

# MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING

Town of Bethel, Connecticut  
Recommended Budget  
Fiscal Year 2009-2010



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MAR 31 2009

TOWN OF BETHEL  
TOWN CLERK

At a meeting of the Board of Finance, which concluded on March 9, 2009, the following estimates of expenditures and revenues were recommended for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2009 and ending June 30, 2010.

A public hearing on the recommended budget will be held on Thursday, March 26, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. at the Bethel High School Auditorium, Whittlesey Drive, Bethel, Connecticut.

All persons entitled to vote at the Annual Town Budget Meeting are invited to make written and oral comments concerning the recommended budget. Copies of the recommended budget are on file in the Town Clerk's Office, Clifford J. Hurgin Municipal Center and are available for inspection.

Dated: March 9, 2009

## **Board of Finance**

J. Philip Gallagher, Chairman  
William Britt ~ William Slifkin ~ James Roden,  
Gary Regan ~ John Dietter ~ Kevin Riley

J. Philip Gallagher opened the Public Hearing at 7:30 p.m. and introduced Board of Finance members William Slifkin, Kevin Riley, John Dietter, and Gary Regan. Absent were William Britt and James Roden. Also in attendance were Comptroller Barry Curina, Board of Education Chairman William Kingston and Board of Education Director of Fiscal Services Theresa Yonksy.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

David Glahn, Elizabeth Street, questioned and commented on a variety of topics including Account 340 Boards & Commissions; the Teen Center Director was reduced last year by \$20,000 and questioned the amount of the Board of Education budget that goes towards salaries and benefits. *(Mr. Kingston advised that 86% of the education budget is salaries and benefits.)*

Daniel Gaita, Dodgingtown Road, commented on a variety of topics including all employees need to make sacrifices in order to save jobs, unite together to stand against unions, fight unfunded mandates, we need to get through this financial crisis.

Karen Rowe, Grassy Plain Street, offered that she is a secretary at Rockwell School and supports this budget; any further cuts would be detrimental to education.

Lisa Evans, Topstone Drive commented that this budget should be presented to the voters as is.

William Hillman, Walnut Hill Road commented among other things that this budget is survivable and should go forward as is.

William Michael, Fleetwood Avenue, questioned and commented on a variety of topics including the charitable contributions, this is a year that the budget increase should be at zero, questioned the givebacks on the Board of Education budget, and expressed concern over the medical stipend given to the Superintendent.

Beers, Old Hawleyville Road (child) offered that students won't learn if cuts continue. *(J. Philip Gallagher reminded the audience that only those entitled to vote at the annual town meeting can speak.)*

Albert Campofiore, Old Hawleyville Road offered, among other comments, that further cuts will hurt the children; cuts are hard enough to swallow.

Larry Craybas, Kellogg Street, Board of Education member, among other things, offered that Bethel is a bedroom town; Board of Education looked at every possible savings, and believes that this is a good and fair budget.

Janice Stevenson, Sunset Hill Road, among other comments, offered that the services provided at the school are well worth it; even the janitors know the students by name and questioned the savings for furlough and non union givebacks to the education budget; *Mrs. Yonksy advised that there was approximately \$50,000 in savings. J. Philip Gallagher pointed out that there was \$60,000 in savings on the town side to represent no raises to the non-union employees.*

Chris Longo, Ridgedale Road, among other things, offered that he is a Bethel teacher and any further cuts will dismantle education.

Cynthia McCorkindale, Elgin Avenue, among other things, commented that creative ways need to be found to decrease costs; this is the year for a zero budget increase.

Irene Drake, Pleasant Rise, among other things, offered that she is a teacher in Bethel, children shouldn't suffer, the academic demands are great and she is willing to pay for it.

Katie Fortier, Midway Drive, among other things, offered that she has two children in school, Bethel has fine educators, salary and benefits are priceless.

Clemetine Hollipeter, among other things, offered that she is a teacher in Bethel, doesn't want class sizes to increase, and supports the proposed budget.

Denise Musser, Pound Sweet Hill, among other things, offered that she is an employee at the High School, great strides have been made in education and she supports this budget. She urged each person to get 5 people to vote to save the education budget.

Emily Belardinelli, Dodgingtown Road, among other things, offered that she is a nurse in the Bethel system; they are passionate about their jobs, see 30-50

students daily, have been short-staffed, and money has been cut from their account and they can not afford any more cuts.

Robert Crnic, Old Hawleyville Road, among other things, commented, on the economic times, questioned Dr. Chesley regarding union (*Dr. Chesley advised that at this time, all 7 union groups have rejected offers to reopen contracts*). He offered that no one is questioning how hard the employees work but that if this budget fails, jobs will be lost since there were no union concessions; he believes that the silent majority is ready to vote no on the budget based on the economic times.

Alice Hutchinson, Rockwell Road, commented among other things, that this budget is a responsible thought out budget and supports no more cuts.

Robert Korin, Whipporwill Road, spoke as a Youth Commission member, asked support for the Teen Center.

David Belcourt, Milwaukee Avenue, among other things, offered that as a janitor at the Bethel schools, he feels it is a true honor to work in Bethel; we have a great community.

Leslie Mason, Pleasant Street, member of the Library Board of Directors requested the Library budget remain as presented.

Martha Bishop, Maple Avenue offered that the Library is the heart and soul of a community and urged support of the library budget.

Matthew Knickerbocker, Colonial Drive, among other comments, offered that he supports both budgets 100%, over the years the voters have chosen to invest, we provide a good education, and town employees are taxpayers also.

Shani Burke Specht, Nashville Road, Chairman of the Library Board of Directors offered that this is an exciting year for the Library as it is celebrating its Centennial; Library is one of the cornerstones of a community, urges support of the library budget.

Terry Nakid, Almar Drive requested no more reductions, particularly the Teen Center account of which her son is a member.

Kristin Sprock, Rockwell Road, offered that she is a teacher in Bethel and urged support of this budget.

Resident, Appollo Road, offered that the town needs to invest in the school system during tough times.

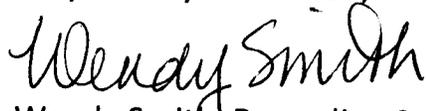
Michael Cleary, Redwood Drive commented that he wants to see this budget pass.

Robert Legnard, Evergreen Drive, offered that the first budget is usually the best budget; behooves everyone to support this budget.

J. Philip Gallagher advised that the Board of Finance will meet again to adopt a final budget to present to the Annual Town Meeting.

As there were no further speakers, J. Philip Gallagher closed the Public Hearing at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wendy Smith".

Wendy Smith, Recording Secretary