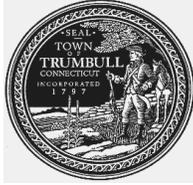


# Town of Trumbull

Tri-Board Meeting  
CONNECTICUT  
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MINUTES  
December 29, 2011

Chairman Carl A. Massaro, Jr. called the special Tri-Board meeting to order at 7:41 p.m.

Chairman Carl A. Massaro, Jr. extended his gratitude the members of the Town Council, Board of Finance and the Board of Education for attending this meeting during the holiday season.

The clerk recorded the roll as follows.

Town Council

David R. Pia	James Blose	Debra A. Lamberti
Suzanne S. Testani	Kristy Waizenegger	Martha A. Jankovic-Mark
Chadwick Ciocci	Carl A. Massaro, Jr.	Fred Palmieri, Jr.
James F. Meisner	Tony J. Scinto	Jane Deyoe
Michael J. London	Mark LeClair	Thomas Whitmoyer
Vicki Tesoro		

Board of Finance:

Elaine Hammers - Chair	Alex Remson
Andrew Palo	Cindy Penkoff
Paul S. Lavoie	Thomas S. Tesoro
David Rutigliani	

Board of Education:

Steven Wright, Chairman	Deborah Herbst, Vice-Chair
Rosemary Seaman	Loretta Chory
Lisa Labella	Edward Ward
Thomas Kelly	

Also Present:

First Selectman Timothy M. Herbst, Daniel Nelson, Chief of Staff, Maria Pires Director of Finance, Superintendent of Schools Ralph Iassogna, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Dr. Gary Cialfi, Steve Serico BoE Business Manager and BoE Student Representatives Emma Connolly and Patrick Curtin.

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TRI-BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS:

2012-2013 Town Budget and the Superintendent's proposed BOE Budget 2012-2013

First Selectman Herbst recognized all of the newly elected officials. All present tonight, irrespective of their differences are committed to confronting the issues at hand, we will rise to the occasion to solve problems and be able to move the Town forward in a positive direction. These are challenging times, at the local level we are being asked to maintain services along with the unfunded state mandates being implemented during one of the worst economic times in recent history. The challenges of the Town budget includes a projected 4% increase (\$5,598,392) which encompasses the current proposed BoE increase, debt service, increased contributions to Town pension fund for Town and Police employees. This does not include health care costs or contractual obligations on the Town side of the budget. There will also be a property revaluation this year. The residential revaluation will be offset from the commercial side.

We are seeking a Feasibility Study to explore a joinder of services between the Town and the BoE. This has been discussed with the Chairman of the BoE. The goal of the study is to join services that will not negatively impact the student or taxpayer needs. A 4-member task force has been appointed to examine the joinder of those services and the feasibility as to the effectiveness.

The First Selectman stated that the BoE's budget underscores the challenges and addresses the priorities, and requested that the BoF approve a budget and that dialogue amongst the six members of the BoF start now.

There are some legislative priorities that will need the Town Council's attention and action such as, the alarm abatement ordinance, senior tax relief and hybrid tax abatement for businesses.

The P&Z Commission needs to begin collaboratively to reopen the plan of conservation and development and address planning for those areas of the town that could bring business growth, expansion and retention.

The First Selectman asked the Town Council to have a sharp pencil and a keen eye with respect to our collective bargaining units which has the biggest impact on our Town's budget and to also watch our pension contribution obligations. The biggest issue that will come to the Town Council and the Board of Finance over the next two years is sewer regionalization.

Chairman Carl A. Massaro, Jr. noted for the record that there was a respective quorum for each of the boards present at this meeting.

Mr. Iassogna noted that the First Selectman's comments have been well noted, the tone is most important, the BoE and he are looking forward to working with the First Selectman, the BoF and the Town Council. At this juncture there is only a superintendent's recommended budget; the BoE will consider the budget at their January 3, 2012 meeting.

