

BOARD OF FINANCE

Public Budget Comment Session Minutes of Meeting

March 29, 2014

The Board of Finance Public Budget Comment Session was held on Saturday, March 29, 2014 at 9:30 am in the auditorium at Roger Ludlowe Middle School, Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT.

Members Present

Catherine Albin, David Becker, Ken Brachfeld, James Brown, Christopher DeWitt, Thomas Flynn, Robert Stone

Members Absent

Mary LeClerc, James Walsh

Also Present

Caitlin Bosse, Controller, Town of Fairfield and Clerk of the Board of Finance

Chairman Flynn called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

A Fairfield Woods Middle School Boy Scout, Johnathan Perozzo of Troop 199, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Flynn explained the public comment process to those in attendance. Mr. Flynn asked that everyone keep their comments to 90 seconds due to the large crowd and the time limitations for the meeting.

The following comments were then heard by the Board:

Neal Fink, 70 Crest Terrace

He is advocating for all children; students need more that the three r's in this day and age; he asked the Board to please champion education in Fairfield.

Melanie Smith, 90 Mill Hill Lane

A tax increase will be a burden to homeowners; neighboring towns have lower taxes and, as a realtor, she has seen that Fairfield is losing sales of homes due to the high taxes.

Jason Guttman, 536 Hulls Highway

A solid award winning school system is a benefit to the town; schools are the heart of the community; please support BOE budget request.

Zhanna Funaro, no address given

She moved here due to the excellence of the educational system; system has high standards; special education department is very supportive; please support BOE budget.

Bob Frigo, RTM

He thanked the Board for their efforts; he said there is no master plan in town; seniors need options to be able to stay in town; housing options are needed.

John Levinson, 883 Harbor Road Board of Finance Public Budget Comment Session Minutes of Meeting March 29, 2014 2

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Keep the tax increase at 1.5% or lower; BOF should require a study be done on benefits/cost savings of outsourcing HR and Payroll functions of the BOE.

Virginia Sanford, 1831 Hillside Road

The BOF's job is to assess the financial capabilities of the town; spending more on education doesn't mean a better education.

Sean Upton, Bay Edge Court

There has been a population increase of 35 over the last 10 years and the property tax rate is up 71%; spending is a problem; all operations need to be reviewed for cost savings.

David MacKenzie, Merwins Lane

The town is on the wrong path; spending is going up quickly; it is time to step up and demand that the budget increase be less than or equal to 1.5%.

Sally Parker, no address given

Public libraries, especially Pequot, are very important to the community; please fund the libraries properly.

Chris ?

He appealed to the BOF as a father; families are moving here for the educational system; please support the BOE budget.

Nancy Ligare, 245 Unquowa Road

Taxes are too high; the town needs more commercial buildings to pay taxes; senior citizens get the smallest bang for the buck at the Senior Center.

Norma Bareth, 66 Southport Place?

The Fairfield Senior Center needs a full time director; this facility is well used every day; please support the budget request for this wonderful place.

Gordon McKenzie, 11 Palmer Bridge

Taxes need to be restrained before tax caps are legislated.

Drummond Bell, 72 Willow Street

He asked for a tax increase not to exceed 1.5%; please keep the budget in check; a strategic plan needs to be put into place.

Matthew Sweer, Ronald Drive

Please support Fairfield Schools; no more cuts.

Keith Havokey?. 69 Buena Vista Road

Desirability is based on affordability; the will to learn determines how well a student will do in school. Board of Finance Public Budget Comment Session Minutes of Meeting March 29, 2014 3

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Trude Durrell, 64 Woodcrest Road

Restore BOE budget to original request.

Claire Orriss, 53 Nutmeg Lane, student

Budget cuts affect students not buildings; please do not make any cuts to the BOE budget.

Robin Orriss, 53 Nutmeg lane, mother of Claire

Please vote no to cut the BOE budget.

Steve Baker, 22 Charles Street

RLMS PTSA supports the BOE budget as presented.

Dane Lopes, 160 Saxonwood Road

Fairfield's attractiveness is slipping; please support the BOE budget.

