

**TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT**

*Special Town Council Meeting  
Town Council Chambers*

**May 8, 2014**

**6:30 P.M.**

**AGENDA  
RECORD OF VOTES & MINUTES**

The Regular Meeting of the Wallingford Town Council was called to order at 6:37P.M. A Moment of Silence was observed as Reverend Warburton could not be in attendance. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were: Chairman Vincent Cervoni, Craig Fishbein, Thomas Laffin, John Letourneau, Christine Mansfield, Robert F. Parisi, Larry Russo, John Sullivan and Vincent F. Testa, Jr. Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr. and James Bowes, Comptroller were also present at the meeting.

1. Discussion and Possible Action on the FY 2014-2015 Budget of the Town of Wallingford  
- Chairman Vincent Cervoni

Chairman Cervoni stated that the first motion he was made aware of came from Councilor Testa.

**MOTION WAS MADE TO RESTORE \$515,000 TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET.**

**MADE BY: TESTA  
SECONDED BY: SULLIVAN**

*In attendance: Dr. Salvatore Menzo, Superintendent  
Roxane McKay, Chairperson, Board of Education  
Also attending in the audience: Linda Winters, Business Manager  
Sharlene Wong, Food Service Director  
Kathy Castelli, Board Member  
Mike Votto, Board Member*

Councilor Testa stated that he has a strong obligation to fund the sustained budget and expressed his wish to be able to fund the strategic budget. Councilor Sullivan stated that he supports funding that sustains the budget of the Board of Education. Comptroller Bowes stated that if these funds do not come from the reserve account, then the tax increase would go from .55 mills in the Mayor's present proposed budget to approximately .66 for 2014-15. He said that the change to taxpayers would be from \$106 to \$138 additional taxes. Dr. Menzo discussed how the BOE is short \$515K to sustain the same services. The Board has \$300k in their contingency account but cannot be used for contractual obligations, salaries & benefits. Dr. Menzo noted that it can be used for non-recurring expenses such as 10-year old servers (approximately \$100K) and teacher devices (approximately \$240K).

In responding to a Town Council question, Dr. Menzo and Mrs, McKay stated that if they do not receive the funds need to sustain the BOE's budget, then the real cuts to arrive at \$515K could include and are currently being discussed – extra-curricular Middle School and High School sports; or they could eliminate certified staff member(s) who salary & benefits equal

approximately \$75K; or class size could increase; or all of these items. They discussed CRRRA fund distribution to BOE projects, mandated items such as asbestos removal, no control over mandates so hard to plan for, and reserve funds are surplus, which comes from departments not spending all of their budgeted funds. Dr. Menzo reported that for the last three years he has presented the Strategic Plan of Board of Education. There was concern last year because the state reduced funds to towns. Councilor LeTourneau and Councilor Russo stated they support the motion.

Mayor Dickinson talked of the Affordable Care Act and that if this money is removed from reserves, then the Council would be losing track of basic reality. He said it would be a big mistake. He said that this should show in the mill rate and that in dealing with the budget to not add new programs, or new positions unless you take away old programs. He said we can't keep adding. There was discussion with regard to capital programs of the Board of Education that remain undone such as safety measures, boilers, bleachers, Athletic complex at Lyman Hall High School. Councilor Fishbein suggested and Ad Hoc Committee between the Town Council and the Board of Education to discuss projects that could possible be bonded in the next few months. He requested the item be on the May 27 Town Council Agenda.

Councilor Laffin reminded citizens that this will not provide for all-day kindergarten and to remember that the Board of Education has a three-year phase-in for this program. Dr. Menzo stated that he has tried to develop a partnership with the Town Council with the cornerstone being communication. He talked of the fluidity of staffing in relation to new student registrations. He listed in the booklet all of the CRRRA items, the most critical. He reminded people that the BOE Food Truck program is funded with state grant money, not town money. He said the budget he has just to sustain BOE services for next year is bare bones. Some Councilors agree on sustaining the BOE Budget but not from the reserve account.

