



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

**Town of Colchester
Board of Finance Meeting Minutes
April 30, 2020 – Virtual Meeting – 6:30 PM
BOARD OF FINANCE BUDGET WORKSHOP
MINUTES**

RECEIVED
COLCHESTER, CT
2020 MAY -4 PM 1:24
Gayle Furman
TOWN CLERK

*Audio of this meeting is available on the Town website

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Rob Tarlov, Michael Hayes, Mike Egan, Andreas Bisbikos, and Andrea Migliaccio, Bernie Dennler

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

BOE MEMBERS PRESENT: Chris McGlynn, Jessica Morozowich, Mary Tomasi, Sue Hickey, Joanne Rose, Amy Domeika

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mitch Koziol

OTHERS PRESENT: Superintendent Jeff Burt, Director of Learning Charles Hewes, Director of Special Education Kathy Perry, CFO Maggie Cosgrove

***All members and citizens were present via Zoom webinar

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Tarlov called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. **CITIZEN COMMENTS REGARDING BUDGET:** Citizens spoke in opposition of moving Alt Ed from old Bacon Academy. There was a continued call for salary freezes and furlough days by some while others were firmly against concessions at this point in the process.
3. **CORRESPONDENCE:** See attached
4. **BOF DISCUSSION OF BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET:** Superintendent Burt presented a list of possible reductions that would bring the budget to .076% increase over the adopted budget. The BOE has not yet taken action on these reductions and feel anymore being taken out would be detrimental. Revenue through the CARES Act will be approximately \$211,000 which could be used to offset portions of the budget. There will be some cost savings this year due to no need for busing as a result of COVID. The exact amount is not yet been determined. BOF members recognized the difficulty in developing a budget during this time with so much uncertainty.
5. **CITIZENS' DISCUSSION:** Support was expressed again for the Alt Ed program being kept at old Bacon Academy while suggestions were made for other areas to be cut instead. Union dialogue around concessions was encouraged by some with others feeling teachers should not be asked at this point to make the sacrifice.
6. **BOF DISCUSSION OF BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET:** Superintendent Burt explained his reasonings for removing the Alt Ed program from old Bacon Academy were not just financial. Members recognized the difficulties and uncertainties many citizens are facing during this unprecedented time.
7. **CITIZENS' DISCUSSION:** Discussion regarding pay freezes and furlough days being a way to reduce the budget continued.
8. **BOF DISCUSSION - NEXT STEPS:** M. Egan read information he had on where other towns are in the process and what their current proposed budgets looked like as a reference point. Meetings will be held again next week

9. **ADJOURNMENT:** A. Migliaccio motioned to adjourn, seconded by B. Dennler. Vote was unanimous.
MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Tarlov adjourned the meeting at 8:46 p.m.

Submitted by,

Dawn LePage, Clerk

Attachments: Correspondence, Budget Reductions

2019-20 Adopted Budget	2020-21 Proposed Budget	Proposed \$ Increase	Proposed % Increase
\$41,237,122	\$ 42,470,088	\$ 1,232,966	2.99%

Total of Recommended Changes	Revised Proposed Budget Total	Revised \$ Increase/ Decrease	Revised % Increase/ Decrease
\$ (919,524)	\$ 41,550,564	\$ 313,442	0.76%

Area

Capital, Supplies & Building

Transfer to Capital Reserve	\$ (40,000)	Increased by BOE during budget process, unallocated
Transfer to Capital Reserve	\$ (255,735)	Reduce to \$0, use existing reserve for priority projects
Transfer to Reserve -Technology	\$ (34,028)	Purchased \$18,000 CB this FY, can offset future purchases
Supplies General	\$ (20,000)	General Reduction
District Wide Grounds Maint	\$ (5,000)	Reduce increase from \$11k to \$6k
BA Building Repairs	\$ (10,000)	Repair line would have \$50,000
BA Supplies	\$ (4,500)	
BA Furniture	\$ (500)	
JJIS Flexible Seating	\$ (3,557)	Postpone by one year, seek alternative funding
JJIS Postage	\$ (1,000)	
JJIS PBIS Supplies	\$ (500)	
JJIS Office Supplies	\$ (1,000)	
Supt Office Supplies	\$ (500)	
IT Supplies & Software	\$ (15,300)	
Old Bacon Internet	\$ (3,060)	
SPED Supplies & Testing	\$ (6,000)	
BOE meetings/awards	\$ (500)	

