



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

**Town of Colchester
Board of Finance Meeting Minutes
June 3, 2020 – Virtual Meeting – 6:30 PM
Regular Meeting**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: CFO Maggie Cosgrove, First Selectman Mary Bylone, Superintendent Jeff Burt, Director of Public Works Jim Paggioli, Director of Youth and Social Services Val Geato, BOE members speaking: J Morozovich, A Domieka

***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. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Regular Meeting 5/21, Budget Workshops 5/19:**
M. Egan motioned to approve the regular meeting minutes from May 21, 2020, seconded by M. Hayes. Vote was unanimous. **MOTION CARRIED.**
B. Dennler motioned to approve the budget workshop minutes from May 19, 2020, seconded by A. Bisbikos. Vote was unanimous. **MOTION CARRIED.**
3. **CITIZENS' COMMENTS:** There were citizens that spoke in favor of the additional firefighters as well as the education budget. Opinions were mixed on the use of general funds to offset a budget increase.
4. **CORRESPONDENCE:** Attached
5. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**
 - a. **Tax Collector:** Provided the 2nd meeting of the month
 - b. **Finance Department:** Provided the 2nd meeting of the month
6. **FIRST SELECTMAN**
 - a. **Transfer requests: Authorization of funds for matching grant to purchase Senior Center van.**
Discussion and Possible Action: M. Egan motioned to authorize the expenditure of an amount not to exceed \$15,000 from the Vehicle Reserve Fund (FY 2021-2022) for the local match requirement for the acquisition of a 14 passenger wheelchair lift mini-bus, seconded by M. Hayes. Vote was unanimous. **MOTION CARRIED.**
 - b. **First Selectman's report:** Town Hall will be opening back up on June 8th. Most all staff will be back. There will be a desk in the lobby to log visitors in and take their temperature. Day camp has been cancelled as it was going to be difficult to create a safe environment and there was a lack of enrollment. Park & Rec and Youth Services are working on one-day activities that families can sign their kids up for. The Halls Hill project is starting. The sewer line has been repaired. Gas lines for the fuel cell are behind on the airline trail portion.

RECEIVED
COLCHESTER, CT
2020 JUN -5 PM 1:03
Bylone
Burt
Paggioli
Dennler
Domieka
Morozovich
Geato
Cosgrove
Hayes
Egan
Bisbikos
Migliaccio
Tarlov

7. BOF BUDGET DISCUSSION: R. Tarlov and M. Egan want to make sure all the town meets the guidelines of the Governor's order which stated that a draft of the complete budget be posted for citizens to view. The revenue side of the budget with a mil rate calculation has not been posted. The BOE latest budget also needs to be posted. In order to have a longer time for information to be posted, the meeting that was supposed to be June 10th will be moved up to either the 8th or 9th. Members worked to establish consensus on the Town budget. All members agree there is a need for the two firefighters. The First Selectman was asked if there will be savings from this year to offset costs next year. She said while there is uncertainty as to what will be reimbursed in relation to Covid expenses, and there have been some unplanned IT expenses, she believes there are some definite opportunities for some savings this year that could be spent on items for next year. M. Cosgrove urged the board to remember there are no guarantees on reimbursements for Covid. She also stated that using the General Fund to offset the budget for one year would not affect the Town's credit rating. When this becomes common practice multiple years in a row is when it becomes an issue. She sees some areas for possible increased revenue. CCM has said they will give back 50% of membership and tuition from Norwich students could go up \$30,000 due to a miscalculation in the number of students. M. Egan requested the paving budget be looked at and asked if it could be reduced by \$50,000 with the money then being taken out of TAR. He also asked if there would be savings in asphalt due to lower oil prices. A. Bisbikos asked if the \$3200 from the Dog Pound could be removed as we do not use the building, if there was savings from the parade, as it was not held, and from the training that was not attended due to Covid. First Selectman Bylone said the electric might be able to be turned off to the building in the summer but in the colder months, it needs to be kept heated to maintain the building. She is working with J. Paggioli on ways to use that space but she will look into savings further. M. Cosgrove said there were some savings on the parade but some of the funds were still spent for the laying of the wreaths. Many of the training for her department was still held, just moved to virtual. She could not speak for other departments. J. Paggioli spoke regarding the paving budget. Bid amounts for asphalt are similar to last year. They were slightly cheaper per ton on the asphalt. He feels that \$50,000 could be taken from the TAR money without impacting any large equipment replacements. A. Bisbikos asked about savings from the Youth Services position not having been filled since February and could we get by without filling it. M. Bylone said V. Geato and her have talked and they do feel that while the approach might have changed due to Covid, the position is still needed. V. Geato spoke regarding filling the position and feels she could hold off filling until the end of August. Members agreed that by using TAR money and savings from the Youth Services positions the Town budget could be achieved with a zero dollar increase. A. Bisbikos wished to go on record that he still would like to have seen concessions and furlough days addressed. First Selectman Bylone also wished to go on record that she did consider concessions and furlough days but did not feel she should ask that of the employees when there is \$7 million in the reserve. Town employees are not being paid what other towns are paying yet remain committed to serving the town and its citizens. If in the future the financial situation becomes dire she will approach it with the unions.

