



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Andreas Bisbikos, First Selectman

BOARD OF FINANCE WORKSHOP: BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET

April 13th, 2022 – In Person – 6:30 PM - Town Hall, Room 1

Minutes

Meeting was recorded

RECEIVED
COLCHESTER, CT
2022 APR 18 AM 8:41
Mike Thomas
TOWN CLERK

BOF Members Present: Andrea Migliaccio, John Thomas, Art Shilosky, Mike Hayes, Tim Vaillancourt, Mike Egan

Also Present: Superintendent: Jeff Burt, BOE Secretary: Jessica Morozowich, CFO: Maggie Cosgrove, BOE Member: Rosemary Cognac, BOE Liaison: Margo Cognac, BOE Member: Christopher Rivers.

1. CALL TO ORDER – Chair A. Migliaccio called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. BOE BUDGET: Discussion and Review - M. Egan commented on the budgets and expressed that they were both done well.
4. CITIZENS' COMMENTS: V. Rose - Shared concerns about the school budget and education funding. J. Rose - Commented on inflation and the budget increase of 0.95%. J. Morozowich - Commented on the possibility of having meetings and workshops virtually until the hybrid capability is available. T. Rudko - Commented on the education budget increase, school grant funding received and the town education system.
5. BOE BUDGET: Discussion and Review - The board, M. Cosgrove and J. Burt discussed line item within the education budget, the funding formulas used on the education portion of the budget, the processes used for the reserves and capital plan, how the town budget and education budgets affect each other, insurance plans, the funding receive from the federal government and what it was meant to help/what we used it for. A. Migliaccio asked J. Burt about the HVAC line item and what we need to bring the system up to date. They discussed the various factors and the future funding for the HVAC systems of the schools. A. Shilosky asked J. Burt about pre-school funding from last year. J. Burt explained that they are bringing those items that were covered by ARPA back into the budget once the ARPA funding has ended. A. Shilosky asked about the oil tank removal and funding for the future. J. Burt and A. Shilosky discussed the future funding of the removal and creating a plan for future funding. A. Shilosky asked if it's normal for contingency to be 0. M. Cosgrove explained the use of the contingency line item and that it acts like a reserve. The board and M. Cosgrove discussed the grand list increase. J. Thomas asked about IT and technology funding within the budget. M. Cosgrove explained why there is an ask this year and that they used alternative funding in the past. J. Thomas asked about the technology purchase from last year. J. Burt discussed the plan utilized to replace older devices and shift devices between the schools. A. Migliaccio asked when the funds became available and about the 80,000 wifi cost addition. J. Burt answered and explained that the funds are currently available and that the wifi asks for a system wide reboot and additional security measures. J. Burt reviewed the ARPA and Operating budget items with the board.
6. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS: J. Morozowich - Commented on the long range plan for technology, security, IT, etc and that they are still working on assessing the building's needs and what future expenses might look like. She also expressed concern that these items need to be funded properly over time in order for the plans to be effective. V. Rose - Asked about the line item for repairs and maintenance and why there is a decrease from the 2020 year budget. J. Duigou - Asked J. Burt to go over the tuition line item. J. Burt explained what the tuition line item encompassed.
7. BOE BUDGET: Discussion and Review - A. Migliaccio asked about the unit change for calculating oil costs. M. Cosgrove explained that it was based on historical data and trends from the last 3-5 years. A. Migliaccio asked about the CTAC and ALT ED programs and where they were located. J. Burt and J. Morozowich explained that the CTAC program was offsite and the ALT ED program was at the school. M. Egan reviewed a packet that he put together that compared the town budget to other towns within our DRG and surrounding towns. The board discussed the packet provided by M. Egan. The board, M. Cosgrove, J. Burt and J. Morozowich discussed the education

budget, transfers, savings and capital reserve.

8. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS - T. Rudko commented about the education budget increase of 0.95% and asked about the capacity of each school. Mo. Egan commented on the education transfers and that it was 1% of money moved. V. Rose commented on the education budget increase, inflation, and concerns of cuts for programming and teachers. J. Morozowich commented on budget transfers from end of year savings to assigned fund balance and that it is a regular occurrence due to the volatility of the certified staff line. J. Rose commented on inflation rates and added that an increase of wages also be taken into consideration for the budget. A. Domeika commented on the discussion from the night and expressed concerns over the budget.
9. ADJOURNMENT - Motion to adjourn by M. Hayes, 2nd by T. Vaillancourt. **Vote was unanimous.** Meeting adjourned at 8:48 pm.

Submitted By,
Megan Trujillo, BOF Clerk

I have reached to elicit participation on this evening's BOC workshop.

The school's budget is asking for a .95% increase, however considering the savings the real increase is ~4.5%. This is unacceptable! Here are the reasons why:

1. The Colchester Schools system over the past year received \$2.5M in ARPA funds. The schools also received an additional ~\$1.5M in ESSER grants.
2. Overall enrollment is down year over year.
3. Truancy is up.
4. State testing scores are down.
5. College enrollment is down.
6. The 10-year projected growth map is completely inaccurate.
7. There is no plan in the budget to keep the Colchester school's system competitive. Other communities are investing in remote learning to attempt to keep students in district as opposed to home schooling. Our district is kingdom building with union bodies.
8. The demographics of Colchester have the 55 and older community at 45% and yet the budget is split 75% to schools and 25% to the town.
9. The amount of liberal bias in the classrooms has forced families to pull their children out of school.
10. There are two genders male and female, to force students to identify via a pronoun is obscene.
11. We have political activists that are teachers that have espoused false narratives on Facebook without a single basis in fact. Those individuals are our children's teachers and are in charge of Democrat's programs at Bacon Academy.
12. The teacher's union's motto is "Union First" not children first!

APRIL 13, 2022, BOF BUDGET WORKSHOP – BOE BUDGET

2020-2021 BOE BUDGET:

- As Proposed by the Superintendent – March 2020:
 - \$42,470,088 (3.00 % increase from 2019/2020)
- Adopted Budget (voted on by BOF):
 - \$41,316,610 (0.2 % increase from 2019/2020)
 - \$1,153,478 Reduction in the proposed budget

2021-2022 BOE BUDGET:

- As Proposed by the Superintendent – March 2021:
 - \$42,652,270 (3.23 % increase from 2020/2021)
- Adopted Budget (approved in first referendum in June 2021):
 - \$41,827,055 (1.24 % increase from 2020/2021)
 - \$825,215 Reduction in the proposed budget

\$1,978,693 in Reductions by the BOF in two years

2022-2023 Budget Proposing a 0.95% increase. How does that compare to other Districts?

