



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Bernie Dennler, First Selectman

Board of Finance

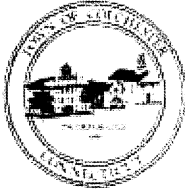
Budget Forum Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 28, 2024 @ 6:30 PM

Hybrid: Town Hall – Meeting Room 1 & Via Zoom

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COLCHESTER, CT
2024 MAR -5 AM 8:42
Gayle Furman
TOWN CLERK

1. Call to order and Roll Call
 - a. Scott Chapman, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM
 - b. BOF Members Present: John Thomas, Scott Chapman, Tim Vaillancourt, Mike Hayes, Mike Egan, Karen Belding
 - c. BOF Members absent: none
 - d. Others present: Bernie Dennler (First Selectman)
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Opening statement made by Chair.
 - a. Agenda and format reviewed, with citizen comment overview
4. Citizen Comments on Budget
 - a. Matt Parsons: teacher at Bacon Academy. Reiterating points from the presentation to the BOE last week about a BOE capital plan facilities committee. Evaluated all school buildings - committee of over 14 people, coaches, community members, parents, etc. Offered recommendations to BOE last week. Includes prioritized list of projects needed by school district. One piece is around the fields at Bacon Academy. Other recommendations included things that are overlooked when there isn't a comprehensive plan. Bacon Academy roof, improvements to theater system, JJIS playground. Everything on the list is part of a long term vision for the school system. Oil tanks, chillers, air control systems. And more. Prioritization is part of the list.
 - b. Skip Stark: Bacon Academy soccer coach, parent, citizen, member of facilities committee. Stated that related to the capital improvement plan is very comprehensive - way beyond just turf fields. The need of doing something for the fields is there, but there are a lot of needs on the list. Investment in all different kinds of extracurricular stuff is necessary and is part of the list. Asked the board to really consider the whole plan.
 - c. Eric ?: golf course superintendent and parent. Colchester can't afford to maintain a turf field - we'd be better off looking into other options that cost less to maintain.
 - d. Jeremy McKenzie: budgets needs to be created based on reality of funds needed to appropriately fund the service level or programming level. Building and field maintenance is necessary. Abolish pay to play. Remove transportation barrier to participating - implement activity buses. Bring back talented and gifted for this special needs group. To recruit and retain best talent - compensation and salaries need to be competitive.
 - e. Michael Dubreuil: two children in school system, but conflicted over the capital plan. Stated that citizens cannot participate in the Superintendent's committees because they are not run as formal committees - no FOI, no minutes or agendas. Asked if BOF can give oversight to that.
 - f. Deanna Bouchard: looking into the Superintendent committees and spoke with him about them. Told him that the committees must post agenda, must post minutes, must comply with formal committee policies. Board of Finance has policy that First Selectman is supposed to advise on legal expenses in town and has to have a defined maximum amount - but we're now in budget season and isn't sure that has happened yet.



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- g. S Chapman (Board Chair) - stated that current FOIA person is Russell Blair
 - h. Tiffany Moroch: on two of the school pride and purpose committees; noted that what is being noted by those groups covers a lot of different topics for the schools, but also makes the town attractive to other people and communities. Need to fund things already important to people here, but also attractive to people from other places.
 - i. Matt Parsons: district based facilities committee is not the same as the formal subcommittee that is part of the BOE. Invites to join the district advisory groups went out the community. As we head into budget season, please look to be proactive in planning for projects and look for the future planning of the town and for improvements. Reactive budgets make us pay more over time.
 - j. Deanna Bouchard: reiterated the points about what was told to Superintendent, that if the district committees are actually committees need to follow those rules. Fines for not complying on committee policies can be up to \$5,000.
5. Board discussion
- a. No items for discussion
6. Adjournment
- a. K. Belding motion to adjourn. J. Thomas seconds; roll call vote passed unanimously. Adjourned at 6:54 PM.

Respectfully Submitted By:
Karen Belding
Member, Board of Finance