Mr. Iassogna presented a power point presentation for the Boards present topics reviewed are as follows:

- Trumbull ranked the 7<sup>th</sup> best Town for families in the Family Circle magazine, on a scale 1-10 Trumbull received a 9 for its excellence in education.
- In Connecticut Magazine Trumbull ranked #9 in the best town to live in with a population of 25-50,000; Trumbull school ranked #5 out of 26.
- 99% of Trumbull students graduate high school with 94% going on to college.
- CMT scores show solid growth.
- Per DRG 2010 Trumbull's per pupil expenditures is \$12,599 - Trumbull is in lower quadrant.
- Many unfunded mandates have been funded in recent years and continue to come.



passes the budget will be held at 3.5% budget increase. Discussion will then be around cutting the budget not increasing the budget by any amount. The referendum would have to come by petition; The BoF starts with approved budget number of the prior year (that is how MUNIS functions) not a supplemental. The BoE superintendent's recommended budget without all day kindergarten represents a 3.38% increase. The restoration items requested have to do with safety issues.

- THS Enrollment Increases - The Curriculum does not include the reductions of 3.6 THS high school teachers reduced from last year's budget, after the supplemental appropriation of \$477,056 was received; the district restored two of those teachers. The total reduction of 1.6 teachers was at the high school (1.0 music and .6 orchestra). However in the past ten years THS enrollment has increased, there have been increases in staff, however since 2008- 2009 the enrollment increased by 128 students. That is where the short changing of the closing out of classes has happened. The THS has not received the corresponding staff increases to meet the increase of the 128 students. The education system's reputation relies on students being accepted at top quality colleges/universities. THS will have increased by 520 students in the last ten years (inclusive of next years projected increase) and have received 22 staff members. The first seven years the district has kept up with the student increases, the last 3-4 years they have not. The BoE is very concerned with this matter and will discuss it at length their January 3, 2012 meeting. Restoration of teachers to THS was requested by multiple council members.
- Closing Out of THS Classes - Results in two options: the student going into a study hall or another class which increases class size, last year's cut resulted in several English classes closing out, 5-6 music classes and some AP classes. The fact that students could not take the AP class and went into a regular class was not a result of the prior year's cut but from the enrollment increase that the district has not been able to keep up with. There are two dynamics affecting class closings. There is the variable of teacher certification which must be considered with regard to class closings, certain teachers are only certified to teach certain classes, it is not a matter of being able to move the teachers indiscriminately. Class closeouts are not impacting the core curriculum, however it will be required by the State (unfunded mandate) to raise the number of credits required to graduate. 83-84% of THS students graduate with 24 or more credits, 22 credits are what is required to graduate currently and will go to 25 credits by 2018.

The suggestion by NEASC is to eliminate lower level classes and require those students to take more a challenging class level. The issue is not whether the students meet the high school required levels; the issue is with class closings. The students will not be as competitive as their peers to get into the colleges. The inventory of interests of the students will be difficult to match on an annual basis with the inventory of available and qualified teachers; these will be the difficult decisions that will be made on an annual basis.
- Educational Weaknesses - provision for ample opportunity for students to excel in areas they need to excel in such as:
  - A. ELL English Language Learners
  - B. State Mandates: RTI - SRBI - Interventions provided for tier 1,2 & 3
  - C. Social & emotional component of working with the student
  - D. Percentage of population the district predicatively does not reach (Tier 1,2 & 3)
  - E. Real time data on the student

F. Participation Fees Pay to Play - Trumbull is now in the top 5% for participation fees, there may be students who are not able to participate due to the fact that a parent may not want to come forward on this issue. The superintendent is responsible for providing waivers for those families; last year he had averaged 62 waivers, this year he is already up to 30, although the waivers are not funded regularly and will eventually go away.

▪ Full Day Kindergarten -

The district is looking at full day kindergarten for each of the schools; 10% of that population will not be mature enough or socially ready for the full day. If the program was to run from 8:30 to 3:30 there would be 2-3 students (10%) in each class that would go home at 1:30. All students are usually able to be transitioned to full day by February 1<sup>st</sup>.

The Total net cost of full day kindergarten will be \$873,000 - adding 12 teachers and 12.5 para's. This will be off set by the savings in bussing (\$275,000). Presently in the ½ day model there is not enough time to do intervention. To be able to quantify cost savings due to increased intervention we could look to New Canaan that had implemented full day kindergarten a few years ago, the program results in a 2% reduction in special education.

Based upon projections approximately 424 to 450 kindergarten students are expected, the exact number is not known based upon the fact that once it is well known that the program will implemented there is a certain population that may not register their children in private enterprises. The second year the program is in existence will probably represent truer numbers.