APRIL 13, 2022, BOF BUDGET WORKSHOP – BOE BUDGET

School District	Accountability Index	Per Pupil Spending	2022-2023 Proposed BOE Budget	BOE % Increase	2018-2019 approved BOE	BOE % Increase 18/19 to 22/23
In our DRG:	(2019-2020)	(2019-2020)				
Old Saybrook	85.4	\$21,416.00	\$27,473,341.00	2.6	\$25,809,822.00	106.45%
Branford	77.9	\$20,467.00	\$60,766,694.00	2.5	\$57,389,343.00	105.88%
East Granby	84.6	\$20,193.00	\$18,407,623.00	2.89	\$16,600,000.00	110.89%
Stonington	81.9	\$19,638.00	\$39,292,720.00	2.44%	\$37,976,903.00	103.46%
Waterford	81.6	\$19,458.00	\$52,109,124.00	2.89	\$48,256,233.00	107.98%
Clinton	78.5	\$19,446.00	\$34,552,204.00	1.89	\$32,656,674.00	105.80%
Wallingford	75.9	\$18,924.00	\$111,189,957.00	4.19	\$102,112,602.00	108.89%
Tolland	80	\$18,600.00	\$42,040,614.00	2.99	\$39,642,607.00	106.05%
Windsor	75.9	\$18,557.00	\$76,634,436.00	3.05	\$68,298,120.00	112.21%
Berlin	80.1	\$18,172.00	\$50,122,596.00	4.67	\$43,023,684.00	116.50%
East Lyme	81.3	\$18,053.00	\$54,608,478.00	4.59	\$47,576,943.00	114.78%
Colchester	82.8	\$17,767.00	\$42,224,412.00	0.95	\$40,549,344.00	104.13%
North Haven	77.2	\$17,547.00	\$60,166,330.00	2.9	\$53,052,836.00	113.41%
Rocky Hill	83.1	\$16,358.00	\$50,369,473.00	4.49	\$41,937,665.00	120.11%
New Milford	77.7	\$16,089.00	\$69,512,336.00	3.14	\$63,010,586.00	110.32%
Bethel	81.9	\$15,968.00	\$51,224,831.00	4.43	\$45,116,282.00	113.54%
Southington	80.1	\$15,706.00	\$104,618,146.00	4	\$95,827,943.00	109.17%
Ledyard	76.1	\$15,442.00	\$34,500,000.00	2.62	\$31,838,395.00	108.36%
		\$18,211.17	average			
Neighboring Towns:						
Lebanon	79.4	\$20,106.00				
Glastonbury	83.5	\$18,466.00	\$117,237,381.00	3.25	\$100,894,967.00	116.20%
East Hampton	80.4	\$17,219.00	\$34,326,097.00	3.75	\$30,499,668.00	112.55%
Salem	79.9	\$17,109.00	\$11,050,886.00	4.21	\$10,324,299.00	107.04%
Marlborough	77.9	\$17,072.00	\$8,063,315.00	2.99		
Cheshire						
South Windsor	83.1	\$16,601.00	\$81,800,000.00	4.95	\$74,028,368.00	110.50%
Windsor Locks	71.7	\$20,558.00	\$33,125,625.00	5.56	\$30,208,700.00	109.66%
Ellington	80.9	\$15,056.00	\$43,169,826.00	3.80	\$38,287,301.00	112.75%
Wethersfield	79.3	\$16,755.00	\$60,315,792.00	4.98		
Trumbull	83.9	\$16,953.00	\$117,297,398.00	4.45	\$100,423,596.00	116.80%
Windham	65	\$17,925.00				
			3,864,768			110.54%

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Issue of ARPA: Needed to address the loss of learning due to the Pandemic – Not to address Operational Needs (but):

Grant Positions (Transferred to Operating Budget)

One Classroom Teachers CES (1.0) \$ 62,786

One Special Education Teacher BA (1.0) \$ 91,451

(from Superintendent's Presentation showing reintroduction of these costs back to Operational budget)

Issue of Declining Enrollment. Other District's facing same issue have had bigger budget increases with larger drops in enrollment:

Town	2015-2016		2022-2023		Differential	
	Budget	Enrollment	Budget	Enrollment	budget	enrollment
Tolland	\$ 38,275,831.00	2598	\$ 42,040,614.00	2217	9%	-17%
Colchester	\$ 39,795,370.00	2550	\$ 42,191,251.00	2221	6%	-15%

This completely undercuts the argument on enrollment decreases vs. budget increases. And Tolland is one of the most fiscally conservative School District's in our DRG.

APRIL 13, 2022, BOF BUDGET WORKSHOP – BOE BUDGET

Colchester BOF Mission Statement: “Balancing the needs of Colchester with its ability to pay”

Need:

- **The Pandemic has created one of the greatest Educational Challenge the District has faced in Decades**

Ability to Pay:

- **Large reduction in Mill Rate will see many (not all) Residential tax bills go down**
- **Unassigned Fund Balance close to 14% of Budget**