tax cuts will mean a reduction in services.

Susan Filipowich, 599 Old Mill Road

Support the BOE budget specifically the music program.

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Urban Levinthen, 315 Acorn Lane

Supports the last few comments; address every element of Town spending; any increase should not exceed the cost of inflation.

David Thornton, 1146 Valley Road

Speaking for John Sullivan, James Eldridge, and Robert Penn Warren, all deceased Fairfield residents; the bureaucracy grows; chronic spending is taking place; try to control spending.

Suzanne Miska, 123 Ryegate Road

Healthcare, pensions, salaries are the drivers; 401K plans should not be optional; a unified healthcare program needs to be implemented.

Lois Lehmann, 90 South Pine Creek Road

Taxes need to go down to stay competitive with the surrounding area.

Greg DiMaggio, 490 Hulls Farm Road

lots of people are struggling; commuter costs keep going up; find a creative way to bring in more revenue from someone other than the homeowners.

Liz Sheppard, 71 Spruce Street

Fairfield needs a higher corporate tax base.

Julianne Stirling, 766 Old Post Road

Outrageous tax increases have been imposed in the last few years while at the same time home values are being reduced.

Kathy Coyle, 85 Sherwood Farm Road

Pensions and healthcare are the drivers for the budget increases and they need to be addressed immediately; support the BOE budget.

John Donovan, 164 Taintor Drive

Reduce the budget increase to a maximum of 2%; you can't improve what you can't measure; if per pupil costs in Fairfield are in the top 1/3 statewide, then why aren't the results in the top 1/3 statewide also?

Charlotte Bartol, 1121 Sasco Hill Road

Taxes are too high; she is a supporter of the Fairfield Taxpayers Group; the town needs to cut back to avoid a large tax increase just as families have had to cut back their budgets.

Lisa Havey, 216 Longview Avenue, Fairfield PTA Council President

The Council supports small class sizes and programs; we need safe town buildings; get the facts before making a decision.

Dick Cooke, 1123 Sasco Hill Road

Pensions need to be addressed immediately in order to survive.

Heather Lolan, 2680 Congress Street

She is a teacher in Stamford; huge tax increases are making it difficult to stay; pensions need to be addressed immediately; look at salaries very carefully.

Sean Keller, 246 Old South Road

Increasing property taxes, 25% in 4 years, are a real problem; attack the drivers of healthcare and pensions.

Courtney Bradley, 443 South Benson Road

She moved here from NJ partially for lower taxes but she is now having déjà vu! Don't deal with taxes at the expense of education programs.

Doug Stevenson, 1001 Gunston Road

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He said he has worked in municipal finance for a long time and he can see that these budgets are devoid of austerity and common sense; tax payers are the town's printing press; transparency is needed; taxes are out of control and must be managed.

Kevin Dillon, 120 Wakeman Lane

Pensions and healthcare are the drivers of the budgets; property taxes have quadrupled over the last few years while home values have only doubled; at this rate, he will be forced to leave with his family from a home they all love deeply.

Kathy Wiant, 289 Beach Road

Support the BOE budget and only .68% of the increase is for programs; tax increases need to be held down with cuts across the board.

George Barrios, 88 Martingdale Lane

Spending cannot grow faster than inflation; give a 10% reduction and deliver same services to town.

Mike McGrath, 480 Jackman Avenue

Support the BOE budget even if a tax increase is needed.

John Levinson, 883 Harbor Road

He is concerned about affordability being at the tipping point in Fairfield; relief is needed across the board; cuts are needed town wide.

Bud Morten, 290 Sasco Hill Road

Since he only has 2 minutes, he will send a copy of his full statement to the Boards. A 4.8% increase is higher than the inflation rate and cannot continue; an increase should not exceed 2%; create a 5 year plan and don't start every budget cycle by asking how much can we spend.

Tim Ihlefeld, 450 Hollydale Road, Jennings School parent
it is time to demonstrate leadership that is lacking.

Robert Walker, 35 South Benson Common

Support Fairfield Taxpayers Association and take the difficult stand to reduce a tax increase.

Michelle Mitola, 21 Surry Lane

What about next year? Don't damage educational programs.

Nancy Legare, 245 Unquowa Road

She is a 50 year resident but she may not be able to stay for the rest of her life. Watch salaries and healthcare and pensions. Create a committee of business leaders to help with this crisis.

Palma Senatore, 42 Pilgrim Lane

She has been forced to leave; taxes are up 225% in 13 years; Hurricane Sandy damages are real; salaries are too high, cut salaries, not programs!

Loretta Jay, 113 Rolling Ridge Road

Increasing classroom size is shortsighted as well as penny wise and pound foolish.

Perry Tallman, 208 Mill Hill Terrace

He is a life-long resident; the budget is top heavy with salaries and benefits; the town needs to live within its means just as its residents do!

Cale Tallman, 3628 Redding Road

Tax increases will force him right out of town. Even though the population in Fairfield has not grown significantly in the last 10 years, the fire and police departments have

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doubled and it is difficult to understand the reason. Time to curb spending.

Rose Healy, 325 Homeland Street

Support programs in schools especially music and world language.

Candace Paige, 131 Hanford Drive

She is a lifelong resident and a real estate attorney and she agrees with the realtors who have spoken about the taxes that are too high and she encourages the boards to approach on a fair basis to cut the increase to a minimum.

Eric Hanford, 1852 Hillside Road

He is a business owner and he has been through this in his business, He said it was difficult but worthwhile and you need to question the need for every item in the budget.

Frank Rice, Conservation Commissioner, 126 Hulls Highway

Please do not cut the Conservation Department budget again this year since they are currently working understaffed.

The members of the Board of Finance thanked the public for their input and reminded everyone to get out and vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.