There are variations of the full day program; the model Trumbull is considering is the Fairfield model. The cost of extended day kindergarten v. full day is \$24,000. The district is required by statute to provide transportation at the 1:15 dismissal for the 10% of students who are not ready for extended day kindergarten, eventually the cost of the 1:15 dismissal (\$48,000) would go away by February or sooner.

The program was designed for the children and based upon what is healthy for a 5 year old. Currently in Trumbull the 5 year olds are going to school for two hours, it can be very stressful for a 5 year old. The full day program gives the teachers and the students the gift of time, to mature, socialize, enjoy and explore. Originally there was budgetary bussing savings of \$300,000 currently the savings will be \$274,000 the \$26,000 difference pays for the students during that time period the students will be picked up at 1:30.

It takes first grade teachers the first 3-4 full months to get the kindergarteners acclimated into first grade as they are not currently prepared for the full day. Opportunities are being lost not only in the kindergarten setting but in the first quarter of the first grade year.

There is a space issue at Booth Hill School for the next 1-2 years which will necessitate music on a cart for those first 2 years. The district may do a surgical shifting (not a redistricting), i.e. new families that move in to Town who are on the border will be given the option of which school to attend.

Discussion in committee with regard to implementing extended day kindergarten (1:30 dismissal) had taken place, but it was their decision that there is so much curriculum in place currently that the full day was necessary.

The cost difference between extended kindergarten vs. full day had not been cost out; it would represent a .85 teacher vs. a 1.0 teacher. In some districts the extended day is the model for all students. The cost savings realized for extended kindergarten in lieu of full day may be lost to the additional transportation costs that would be incurred. There are studies that speak in favor of full day and there are studies which speak in favor of extended day. The

administrators in our Town are aware that there are some children who will not be ready for the full day which is why a compromise was made and an option would be made to those students. The needs of all children were considered. Grade 3 is the indicator year that tells us what reading rating the student will be performing at even in high school; with full day kindergarten we will be elevating that reading level.

The Superintendent is committed to full day kindergarten, although if the BoE budget is reduced significantly, the first item cut would be full day kindergarten. The 3.6% which is the core budget is what brought us to this point. It would be difficult for the Superintendent to implement a new program and have to eliminate other items which have proven to be successful.

▪ Budget Referendum -

The voters have the right to petition for a referendum when the Town budget (the Town Council final approved budget) is 3½ % over the prior year's budget. If the referendum is passed then it automatically goes down to the 3½ % and goes back through the process of the First Selectman, BoF and Town Council for re-adoption. The amount of signatures needed for the petition is 5% of the voters who participated in the previous election.

▪ The \$477,056 that was restored included:

Freshman Sports, 2 teachers at THS, 3 teachers and .4 music & strings, 2 of the 4 elementary secretaries, 1 custodian, sophomore football and girl's club ice hockey. There is no overlap in those numbers. The three restorations especially the people were necessary and the most important to restore.

▪ Core Curriculum & the State- Discussion ensued amongst the boards with regard to core curriculum and the state aligning with the municipalities' curriculum. Connecticut has a high State standard, is great bench mark and could be a future model for other states. Governor Malloy wants to be known as the education governor and is working towards consistency within the 190 school districts; the new Commissioner Dr. Stephan Prior has asked the superintendents of schools what should the State department staff be doing to help assist the Towns to achieve their goals? Linked to that is the Superintendent's Association has a transformational project underway, there is commonality in a three, this could be the turning of a corner where there can be more consistency but still have flexibility at the local level. We will see a new direction for Connecticut not only in academia but in funding. With everyone working together they will be able to turn the corner.

▪ Curriculum Writing Costs: Title 1 & 2 federal grants have been used for the district's curriculum. The district does not get many grants, they are for priority districts, and Trumbull is not a priority district. Trumbull should be proud of the fact that 99% of our students are graduating. Graduating percentages are going up for the State but are finding that 1-5 students throughout the state are graduating in more than 4 years.

No motions or votes were taken.

Chairman Carl A. Massaro, Jr. thanked all present for attending this discussion and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

By unanimous consent the Tri-Board special meeting adjourned at 10:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Margaret D. Mastroni, Town Council Clerk