

**COMBINED BOARD OF SELECTMAN AND BOARD OF FINANCE
PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING
MINUTES OF MEETING
March 19, 2011**

Pursuant to the call and written notice, the Public Budget Hearing of the Board of Finance was held on Saturday, March 19, 2011 at 9:30 pm at the Senior Center, 100 Mona Terrace, Fairfield, Connecticut.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairman Thomas Flynn, Robert Bellitto, Jr., Vice Chairman, Ken Brachfeld, Michael Tetreau, James Brown, Robert Stone

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mary LeClerc, Kevin Kiley, Christopher DeWitt

ALSO PRESENT

Paul Hiller, Chief Fiscal Officer and Clerk of the Board of Finance
Linda Gardiner, Budget Director
Kenneth Flatto, First Selectman, Town of Fairfield
Sheri Steeneck, Board of Selectmen

Kathy Napolitano, 20 Hoydens Lane, requested that the Town of Fairfield continue to support non-public school bus transportation at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School.

For the record, Ms. Napolitano presented a copy of her letter, dated March 16, 2011, to Mr. Flatto, Board of Finance and the Board of Education.

Frank Rice, 126 Hulls Highway, as he has requested in past years, suggested that the Wetland Compliance Officer in the Conservation Department be reinstated.

Joseph Witko, 135 Sky Top Drive, has concerns about out State cut school administrators school budget.

Thomas Hodgman, 731 Sasco Hill Road, was not in favor of the proposed school budget.

Laura Roberts, 590 Katona Drive, spoke in favor of the proposed BOE budget and asked the Board to pass it as presented.

Ann Stanler, RTM District 5, was grateful to the Board for their time spent on the budget process and was in support of the BOE budget.

Mark Goldstein, 423 Hemlock Road, suggested the Town should combine school systems and consolidate library, police, etc. He thought the town budget ought to be easier to understand and include two pie charts – one showing the source of funds and another showing the application of funds.

Elaine Davis, 206 Farmington Avenue, noted she didn't want to go back to the 1980s, which included the loss of art, music and foreign language classes and buildings that fell into disrepair. She was in favor of the BOE budget.

David McKenzie, 505 Merwins Lane, was concerned about the executive overview on consumption in the budget that included the number of teachers per student and the number of administration per teacher and that compared those ratios to other towns.

Mary Hogue, 165 Stonewall Lane, noted the operational audit of the BOE budget recommended one more administrator, and cutting the education budget can affect the value of real estate. She was in support of the BOE budget.

Bob Mcaccuffie, 144 Mayweed Road, was not in support of the BOE budget.

Kate Daniello, co-founder of We the People of Fairfield, 490 Schrub Oak Lane, not in support of increased taxes. She noted if we continue to increase taxes, seniors will move out, and people who replace them will have children. She further noted one wanted to destroy Fairfield's education system but felt there is room for cuts.

Steve Sheppard, 124 Juniper Lane, was not in support of the BOE budget.

David Adnett 165 Hemlock Hills South, asked that the Board to find a way to freeze the budget.

Sara Kwon, 115 Paulding Street, was in support of the BOE budget.

Robert Forcclino, co-founder of We the People of Fairfield, 51 Taquoshe Place, noted the teachers, police officers, firefighter, and municipal workers are not underpaid. He is not saying they are overpaid but thought they should freeze their pay. He didn't think anyone was going to quit.

Craig Roberts, 580 Katona Drive, was in support of the BOE budget.

Palma Senatore, 42 Pilgrim Lane, was not in support of the BOE budget.

Gaye Gaylors, 51 Spruce Street, noted the seniors deserve more than their getting. She was not in support of the BOE budget.

First Selectman, Ken Flatto, noted the average town employee makes 50 percent of the average town resident on a per capita basis. He also noted the RTM has a right to object to contracts between the town and unions but if the contracts go to arbitration, the community's ability to pay will be part of the outcome.

Larry Kennedy, 86 Robertson Crossing, was in support of the BOE budget.

Joan Fortuna, 38 Pine Creek Avenue noted she does not want to see her taxes raised.

Virginia Sanford, Hillside Road, noted she is not in favor of the BOE budget.

Christine Vitale, 254 Verna Hill Road, noted that the BOE budget be passed as presented.

Sheri Steenack asked the Town and the Board of Education employees to email her with ideas about how the proposed 2011-12 town budget could be reduced.

James Brown, BOF, noted he supports tax costs, service, and expenditures.

Robert Belitto, Vice Chairman, noted the Board of Finance said short term fixes often have long term consequences.

Michael Tetreau asked the residents to keep the cards and letters coming in and to stay involved. He noted multi year issues and problems require multi year solutions.

Ken Brachfeld thanked the residents for coming out to voice their opinions. He also thanked the rest of the Board, especially Chairman Flynn.

Robert Stone asked the residents "how many people got a raise" and noted he will do his best to lower taxes.

Tom Flynn, Chairman, noted seventy percent of costs related to the annual budget are related to personnel costs.

Mr. Flynn also noted he was aware of the economy's affect on the private sector. He said revenues at his company went down 35 percent and staffing was cut from 525 people to 370 people. He further noted everyone else took a 10-percent reduction in salary.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.