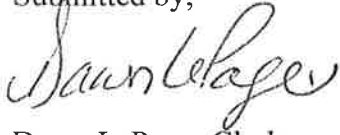
Members turned their attention towards the BOE budget. R. Tarlov said the negotiated rate of the bus contract was in the budget for \$15,000 but ended up being \$101,000. That is \$86,000 that can be pulled out of the budget without impacting programming. He also said that J. Burt had previously removed from one of his proposals, \$254,000 for IT Hardware, as he said it could be purchased this year, but he later removed 105,000 of that reduction as he (JB) was concerned that the recurring expense would show as a budget increase next year. R. Tarlov said that he sees this \$191,000 as unallocated and removing it from the budget will not impact any of the programming in the budget approved by BOE. M. Egan is concerned there will be upfront costs for Covid related items that directly impact the budget. He asked if there is a way to have a source of funding that is used for items directly related to Covid. M. Cosgrove reminded the Board they

have no authority on how the BOE uses their money. R. Tarlov said it is likely that COVID related expenses will be a lot higher than 191,000 and the BOE budget will not be able to absorb those costs. Rather than using the 191,000 in budget to fund the unknown, he said it should be removed and when COVID related costs are known, BOE should ask BOF for a special appropriation out of Unassigned Fund Balance. A. Domeika reminded members that 80% of the budget costs are contractual and they might not have enough money to fund COVID expenses upfront. R. Tarlov said that 15% of the BOE budget is 6 million dollars and amounts under 800K can be funded quickly by BOF. Superintendent Burt asked the board to give him a budget and he, along with the BOE, will work with it. He said there are so many uncertainties at this point as to what the next school year is even going to look like. He might not even know until August. He said if we don't go back to school or need to close mid year, there would be money that is not needed. He said we should not consider future COVID related expenses in the budget. M. Cosgrove agreed saying we should consider them at one time when they become known. M. Egan said at .43% it is one of the lowest increases in the DRG. R. Tarlov said you need to look deeper at other towns' budgets to see what's causing their increases or allowing us to come in lower, as in our BOE making capital reductions where other school districts could not. M. Egan said he would like to hear more from the BOE before making a decision. J. Burt said he has nothing more to add to the discussion. M Egan said BOF should not change the technology plan, which took a long time to develop. R. Tarlov said the 105,000 does not change the technology plan, the hardware will be purchased for use, on time. Only the timing for the funding is changed, as it would happen now instead of later. J. Burt reiterated that he really has no idea what the situation will be next year and therefore can't preplan for Covid related expenses. A. Bisbikos questioned savings due to no substitutes or sports in the spring. M. Cosgrove said those are the funds being used to purchase items this year instead of next year. She said the first thing that will need to be covered with any savings is the food deficit, potentially \$90,000, from supplying meals during Covid. A. Bisbikos questioned salary freezes and concessions again. J. Burt responded saying he echos what M. Bylone said. If we can work within the budget without cutting services, we are going to do that first. There is so much uncertainty next year that he feels concessions and freezes are premature this year. M. Egan said he would agree to removing the \$85,000 if it was just that that was removed. R. Tarlov recognized that anything that is a recurring expense and is removed this year will make the budget look inflated next year, but whether we reduce expenses or use general fund balance, the impact on the mill rate is the same, and taxpayers vote on the mill rate. J. Burt said to give the BOE a number and they will look to reallocate as needed when they know what they are facing. He said that this is a very difficult time and he will not have any better idea of next year's situation before the BOF meets again. M. Egan would like to touch on the revenue side before more discussion on the BOE budget.

