

BOARD OF FINANCE
Business Education Initiative and Board of Education Budget Hearing
MINUTES
February 15, 2012

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Elaine Hammers called the budget hearing meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. at the Town Hall, Trumbull, Connecticut. All those present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

Members present and absent were as follows:

PRESENT

Chairman, Elaine Hammers
Cindy Penkoff, Alternate
Paul Lavoie
Dave Rutigliano
Tom Tesoro

ABSENT

Steven Lupien
Alex Remson, Alternate
Andrew Palo

Also present: Maria Pires, Director of Finance; Ralph Lassogna, Superintendent, Dr. Cialfi, Assistant Superintendent, Stephen Sirico, Stephen Wright, Debra Herbst, Rosemary Seaman, Michael Ward, Loretta Chory, Lisa Labella, Thomas Kelly, Jeff Hackett

Business Education Initiative

Mr. Annick presented the budget request for the Business Education Initiative, referencing page 325, section 6, of the Board of Finance Budget. The BEI functions:

- Bring businesses together in town and network them
- Assist students in the town to learn more about the work world
- The BEI operates channel 17 and channel 99; on-line 14 hours
- Currently covers 12 boards and live sports, etc.- videographers earn \$25/hour – students earn \$15/hr , then \$18/hr. after one year.
- Rather than asking for \$12,000-15,000, he asked the First Selectman to put it into the budget, with the full support of the BOE.
- He is now requesting an additional \$10-13,000 above the initial budget request; funds to be used for a studio director, etc., since it was too late to put it into the original Budget Request.
- Received a \$43,000 grant from the State of Connecticut; BOE received a new 3-camera system.

The Chair requested additional information, which she would give to the Board members for review.

Board of Education

Mr. Wright spoke indicating the BOE is seeking a 5.07% budget increase, whereas the First Selectman's budget supports a 3.5% increase. He went on to add that the focus should be on the difference.

- 5.07% increase includes full-time kindergarten while sustaining the operations we now have.
- Connecticut education is going to be reformed over the next few years.
- High performing districts, such as ours will gain opportunities to obtain grants, etc.

Mr. lassogna indicated that the Board of Education is requesting a 5.07% budget increase, and the First Selectman, after reviewing this request reduced the increase to 3.47%. He went on to add the following:

- Principals and other BOE individuals would be on hand to answer all Board of Finance questions.
- Job of BOE is to implement those programs that will benefit the most students, including those with special needs.
- BOE has the responsibility to answer all questions to make sure that people are informed about the budget.
- BOE has implemented cost saving measures without compromising student needs, responding appropriately to the \$3.2 million reductions in the last 2 years.
- Given Federal and State mandates, this budget has been an arduous task.
- Currently, we are dealing with bullying legislation and interventions.
- The BOE is very appreciative of the contributions the Town has made to the education system; the town is currently rated 9 out of 10 in education.
 - 99.6% graduate from THS
 - 94% go to college
 - CMTs are solid
 - CAPT scores increasing
- Trumbull does more with less.

He went on to discuss the budget requests:

- Core amount needed to maintain what we have: \$90,149,343 - includes salaries and benefits.
- Restorations – including salaries: \$585,241
- Established initiative – all day kindergarten: \$878,730
- 5.07% - \$91,878,405; without kindergarten – 4.0%
- We will work as hard to be the best no matter how much we receive
- He referred the Board to Section 2 page 8, which highlights the Trumbull school activities, accomplishments and achievements.

The Chair indicated that we are here to help students. She went on to add that she is always amazed at how articulate the students are when giving their input for what they need, and the effectiveness of the methods currently in use.

Discussion followed regarding the loss of 8% in State funding this year; however, it was noted that we might be eligible for \$163,000 from the State, due to being a high performing district. The Chair expressed concern that the State would not give us these funds. Mr. Wright suggested that perhaps the State might cut a lot of the red tape they currently subject us to. He went on to indicate that we have submitted 11 waivers for approval and 1 was returned for additional information.

Mr. Tesoro asked that the list of questions he submitted to the BOE be addressed at the next meeting with a high level of specificity, along with what-if scenarios.

In response to Mr. Tesoro's question, Mr. lassogna indicated that over the last 5 years the BOE has had an average of \$600,000-\$650,000 in unspent funds. He went on to add that using unspent funds to buy in advance for the next year could create a funding cliff. He supports receiving the unspent funds from the BOF as a supplemental, using the funds for reinstatement.

The Chair indicated that according to the Town Charter, supplemental funds are not automatically added to your next year's base. The Chair indicated that the BOF would not approve a supplemental going forward knowing that the funds would to be added to the base for the next year.

Discussion followed regarding the \$477,000 supplemental given to the BOE last year. Mr. Sirico indicated that if a supplemental were given, the State would want to know why, which he feels was the intent of the MNBR.

Mr. Tesoro expressed concern that a funding cliff would occur in year 2 if the supplemental were added to the base this year, which could appear as improper funding on our part.

The Chair indicated that the BOE has more flexibility in moving funds around than the Town, which has more constraints and cannot. She added that the Town needs to seek legal advice on this.

It was noted that all questions for the BOE must be submitted by Monday and responded to by the 27th of February.

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Phyllis Collier
Board of Finance Clerk