



BOARD OF FINANCE

Clifford J. Hurgin Municipal Center, 1 School Street
Bethel, Connecticut 06801 Telephone: (203) 794-8501

MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING

Wednesday, April 4, 2012
7:30 p.m.

Bethel High School Auditorium, Bethel, CT 06810

PRESENT: William Kingston, Chairman, J. Phillip Gallagher, Patricia Smithwick, Eileen Freebairn, Claudia Stephan and Timothy Draper. Also in attendance were Comptroller Robert Kozlowski, Board of Education Chairman Larry Craybas, Superintendent of Schools Kevin Smith and Board of Education Director of Fiscal Services Theresa Yonsky.

William Kingston opened the Public Hearing at 7:30 p.m. and provided an overview of the Board of Finance actions regarding the budget process thus far.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

William Hillman, Walnut Hill Road: Among other comments, offered that the budget should be inline with the rate of inflation, anything more is unfair to residents, economy is unfair, should be more union concessions.

Ted Stevenson, Sunset Hill Road: Among other comments, requested that the Board of Finance reinstate the \$400,000 cut, noting that this is not a move forward budget but that a move backward budget.

Mary Welander, Hoyts Hill Road: Among other comments, questioned the effect this cut would have on teaching positions. Dr. Smith advised that there would be 5 possible eliminations, 4 in the elementary classes and a world language teacher for the Middle School.

Jane Bickford, Vera Drive: Among other comments, requested that \$3,000 be reinstated to the Library Books account, would like to be able to carryout the mission statement of the Library.

Tia Murphy, Linda Lane: Among other comments, noted that 66% of residents have a library card, average visit is 12 visit per cardholder. Please reinstate \$3,000 to the Library Books account.

RECEIVED

2012 APR 12 A 11: 26

TOWN OF BETHEL
TOWN CLERK

Irene Drake, Pleasant Rise: Among other comments, offered that there is a responsibility to fund schools, irresponsible to underfund. Please reinstate the \$400,000 cut to the Board of Education.

Dionne Craig, Whipporwill Road: Among other comments, offered that the \$400,000 should be reinstated to the Board of Education account and let the people voice their opinion/vote instead of the Board of Finance taking the people's voice away, people should decide what they want to spend on education.

Will Michael, Fleetwood Avenue: Among other comments, offered that the \$400,000 cut should be spread over many line items and that the reduction is really a reduction to an increased budget amount.

Stephanie Prioli, Dogingtown Road: Among other comments, spoke to the importance of providing a world language teacher in the Middle School.

Janice Chrzescijanek, Pell Mell Drive: Among other comments, offered that people are willing to make the investment in our school system, please reinstate the \$400,000 to the Board of Education account.

James Lacey, Rockwell Road: Among other comments, offered that a \$400,000 reduction to the Board of Education account should not come before the people got to vote on it; this is not a second or third referendum, no need at this time for such drastic reduction, Board of Finance made the decision that people couldn't afford it and thinks the residents have the right to decide what they will support.

Bobbie Jo Beers, Old Hawleyville Road: Among other comments, offered that we need to stop looking at the short term - investing in education is investing in your town, important to invest in the town, expand tax base, please reinstate the \$400,000 to the Board of Education account.

Kim Lemone, Allan Way: Among other comments, offered that it is only fair that resident's get to vote on the Board of Education account, called for a show from the audience for those in support of adding the funds back, requested an accounting of Board of Finance members as to who voted for the Board of Education cut.

Mary O'Leary, Terry Drive: Among other comments, requested that \$3,000 be restored to the library budget and supported that funding was included for organizations that serve Bethel residents.

Liz Teed, Ravencrest Drive: Among other comments, offered that residents should be given the opportunity to vote on the entire Board of Education budget, please reinstate the \$400,000 cut. Proud to be a BHS graduate, mother and teacher.

Marybeth Cook, Rockwell Road: Among other comments, respectfully requested that the \$400,000 be reinstated to the Board of Education account to allow the residents to vote on it.

Jessica Nobels, Kayview Avenue: Among other comments, requested the reinstatement of the \$400,000; give residents the chance to decide, don't assume they won't support it.