8. **CITIZENS' COMMENTS:** Citizens spoke in favor of the BOE and it was questioned how the Medicaid funds are allocated.
9. **OLD BUSINESS:** None
10. **NEW BUSINESS:** None
11. **LIAISONS' REPORTS:** M. Hayes attended the CHVFD Exemption Revision Committee meeting. One of the speakers could not attend so the meeting was brief but they will be meeting again next week.
12. **CITIZENS' COMMENTS:** None
13. **CITIZENS' DISCUSSION:** None
14. **BOF BUDGET DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:** No additional discussion.

15. ADJOURNMENT: A. Bisbikos motioned to adjourn, seconded by A. Migliaccio. Vote was unanimous.
MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Tarlov adjourned the meeting at 9:37 p.m.

Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dawn LePage".

Dawn LePage, Clerk

Attachments:

Correspondence

Program Grant Application Memo



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

95 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Patricia A. Watts, Director of Senior Services/Municipal Agent

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Finance

From: Patricia A. Watts, Director of Senior Services

Date: 05/20/20

Re: Section 5310 Program Grant Application

Section 5310 funding is used to fund the replacement of vehicles which have exhausted their useful life. Our 10 passenger 2010 Ford mini-bus is slated for retirement. Pending the approval from the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen, the grant application for the Section 5310 Program will be submitted to CTDOT by June 26, 2020. Should funding be awarded, it will be approved for up to \$60,000 of funding provided by CTDOT. This funding will be utilized for the procurement of a new 14 passenger mini-bus. This vehicle would accommodate up to 12 walk-on passengers and an additional 2 passengers in wheelchairs. It will be used to provide transportation services for seniors and disabled individuals ages 18 and older through the operations of the Colchester Senior Center in the Department of Senior Services. The cost of the bus will be approximately \$75,000, with \$60,000 (80%) of the funding provided through the DOT and \$15,000 (20%) required as local matching funds. Delivery of the bus is anticipated for fall of 2021 (FY 2021-2022).

Recommended Motion

Authorize the expenditure of an amount not to exceed \$15,000 from the Vehicle Reserve Fund (FY 2021-2022) for the local match requirement for the acquisition of a 14 passenger wheel chair lift mini-bus.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia A. Watts

Sent to TOWNBUDGET@COLCHESTERCT.GOV

From: Greg Cordova <gecordova@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, April 21, 2020 5:47 PM
To: Colchester Town Budget <townbudget@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Town & BOE Budgets

Town:

I have always supported the Town budget proposals in the past. I am well aware of the hard choices that go into making the best budget possible for the whole of the Town. I am also well aware of the impacts good and bad that those final choices made to our town over the years. This year could potentially be one of the worst, if not THE worst years we will face due to COVID-19. None of us know how the country, let alone how our town will recover from this. So we hope the decisions we make at this time will not adversely impact the town when we come out the other side. With that being said, I hope the decisions we make will sustain our town's needs while we venture through this unknown.

I understand that every business small or large needs a good HR director especially with the ever changing rules and regulations coming out. Is it necessary to increase the salary as much as you put into it?

Can we just add 1 additional Fire/EMT at this time? Even though I believe this is one of the areas that will have an increase of activity even when all the dust settles from the COVID-19 period we are in.

Tree removal – I know we had several trees fall down this past year and we'll probably have more come down today. Can you produce the amount of money spent this year for this effort and if we had budgeted for that amount?

Not sure if there's anything we can do with insurance costs.

Is the Senior center oil tank replacement critical?

I know roads always take a hit, so if you plan on cutting this out can you please let the public know exactly what was planned to be worked on so they are informed before they complain about this.

Are the GIS improvements critical to IT improvement (I am all for IT improvement)?

Is the Code enforcement truck a must have? I am in favor of keeping the police and fire vehicles on the list.

I know fields are a hot item discussion. I am a huge proponent of the needs to make them better. However, since this is the first time that they have all had almost a full season to rest do we really need to add the irrigation at this time?

Now for the most important topic (Contractual workers) – As you have heard, the Town and the BOE were successful I believe twice since I have been in town to negotiate some sort of savings in the current years that they went to the tables. I don't remember the exact resolutions that were agreed upon, but I believe we need to try and work on this for both the Town and BOE. Maybe some sort of deal that would delay the current years increases and try to add them to another point in time. I know that would mean a larger increase in the future. But as I stated above, we do NOT know what the end of this new reality will be for us.

Board Of Ed

I am not sure other than the contractual negotiations I mentioned above can be done with this. I only hope that the Board will come up with a new version of their budget since they presented the Pre-COVID-19 version only.