Gerry Stuhlman, 71 Somerset Avenue

Senior needs are not a priority in Fairfield; numbers are increasing; please invest in priorities to make senior citizens stay in Fairfield.

Wendy Rippel, 1082 Burroughs Road

She stated that she moved here for the excellent school system; please do not make more cuts to the BOE budget.

Meredith McCamach?, Fairfield Beach Road

Please do not cut the BOE budget.

Dorene Herron, 53 Forest Avenue

Support the BOE budget; no more cuts.

Max H.?, 317 Pansy Road

Support the BOE budget.

Doug Feig?, 1059 Pequot Avenue

The tax increases are too high; Pequot Library is a jewel in town and should be supported.

Jim Bohan, 51 Station Street

Taxes are too high; Fairfield taxes are higher than our neighboring communities.

John Everett, 1281 Cross Highway

A decision needs to be made in how to address the future; the private sector is supporting the public sector; don't increase taxes so high. Board of Finance Public Budget Comment Session Minutes of Meeting March 29, 2014 4

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Kristen Therrington?, 79 Walbin Court

Support the BOE budget with no more cuts.

Bret & Natalie Grady, 116 Doreen Drive

Please support the BOE budget.

Aarti McMahon, 3285 Redding Road

Support the BOE budget; we should trust the experience and knowledge of the BOE administrators.

Julianne Stirling, 766 Old Post Road

She is one of those people who is leaving Fairfield because she can no longer afford to live here with the taxes that have been imposed on home owners. She is looking at neighboring towns where the tax situation is much better for affordability.

David McKinnis, 301 Sasco Hill Road

He and his family moved here because of the excellent school system; the BOE has done an excellent job in keeping cuts down; please do not cut the BOE budget.

Eileen Bellitto, 171 Woodside Circle

Keep taxes at or below the rate of inflation; the schools should not be hurt by cost reductions.

Richard Cooke, 1123 Sasco Hill Road

Fairfield should be run as a business not a budget; there is too much overhead at the top.

Carol Guernsey, 80 Sigwin Drive

Her family moved here for the schools; please support the BOE budget.

Stefanie Richthammer, no address given

Please support the BOE budget; do not increase class sizes.

Nina Cahill, Taintor Drive

Please support the BOE budget.

Heather Dean, 919 Stillson Road

She is on the RTM and has received over 700 emails in the last few days regarding the BOE budget; this is about the whole town budget; support the whole budget.

Elaine Davis, 206 Farmington Avenue

Please support the BOE budget.

Rachel Rowan, 160 Pine Creek Avenue

Property taxes are too high; consider holding tax increase at 1.5%, the rate of inflation. Board of Finance Public Budget Comment Session Minutes of Meeting March 29, 2014 5

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Gail Francolini, Stratfield School, 62 Philemon Street

Please support the BOE budget.

Suzie Meehan, Sherman School

Please pass the BOE budget as presented with no cuts.

John Sullivan, 58 Tuckahoe Lane

Support the Senior Center budget request for a full-time director.

Seth Block, 205 Shrub Oak Lane

He resents the BOF going after children as bullies; go after all departments.

Jill Bargas, 31 Pilgrim Lane

Support the BOE budget

Chris L.?, 31 Acorn Lane

Debt service has increased and needs to stop; keep any increase at the rate of inflation 1.5%.

Kathleen McHugh, 129 Banks Place

Keep any increase at or below 1.5%

Karen Wackerman, 192 Shoreham Village Drive

Support the BOE budget as presented.

David Thornton, 58 Twin Brooks Lane

Serves on Board of Assessment Appeals which just finished cutting \$15M from the Grand List.

Jim Whitcomb, 249 Old South Road

Keep any increase at or below 1.5%

Kevin Lennon, 91 Flora Boulevard

Support the BOE budget; support the full time director at the Senior Center.

Steven Shenberg, 15 Flax Road

Support BOE budget in full.

Kathy Paohe, 92 Ann Street

Support BOE budget.

Dawn Llewellyn, 524 Sturges Road

Support BOE budget Board of Finance Public Budget Comment Session Minutes of Meeting March 29, 2014 6

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Nancy Haberly, 30 Duck Farm Road

Support BOE Budget

Ellen Jacob, RTM District 9

This is a difficult job to be done by the BOS, BOF and the RTM; there are questions to be answered pertaining to the management of the Town.

