Town of Trumbull

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TOWN HALL
Trumbull

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FINANCE COMMITTEE
FY 2026-2027 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING
MINUTES
APRIL 27, 2026

Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call: The clerk called the roll and recorded it as follows:

Present: Nicole Satin Chairman, Mary Isaac, Vice Chairman, Christine El Eris Tom Broderick, John Foreman, Richard Wolf, Bill Mecca, Alternate Tony Scinto, Alternate, (arrived at 6:07 p.m.)

Also Present: First Selectman Vicki A. Tesoro, Chief Administrative Officer Cynthia Katske, Town Attorney Daniel Schopick, Town Council Chairman Ashley Gaudiano, Town Council members Joy Colon, Brian Walsh, Jennifer Winschel Steve Spillane, Jerrod Ferrari

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The Chair OPENED the Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m. All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Chair noted Trumbull residents are welcome to speak tonight on any line item within the operating budget. The Council cannot add funding to the budget but can add back to the budget only if it had been reduced by the BOF and was included in the first selectman's budget. The final vote of the Council will be held on Monday, May 4, 2026, at 7:00 pm at the Town Hall. The Chair noted there were three people who had signed up to speak and asked if there was anybody else present who wanted to speak that they could add their name to the list. This is also a hybrid meeting, and it was explained if there was someone who wanted to speak virtually, they would need to use the raise hand option and technology would bring them into to the meeting to speak. If someone were to call in, they were to dial *9 to raise their hand they would also be brought into the meeting to speak

There were four (4) people present to speak, (three (3) in-person, and one (1) virtually).

1. Electra Ferriello of 138 Putting Green Road asked the Town Council to keep the Board of Education's budget as is. It's been clear that taxpayers agree that education is a priority and is what makes Trumbull stand out. The overwhelming amount of parental engagement in this year's budget process speaks volumes. Hundreds of emails were written to all of you, all but a few previous public hearing testimonies spoke specifically to education. The passing of the Hillcrest referendum also shows that our community members value education. I understand that inflation and other fixed costs are negatively impacting everyone's budget, but we cannot continue to sustain deficits in the education budget that seem to double every year. From many of your email responses, comments at all previous meetings, it's also evident that Town Council members believe in properly funding education, as well as the elected officials. I hope that you all have been listening to your constituents and agree that we all need to work together to make sure that our schools are properly funded and that the funding is then spent appropriately, adequately. Appropriately allocating funds ensures safe and proper transportation, smaller class sizes, up-to-date instructional materials, well supported quality teachers and access to critical programs such as special needs and enrichment activities. We need to continue to invest in education so that all students thrive. Investing fully in education is not just an investment in schools, it's an investment in a stronger workforce, healthier communities and a more prosperous future for everyone.

2. Sarah Broas of 25 Doris Street began by recognizing the commitment it takes to serve on the Town Council, the time and effort given often on top of your own professional and personal responsibilities, matters, and is appreciated. She was concerned by the characterization of the parent voice at the Board of Finance hearings, and quoted, “Just want to raise taxes”, end quote, but believes what was heard was far more nuanced. You heard from taxpayers, parents, educators and students who understand firsthand the impact that school resources have on both our most vulnerable learners and our highest performing students. It is true that many are willing to make a modest investment in our schools to support the needs of the entire community. That is a thoughtful, informed choice, one that reflects priorities and yes, sacrifice, and it's important to recognize that adding dollars to a budget isn't enough if that increase doesn't keep pace with inflation or with what peer districts are investing. In that case, we're not moving forward we're falling behind. Dr Semmel has been clear and consistent about what is needed to move forward. The people who spoke understood that balance. What wasn’t heard was, “I want my taxes to go up haphazardly”. What was heard was, let's make a deliberate community wide investment in our schools. As elected officials, the purpose of a town hall like this is to listen and act. Sustained community engagement depends on people feeling that their input is heard and considered as part of the process, yet when votes are taken and the budget is discussed, there is often little explanation of amounts or rationale, and these decisions are not abstract. They have real financial and personal impacts on families. People choose to live in a town that reflect their values, a town with strong schools, a vibrant community and a shared investment in its future, and many are willing to support this vision, even when it means a modest increase in taxes, because they understand that investing in public education is investing in the strength and sustainability of the town itself. At this point, the damage to the Board of Education budget is done. I implore you

to keep the Board of Ed budget as it is and not reduce it any further. For transparency and respect for the voices shared here, at the Board of Finance hearings and throughout the communication received, asked that any changes to the Board of Education budget be discussed openly with clear explanation of both the amounts and the reasoning behind them.

3. Rachelle Giordano of 11 Winhall Lane extended her gratitude for all being at the public hearing, for listening and continuing to support our Trumbull community, and encouraged the Council to fully support the education budget as approved by the Board of Finance in March and would like the Town Council to move forward with a consistent vision for Trumbull's future, one that includes education as an investment, not just a necessary cost. Many residents took the time to come out in March and speak to the Board of Finance in support of education. The meeting in the March increased the line item by $500,000, these are positive signs that we are continuing to value education. However, at the April 8th education budget presentation to the Town Council Finance Committee, a document was circulated with assumptions made on behalf of the town regarding the education budget. After reviewing this document, it contains inaccuracies. It appears that decreased transportation costs were counted twice and that projected electrical cost savings may be overstated. It also directs the Board of Education to fully spend the non-lapsing account. As a result, the assertion that the education budget is fully funded and in the green is inaccurate. For this reason, she urged the Council to maintain the increase approved budget by the Board of Finance in March. She addressed the topic of transportation and the shift from two to three tiers and is disappointed that this is a forced issue. The governing bodies of the Board of Finance and Town Council are not permitted to direct how education funds are spent, yet this is effectively what is happening by adjusting bus schedules, and by extension, the daily schedules of families of middle and elementary school students is being driven by a funding gap. At the Board of Finance request, many families may now face financial burdens, including increased childcare costs they did not previously have. The positive investment in economic development was acknowledged. Several line items regarding development were increased to show support for what Trumbull can become. Trumbull is an energetic and vibrant community. Many of us continue to frequent restaurants and stores just over our borders, and my hope is that the continued investment in economic development will attract more businesses here and believes in a vision for Trumbull's future where we continue to thrive as a community while remaining a top choice for families seeking a strong education experience.

The Chair called a RECESS at 6:11 p.m. The Chair called the Public Hearing back to order at 6:26 p.m.

4. Carla Psarofagis of 16 Wendover Road was present virtually noted she echoed all comment made at this public hearing and spoke in favor of the BOE budget as recommended by the Board of Finance and noted she echoed all comment made at this public hearing.

The Chair confirmed with technology that there was no one else to speak virtually or by calling in. The public is welcome to email any comments they may have on the proposed FY2026-2027 town operating budget to: councilclerk@trumbull-ct.gov

The Chair CLOSED the Public Hearing at 6:31 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Margaret D. Mastroni

Margaret D. Mastroni, Clerk