Good luck.

Thank you,
Greg Cordova

-----Original Message-----

From: Tami McElroy [<mailto:tamimac62@live.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2020 5:46 PM
To: Colchester Town Budget <townbudget@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Budget

My husband and I have lived in town since 1986 and we are former business owners in town as well. We have supported the town's growth and increased taxes over the years. We understand budgets and needing to have the revenue to pay the bills and we also understand tightening the belt to get through lean times. We are experiencing unprecedented times and we cannot support any budget increases at this time and feel it is absolutely necessary to go forward with a zero tax increase especially if the budget will not be taken to a vote to the taxpayers.

Thank you

David and Tami McElroy
tamimac62@live.com
860-607-9930

From: kirkm1950 <kirkm1950@att.net>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2020 11:50 AM
To: Colchester Town Budget <townbudget@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Budget

How do you decide the tax increase will be the voters will remember

From: Katherine Kosiba <kmk178@att.net>
Sent: Tuesday, April 21, 2020 10:50 PM
To: Colchester Town Budget <townbudget@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Question on ppt dated 4/16/2020

What is the abbreviation AHU mean on slide 24?
Thank you.
Warm regards
Katherine

From: Katherine Kosiba <kmk178@att.net>
Sent: Tuesday, April 21, 2020 10:53 PM

To: Colchester Town Budget <townbudget@colchesterct.gov>

Subject: Approach to budget...I like the idea provided by Taras Rudko to determine basic expenses must meet to run town, then decide what is extra that is critical.

This would be a prudent and sensible approach considering the financial hardship our townspeople will be facing being out of work and other financial situation.

Please give this approach more serious consideration in this very unusual time.

Thank you.

Katherine M. Kosiba

From: Katherine Kosiba <kmk178@att.net>

Sent: Tuesday, April 21, 2020 11:34 PM

To: Colchester Town Budget <townbudget@colchesterct.gov>

Cc: mbylone@gmail.com <mbylone@gmail.com>; First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>

Subject: RE: Budget presentation ppt - dated 4/16/2020 - Budget expense that needs reconsideration - slide 17 Dead Tree budget

Found some articles related to state looking at this issue to help municipalities. Has something been decided/provided?

<https://www.ctpost.com/local/article/CT-towns-seek-money-to-remove-trees-damaged-by-14790923.php>

<https://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-news-municipalities-overwhelmed-by-dead-dying-trees-20191031-kkdaij3eyngy3e53hktplidu54-story.html>

<https://www.courant.com/politics/hc-pol-state-bond-commission-20191218-f5clva2p2vgefgsk24jvuh4t4a-story.html>

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/connecticut/articles/2019-11-02/connecticut-leaders-say-theres-a-crisis-of-diseased-trees>

<https://www.ccm-ct.org/ccmdeadtrees>

From: Katherine Kosiba <kmk178@att.net>

Sent: Tuesday, April 21, 2020 7:12 PM

To: 'mbylone@gmail.com' <mbylone@gmail.com>; 'First Selectman' <selectman@colchesterct.gov>

Subject: FW: Budget presentation ppt - dated 4/16/2020 - Budget expense that needs reconsideration - slide 17 Dead Tree budget

On conference call rather than zoom...here is my concern

Also, are there grants available to town for tree removal?

From: Katherine Kosiba <kmk178@att.net>

Sent: Tuesday, April 21, 2020 7:02 PM

To: 'TownBudget@ColchesterCT.gov' <TownBudget@ColchesterCT.gov>

Subject: Budget presentation ppt - dated 4/16/2020 - Budget expense that needs reconsideration - slide 17 Dead Tree budget

This could be a very serious safety issue, as well as during severe storms, those trees street-side near powerlines could affect residents losing power.

It seems this is more serious and important than putting in an irrigation system for fields that may not even be used this year.

Being in a part of town (Bull Hill Road) where we seem to lose power with each severe storm due to trees/limbs falling, this is a serious concern.

Please reconsider the amount of this item in the budget OR search for other sources of funds (grants) so this work can be focused on for the safety of our townspeople.

There was a recent storm where two of the roads coming into our neighborhood were blocked for several days, as well as being without power. Would not want to have a repeat of this knowing we have a significant number of trees on this decaying tree list.

Also, are the trees/areas of town being prioritized of what needs to be done first. If there is a storm and trees/limbs fall, is the tree work then coming out of this budget OR is that coming only from Eversource budget?