Personnel

BA Math Coach (WL 1.0 FTE)	\$ (51,006)	Reduction in BA World Language
Contingency Paraprofessional	\$ (23,520)	Enrollment decline
Technology Integrationist	\$ (51,006)	Postpone by one year
Tech Int Stipends	\$ 8,876	Offset Tech Int Position
HR Assistant	\$ (50,000)	
Reduce Spec Ed Teacher 1.0	\$ (51,006)	
Reduct BA Teacher 0.4	\$ (20,402)	
Increase CO OP for HR	\$ 9,094	
Paraprofessionals 4.0	\$ (94,080)	
Facility Supervisor	\$ (10,044)	Postpone by one year
P/T Custodian	\$ (12,168)	Postpone by one year
0.5 FTE Office Professional IT/F	\$ (24,452)	Reduce IT/DOE support
WJMS Clubs	\$ (12,157)	Move to Student Activities
Additional Staff Hours opening day	\$ (600)	
Old Bacon Custodian	\$ (9,031)	

Instructional

Curriculum Implementation	\$	(15,000)	Different focus due to impact of COVID19
Curriculum Development	\$	(9,000)	
C3 Increase in Funding	\$	(10,000)	Maitain current level of fundign at \$35,000
PSAT 9th Grade	\$	(3,500)	Postpone by one year
Superintendent's PD	\$	(1,000)	
PD for OP Supt	\$	(500)	
BOE PD	\$	(2,000)	
CES Instructional Supplies	\$	(5,000)	
CES Media PD	\$	(500)	
JJIS Headsets	\$	(2,140)	
JJIS Music Inst	\$	(1,400)	
WJJMS Supplies	\$	(6,000)	
WJJMS Safe Futures	\$	(2,900)	
BA Club Advisor	\$	(2,662)	
BA PD for Ath Dir	\$	(1,000)	
CO Staff Development	\$	(2,140)	
SPED District PD	\$	(1,000)	

Other

Old BA lease	\$	(29,000)	
BOE Legal Fees	\$	(10,000)	Fewer contract negotiations
EASTConn Residency	\$	(11,100)	
Alt Ed Van from Old BA	\$	(10,000)	
BA Marketing Materials	\$	(1,000)	

4.30.20

Regards,
Gregory Van Zilen
Brindlewood Path

p.s. Another creative math suggestion. If you were to consider a salary freeze that would leave approximately enough money to hire a 3rd Firefighter/EMT and still be near a zero increase.

From: Lynn Stewart <lwarrenstewart@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2020 9:50 AM
To: Mike Egan <megan@colchesterct.gov>; Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>; Mike Hayes <mhayes@colchesterct.gov>; Andreas Bisbikos <abisbikos@colchesterct.gov>; Andrea Migliaccio <amigliaccio@colchesterct.gov>; Bernard Dennler <BDennler@TownofColchester.onmicrosoft.com>; Heide Perham <hperham@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Budget Concerns

Hello everyone,

I hope this email finds you all healthy and well.

I am writing to express my thoughts regarding the budget. I have sat in on and listened to as many meetings as I have been able, and I have reviewed both the town and BOE budgets. At this point, there are two things that concern me:

- (1) The potential for an increase in taxes if the town and/or BOE budget increases from last year; and
- (2) The potential that there may be no referendum and no opportunity for the townspeople of Colchester to voice their support (or not) of the proposed budgets.

With regard to the first issue, in light of the unusual circumstances associated with Covid-19, there are many individuals who have been relieved of their employment unwillingly. Many of these individuals were deprived of **any** income for an extended period of time for many reasons (e.g., delays in receiving unemployment, being self-employed, delays in receiving the relatively small stimulus, etc.). As a result, there are many people in this town who are stressed and anxious about where their next meal will come from or whether they will be able to pay their bills. This affects people now, but will also affect them even after they go back to work as they try to make good on deferred payments/bills and re-establish a sense of financial security, which may or may not have been present to begin with.