Chairman Cervoni said this has been a hard month, a sobering month; it has been tiresome but necessary; Wallingford has a great school system with extracurricular activities. He thanked all of the hard work of the Dr. Menzo and that of the Board of Education. Dr. Menzo, when asked how much of the \$515K does he need, said all of it. He actually needs approximately \$ 629K, he said.

Discussion turned to same problem next year, sustained services and the BOE base budget. Councilor Testa stated that he appreciated the concern about using reserves but the meeting is about having a sustained Board of Education budget.

Some of the Public spoke for adding the funds to the Board of Education including-Gina Morgenstein, 2% of reserves; Kris, Platt Drive; Robert Gross, FEMA money; and Larry Morgenstein. Paul Chiardullo, 2 Bayberry Drive, spoke against raising taxes, that everything should be a zero; and Kathryn Chardus, 224 Orchard Street, all-day kindergarten

Mike Votto, Board Member, thanked Chairman Cervoni for his comments about the Board; and Councilor Testa for his motion; and Councilor Fishbein for his idea of an Ad Hoc Committee and said he thinks it's a good idea. He stressed that the Board of Education presents '*real numbers*' and that the Board has never had to come to the Council ever before. He brought into the conversation that Dr. Menzo has won many, many grants for the system.

All comments were exhausted, and the vote was taken on Mr. Testa's motion.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

**FISHBEIN: NO                      MANSFIELD: NO      SULLIVAN: YES**  
**LAFFIN: NO                        PARISI: NO            TESTA: YES**  
**LETOURNEAU: YES                RUSSO: YES           CHAIRMAN CERVONI: NO**  
**5-NAY; 4-AYE**

**THE MOTION FAILED.**

**MOTION WAS MADE TO INCREASE THE ALLOCATION FOR \$225,000 TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR FY 2014-15 AND TO AMEND THE MAYOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET TO INCREASE THE MILL RATE AND TO FUND THE SAME ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BUDGET.**

**MADE BY:    LAFFIN**  
**SECOND:     PARISI**

**FRIENDLY AMENDMENT TO INCREASE THE ALLOCATION TO \$515,000.**

**MADE BY:    SULLIVAN**  
**SECOND:     TESTA**

**ROLL CALL VOTE ON THE AMENDMENT:**

**FISHBEIN: NO                      MANSFIELD: YES    SULLIVAN: YES**  
**LAFFIN: NO                        PARISI: NO            TESTA: YES**  
**LETOURNEAU: YES                RUSSO: YES           CHAIRMAN CERVONI: NO**  
**5-AYE; 4-NAY**

**THE MOTION PASSED.**

A passionate discussion in support of the Board of Education and in finding the avenue that works. This motion is a line in the sand for next year as it will increase the base budget of the Board of Education. It is unprecedented for the Council pulling together. Chairman Cervoni said that the vote is for the Board of Education not to raise taxes. He said it is the right thing.

**ROLL CALL VOTE ON THE ORIGINAL AMENDED MOTION:**

**FISHBEIN: NO                      MANSFIELD: YES    SULLIVAN: YES**  
**LAFFIN: NO                        PARISI: NO            TESTA: YES**  
**LETOURNEAU: NO                RUSSO: YES           CHAIRMAN CERVONI: YES**  
**5-AYE; 4-NAY**

**THE MOTION PASSED.**

There was a recess from 9:53 PM. to 10:00 P.M.

Councilor Fishbein presented the Council with a handout from the budget book for the General Fund-Estimated Revenue Budget that compares several years. He discussed these lines in the budget that show differences in the areas of Current Property, Motor Vehicles. Even though the handout shows two proposed decreases for the Police Department,

Councilor Fishbein said that he had new information and has withdrawn those two lines from consideration and the discussion.