Michael Weiss, 333 Bennett Street

Support the BOE budget.

Steven Aniston, 345 Fairview Avenue

He expressed his confusion about facts being published that conflict with one another.

Carol Way, 324 Villa Avenue

She chose to live in Fairfield because of its diversity; she is appalled with the little that is done for the Senior Center.

Suzanne Miska, 123 Ryegate Road

She cannot support the BOE budget; she feels there are problems at the administrative level of the BOE.

Marilyn Miller, 228 Woodrow Avenue

Support the BOE budget as presented.

Brian Gates, Gay Bowers Road

The BOE budget has room for economizing; he sees a lot of indirect costs not going to the students.

Mary Mayer, 585 Warner Hill Road

Support the BOE budget as presented.

Malcolm Zola, 957 Fairfield Beach Road

Keep the tax rate under control.

Amy Mezoff, 261 Robin Lane

Look at the big picture; residential overgrowth is a drain.

Lynne Porter, 261 Robin Lane

Cut the BOE budget; money cannot be equated with the quality in education.

C.Luczaj?, 40 Sherwood Farm Road

Moved here for the school system; support the BOE budget as presented.

Ann Harvey, 363 Hemlock Road Board of Finance Public Budget Comment Session Minutes of Meeting March 29, 2014 7

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Support the BOE budget as presented.

Mary Hogue, 65 Stonewall Lane

The BOE budget is as lean as possible.

Matt Waggner, 168 Grasmere Avenue

The process seems to be that each entity is expected to make cuts to the town budget; no more cuts please.

Bruce M?, 193 Sky Top Terrace

Support the BOE budget.

David Downie, 655 Warner Hill Road

He urged all to realize there is a tipping point to raising taxes; cut somewhere else.

Stephanie Goldman Bresengil, 1477 Fencerow Drive

She chose Fairfield for the school system; support the BOE budget.

Lisa Cammarota, 74 Green Knolls Lane

Support the BOE budget; new mandates from the state and federal government require more money to implement.

Leonora Campbell, 72 Newman Place

Support the BOE budget.

Will Diaz, 49 Melville Avenue

Support the BOE budget.

Lisa Shephard, 82 Lee Drive

Support the BOE budget.

Lisa Geer-Yan, 543 Old Post Road

Her family moved here for the schools; support the BOE budget.

Pamela Iacono, 68 Phye Road, RTM District 9

Please add a part-time director at the Senior Center rather than adding a part-time clerk in the back room of the Finance Department.

Bud Morton, 290 Sasco Hill Road

Tax rates are too high and unsustainable.

Charlotte Bartol, 1121 Sasco Hill Road

No tax increase; keep taxes low. Board of Finance Public Budget Comment Session Minutes of Meeting March 29, 2014 8

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Eileen Wensel, 960 Flintlock Road

Taxes are too high.

Board of Finance Comments

Catherine Albin

She thanked the public for their input; she is waiting to see what the BOS does next week

James Brown

He thanked everyone for their emails; he agrees with the need for a long range plan for the Town; he thanked everyone for coming today.

David Becker

He has received lots of emails and he has read them all; he thanked everyone for coming out today; he is looking forward to see what the BOS does next week when they vote on the budget; everyone is trying to balance the needs of all in determining the budget this year; consolidation and streamlining needs to be done in the near future.

Robert Stone

This is his 13th budget to work on; balance is needed; he thanked everyone for coming today and he said he likes this type of forum.

Christopher DeWitt

He thanked everyone for coming and he noted that it is especially nice to see children in attendance today; he said the budget process is a marathon; there is no rubberstamping done for the budget; He thanked everyone for their involvement.

Thomas Flynn

The budget process is active all year long; he agrees that a strategic plan process is needed and this board is advocating for that to be instituted; long term obligations are being funded as BOF promised to do.

The meeting adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah J. Garavel

Recording Secretary Respectfully submitted,

Deborah J. Garavel
Recording Secretary