The Mission Statement of the Board of Finance is "Balancing the needs of Colchester **with its ability to pay.**" I believe that this year, the ability of many Colchester residents to pay additional taxes is non-existent. While not all residents are in the above-described situation, any decision to increase taxes would affect all residents regardless of income, and in light of the present circumstances, would be insensitive and unconscionable.

I am also of the opinion that the scenario created by Covid-19 is a rainy day scenario, and that if there are expenditures that simply cannot (i.e., versus WILL NOT) be deferred, that this is a perfect time to

utilize the rainy day fund - which has been funded by the taxpayers in this town - as the resource to cover these expenditures.

With regard to the second issue, I believe the people of the town should be given the opportunity to voice their opinion through a vote. If there is no way to conduct a referendum, I advocate that the 2019-20 budgets for both the town and the Board of Education be adopted for 2020-21. In my mind, moving forward with any budget resulting in even a minimal tax increase is taking advantage of a difficult situation on the backs of the taxpayers and is demonstrating a lack of sensitivity to our neighbors and friends.

Thank you for your time and effort as you work to develop a budget for the upcoming year.

Best regards,
Lynn Stewart
95 Caisson Road

From: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2020 5:20 AM
To: Eva Avery <lovely123avery@gmail.com>
Cc: Board of Finance <boardoffinancemembers@colchesterct.gov>; First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>; Amber Albee <aalbee@colchesterct.gov>; Valerie Geato <vgeato@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: FW: Important please read immediately

Hi Ahviel,

Thanks for reaching out to us.

We have not discussed closing the Youth Center at the Board of Finance meetings. I have not heard this suggested outside the meetings either.

I think many people feel like you and realize the value of Center.

Rob

Rob Tarlov, Chairman, Board of Finance
860-608-4293

From: Eva Avery <lovely123avery@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2020 8:35 PM

To: Robert Tarlov
Cc: Amber Albee
Subject: Important please read immediately

Hello, this is Ahviel Rodriguez. I am the daughter of Eva and I would like to make a statement of opinion that lots of other kids would agree with. I heard that you might be shutting down the Youth Center and all of their other groups. once I heard all of this news I immediately felt sad and felt as if I should voice my opinion. You most definitely should not shut down the Youth Services because they support and make lots of kids feel comfortable like they fit in. For example they have a group that involves LGBTQ

☞ and in this group they invite everyone and anyone that want to know more about LGBTQ and wants to find more about themselves and are just interested in LGBTQ. Some parents don't support their kids sexuality and this group will always support you no matter what. Also the Youth Services encourages kids to be active and involved in activities for example they run multiple activities competitions and more. Also just in general the Youth Center is a fun place to be where you can socialize have fun and be involved. so you most definitely not shut it down as it would make me and many others very sad and I would feel like a part of this town is missing.

From: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2020 5:26 AM
To: Kevin <papawu77@aol.com>
Cc: Board of Finance <boardoffinancemembers@colchesterct.gov>; First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>; Valerie Geato <vgeato@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Re: Youth Services Means To Me

Hi Kevin.

Thanks for reaching out to us.

We have not discussed closing the Youth Center at the Board of Finance meetings. I have not heard this suggested outside the meetings either.

I think many people feel like you and realize the value of Center.

Rob

Rob Tarlov, Chairman, Board of Finance
860-608-4293

From: Kevin <papawu77@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2020 1:20 PM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Youth Services Means To Me

Correspondence for 04/30/2020 BOF Meeting

From: Lisa Anfuso <lanfuso@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2020 3:13 PM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject:

Hello,

I am writing regarding the town budget. Below is a post I put on Facebook and was asked to pass along to you.