Michael Mackie, Hickok Avenue: Among other comments, offered that Bethel has a powerful school district, people move here for the education system, please reinstate the \$400,000 – let the people decide.

Resident, 112 Lexington Blvd: Among other comments, offered that teachers do make an impact on everyone's lives, education system is good, \$400,000 should be reinstated to the Board of Education account.

Robert Fand, Kayview Avenue: Among other comments, offered that phonics needs to be offered in early grades,

Resident, 37 Rockwell Road: Among other comments, offered that children are our greatest resource, restore the \$400,000 to the budget and let the voters decide if they want to invest.

Robert Legnard, Evergreen Drive: Among other comments, offered that the Board of Finance has the opportunity to correct their mistake and reinstate the funds for the Board of Education budget. Bethel has a new superintendent

Shannon Vanderheiden, 34 Deer Run: Among other comments, offered that we don't tell the Board of Finance how to pay their bills, funds need to be restore, it's our right to vote on the education budget.

J. Philip Gallagher, Board of Finance member, Among other comments, clarified that the Board of Finance is not a pass through board, their responsibility is to filter through the requests and propose a budget that they think the voters will approve.

Melanie O'Brien, Cross Hill Road: Among other comments, offered that the we weren't always proud of our school system, important function is to educate the next generation, improvements were made by design not by coincidence.

Jen Larson, Grassy Plain Street: Among other comments, offered that the \$400,000 should be reinstated, give the voters a chance to have their say.

Colleen Perotta, 6 Chelsea: Among other comments, offered that some residents are willing to pay more in taxes for what they believe in, please reinstate the \$400,000, we have a responsibility to be the voice of our children.

Steve Fanularo, Ridgedale Road: Among other comments, offered that the \$400,000 should be reinstated to the Board of Education account, cutting funds hurts the town and limits student potential.

Jen Gilbertie, Oak Ridge Road: Among other comments, offered that the \$400,000 should be reinstated, give residents the opportunity to voice their opinion, teachers and class sizes make such a difference to a student.

William Duff, Long Meadow Lane: Among other comments, offered that the Board of Finance should consider putting more into the 460 Maintenance account, Board of Selectmen should not be a paid position, more important to maintain infrastructure than roads.

Randi Oisher, Appollo Drive: Among other comments, offered that the \$400,000 should be restated to the Board of Education and \$3,000 to the Library account. As a member of the Energy Conservation Committee, they are looking into energy cost savings.

Denise Howe, Codfish Hill Road: Among other comments, offered that we are very fortunate to have a good school system.

Robin Kahn, Brookwood Court: Among other comments, requested that the Board of Finance reconsider and reinstate \$3,000 to the Library account.

Michael Cleary, Redwood Drive: Among other comments, offered that of all the bills he pays, he feels best about paying taxes since you get something for it, please reinstate the Board of Education funds.

Billy Michaels, Fleetwood Avenue: Among other comments, offered that we spend more on education than most of our neighboring towns, our wealth is lower, people can't afford to give raises to those making five times their salaries, questioned why revenues are being reduced, requested the Board of Finance hold firm on the reduction to the Board of Education account.

Nancy Ryan, Walnut Hill Road: Among other comments, offered that it is important to properly fund accounts, so many people live and work here, true test of the budget is when it goes before the voters.

Mercedes Kohler, Fairchild Drive: Among other comments, offered that there is the opportunity to reinstate \$400,000 to the Board of Education account, we have remarkable and enthusiastic staff.

Jen Ackerman, Walnut Hill Road: Among other comments, offered that, with this cut to the Board of Education will increase class sizes, research is clear that smaller class sizes improves reading skills and more, have to give our teachers more, can't keep expecting more for less.

Trish Lewis, Rockwell Road: Among other comments, requested that \$3,000 be reinstated to the Library account for books and materials.

J. Philip Gallagher clarified that it was the Board of Selectmen that reduced the Library budget, not the Board of Finance.

Larry Craybas, Kellogg Street, Board of Education Chairman: Among other comments, offered that the fight we should be fighting is to have the state meet their responsibility and fund Special Ed costs at what was promised.

The Public Hearing was closed at 10:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Wendy Smith, Recording Secretary