**MOTION TO INCREASE REVENUE IN THE MAYOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET IN THE FOLLOWING LINES:**

LINE 41006	Current Property	\$700,000
LINE 41008	Motor Vehicle Suppl.	\$100,000
LINE 49005	Close Out Other Funds/Pr. Yr. A/P	\$1, 200,000

**AND TO DECREASE EXPENSES IN THE MAYOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET IN THE FOLLOWING LINES:**

LINE 54325 TOWN COUNCIL-MAINTENANCE OF EQUIPTMT	(\$1,000)
LINE 58238 LIBRARY	(\$35,000)
LINE 57177 EDC-BILLBOARD	(\$10,000)
LINE 56822 PLANNING & ZONING –POCD CONSULT	(\$35,000)
LINE 57234 PARKS & RECREATION-DOOLITTLE SHADE I	(\$6,346)

**AND TO INCREASE THE MAYOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET IN THE FOLLOWING**

LINE 58253 SOCIAL SERVICES –WCI FAÇADE PROGRAM	\$5,000
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MADE BY: FISHBEIN

SECOND: PARISI

**COUNCILOR FISHBEIN WITHDREW HIS MOTION TO SPLIT REVENUES AND EXPENSES. COUNCILOR PARISI WITHDREW HIS SECOND.**

**MOTION TO INCREASE REVENUE IN THE MAYOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET IN THE FOLLOWING LINES:**

LINE 41006	Current Property	\$700,000
LINE 41008	Motor Vehicle Suppl.	\$100,000
LINE 49005	Close Out Other Funds/Pr. Yr. A/P	\$1, 200,000

MADE BY: FISHBEIN

SECOND: LETOURNEAU

**MOTION TO TABLE REVENUES TO ALLOW FOR THE LIBRARY TO SPEAK SINCE THEY WERE IN ATTENDANCE.**

MADE BY: LAFFIN

SECOND: LETOURNEAU

VOTE: ALL AYE

**MOTION PASSED.**

The Town Council conceded that it could get along this year without the \$1,000.

Library: *In attendance: Jane Fisher, Library Director*

*Robert Carmody, Board of Managers, Treasurer*

*In attendance in the audience:*

*Amy Humphries, Library Assistant Director*

*Sunnie Lovelace, Head of Children's Services*

Mr. Carmody gave several important statistics with regard to library operation, for example, library circulation has increased by 40% since 2005 and the library during that time has not increased any staff. If the Council decreases their budget, they will need to fund from reserves to fund operating, something for which the Council has expressed a dislike. A large portion of their budget is for personnel.

There was a discussion with the Comptroller on the process of this type of transaction. With regard to reserves, Mr. Bowes said that this will push us to the edge. Mayor Dickinson said reduce services and taxes will go down. Mr. Bowes, when asked, said that this is unrealistic, and not the way for calculation process.

**MOTION TO DECREASE EXPENSES IN THE MAYOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET  
IN THE FOLLOWING LINES:**

<b>LINE 54325 TOWN COUNCIL-MAINTENANCE OF EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>(\$1,000)</b>
<b>LINE 58238 LIBRARY</b>	<b>(\$35,000)</b>
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<b>LINE 57234 PARKS &amp; RECREATION-DOOLITTLE SHADE I</b>	<b>(\$6,346)</b>

**AND TO INCREASE THE MAYOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET IN THE FOLLOWING  
LINE 58253 SOCIAL SERVICES –WCI FAÇADE PROGRAM**

**MADE BY: FISHBEIN**  
**SECOND: PARISI**

**\$5,000**

**After long discussion, Councilor Fishbein withdrew his motion and Councilor Letourneau withdrew his second.**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**MADE BY: SULLIVAN**  
**SECONDED BY: LETOURNEAU**  
**VOTE: ALL AYE (9)**  
**MOTION PASSED.**

**The meeting adjourned at 11:18 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Weekes  
Secretary to the Town Council  
Meeting digitally recorded

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Vincent Cervoni, Chairman

Date

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Barbara Thompson, Town Clerk

Date