"Why can't we do mail in ballots? It has worked in so many other places. Passing an increase without a vote seems like they are taking advantage. Having an increase at any time is difficult, but having this now is unthinkable. "

I feel we elected you all to do a job. Now the job has become more challenging due to the pandemic situation. The easy way out would be to pass a budget without a vote. However, there seems to be several ways to accomplish the goal of giving citizens the ability to vote. Businesses of all kinds are coming up with ways to get things done safely. Yes, it may take some imagination and effort, but that is what is best for Colchester. As a group, I'm confident you can put a procedure in place that would allow us all to have our vote.

Sincerely,
Lisa Anfuso

Sent from Xfinity Connect App
From: Greg VZ <outtalinedj@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2020 1:29 PM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Twon Budget Suggestion from 4/28

Hi Mr. Chairman,

As it was late I'm not sure that a suggestion I made at the end of Tuesday's workshop may have been completely clear.

What I had intended to say was that in lieu of a salary freeze to consider only an increase of 1/2 of whatever percentage employees were slated for.

If a freeze would cut \$125,000.00, then half of that would be very close to getting the current proposal to a zero increase.

Thank you for all the hard work that you and the board are doing.

Hello,

I am writing this letter to express what Youth Services means to my family and I. I have two daughters (7th grade and 12th grade) and the Youth Center has been a huge part of their life.

My daughter Hailey who is a class of 2020 student at Bacon first started going to Youth Center in 7th grade for "Girl Circle". We were new in town and this was a great way for her to make new friends and enjoy all the great things they did together as a group. Hailey is now working as a Supervisor at the Youth Center and loves it. She also volunteers to help out with Half Day Hooray events at CES and hopes to continue working with the kids and the Youth Center in the future.

Jillian who is in 7th grade started going to the Youth Center after school from WJJMS in 6th grade. She has also joined Girl Circle just like her older sister has in the past. Has gone on trips and joined other clubs that the Youth Center has put together in the past.

The Youth Center is very important, not just to my family, but to the town of Colchester!! They run great programs, It is somewhere for kids to go and do things together and learn from each other. The staff is amazing and are all needed not only to watch our children but to also teach our children so many great things in life. Without the Youth Center & Services there is nothing for the kids!!!

Thank You!!

Mr. Kevin Jones

From: Rosemary Coyle <rcoyle@colchesterct.gov>

Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2020 1:55 PM

To: First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>; Board of Selectmen

<BoardofSelectman@colchesterct.gov>; Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>; Board of Finance

<boardoffinancemembers@colchesterct.gov>; Jeff Burt <jburt@colchesterct.org>; Mary Tomasi

<mtomasi@colchesterct.org>; Christopher McGlynn <cmcglynn@colchesterct.org>; Amy Domeika

<mdomeika@colchesterct.org>; Joanne Rose <jrose@colchesterct.org>; Suesen Hickey

<shickey@colchesterct.org>; Jessica Morozowich <jmorozowich@colchesterct.org>; Mitchell Koziol

<mkoziol@colchesterct.org>

Subject: Salary Concessions

I have been doing research on this issue and contacted the Executive Director of the Connecticut Education Association (CEA), of which I am still a retired member. CEA represents more than 150 towns in Connecticut.

I asked if there were any of those 150+ towns that CEA represents that were making concessions. CEA has received some preliminary questions on this issue but none at this point in time.

I share with you the rest of the response.

"Our position is that it is premature to enact concessions and education cuts when we are in the middle of a biennial state budget, town ECS dollars for the next year are in place, and we are waiting for explanation of how additional federal dollars for Connecticut and education will be apportioned. As you know, teachers have gone above and beyond in adapting to this pandemic, working long hours under trying circumstances to keep the education process going through distance learning, and provide stability for students and families. Penalizing teachers and schools when there has been no retracting of state aid for education, and when additional federal money has been allocated, is the wrong course for students and families. We learned from the downturn in 2008 that layoffs and cuts in education can worsen local and state economies."

I know our ECS is (-\$300,000) but I believe this gives us more than a snapshot of what's happening in our state with teachers and concessions.

Rob, please add this to the BOF record of correspondence.

Respectfully,
Rosemary Coyle, Selectman