Thank you.

warm regards

Katherine M. Kosiba

From: Katherine Kosiba <kmk178@att.net>

Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2020 12:14 PM

To: First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>

Cc: Colchester Town Budget <townbudget@colchesterct.gov>

Subject: RE: Drive up budget voting - Vernon held drive up budget vote on April 28, 2020

Good morning Mary,

Since I heard you say on your webcast last night that you were going to research this event, I thought I would save you some time in doing the research and provide sources for you. With our thousand-plus voters I don't see how this could be easily scalable for our town's usage.

Katherine

From: First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2020 7:48 AM

To: Katherine Kosiba <kmk178@att.net>

Cc: Colchester Town Budget <townbudget@colchesterct.gov>

Subject: Re: Drive up budget voting - Vernon held drive up budget vote on April 28, 2020

I am looking into this but please understand the difference between doing this for 100 voters and 2000 it would be a huge challenge. I am meeting with the registrars again tomorrow.

From: Katherine Kosiba <kmk178@att.net>

Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2020 7:23:02 AM

To: First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>

Cc: Colchester Town Budget <townbudget@colchesterct.gov>

Subject: Drive up budget voting - Vernon held drive up budget vote on April 28, 2020

Dear Mary

On the 11pm news April 28th, there was a news story that the Town of Vernon had a drive-up budget vote.

The voters showed their license through the vehicle window which were verified, then voted with a thumbs up or thumbs down that was then recorded.

The town also allowed pedestrians to vote with a walk up process.

The numbers of Vernon people voting historically ("40-80 people vote") and in this budget vote is generally low. The recorded votes for this budget was: "106 yes, four no. "

This was researched by their town counsel and approved by Gov. Lamont as referenced in the NBC newscast. The other drive up vote that occurred a while ago as you recalled on your 4/28 webcast was also mentioned in the NBC newscast.

Here are some of the web posts about this vote:

During/ After vote:

<https://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/drive-thru-voting-given-thumbs-up-in-vernon/2262818/> 4/28/2020 1:43 min.

<https://www.wtnh.com/news/politics/democracy-in-action-vernon-town-budget-vote-held-via-drive-thru/> 4/28/2020 1:30 min.

<https://patch.com/connecticut/vernon/vernon-budget-approved-2nd-historic-drive-vote> 4/29/2020

Announcing Vote:

https://www.journalinquirer.com/towns/vernon/tuesday-drive-thru-vote-to-decide-94m-budget/article_7488a39c-8899-11ea-aba3-7b886e74cab8.html 4/27/2020

<https://patch.com/connecticut/vernon/vernon-annual-town-meeting-feature-drive-budget-voting> 4/23/2020

I hope this helps you and the Board of Finance as you work to deliver and pass our budget.

Warm regards
Katherine M. Kosiba
178 Bull Hill Road, Colchester, CT

From: Katherine Kosiba <kmk178@att.net>

Sent: Friday, May 1, 2020 1:21 PM

To: Jeff Burt <jburt@colchesterct.org>

Cc: Charles Hewes <chewes@colchesterct.org>; First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>; Colchester Town Budget <townbudget@colchesterct.gov>

Subject: RE: BOF - Education Budget Call - suggestion related to revenue side

Dear Jeff,
Thank you.

In addition to me, I am certain there are many townspeople that would be interested in helping/volunteer in a variety of way where they have time and interest if they just knew what was needed to be done. In the past, people volunteered on Facebook to mow the fields when town was delayed in doing.

There is so much that needs to be done (e.g. grounds at Bacon Academy for improved landscape and gardens) and likely other places around town or at Cohen Woodlands trails.

Would be nice if Colchester set up volunteer corps like they did with the CCC for projects, but just with straight volunteering, using new volunteer page to list tasks that needed to be done, and people registered to do then received the details. People want to contribute.

Take care and stay healthy
Warm regards

Katherine

From: Jeffrey Burt <jburt@colchesterct.org>
Sent: Friday, May 01, 2020 9:09 AM
To: Katherine Kosiba <kmk178@att.net>
Cc: Charles Hewes <chewes@colchesterct.org>; First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>;
townbudget@colchesterct.gov
Subject: Re: BOF - Education Budget Call - suggestion related to revenue side

Thanks for the information Katherine. We will explore all possibilities. Best, Jeff

Jeffrey E. Burt
Superintendent
Colchester Public Schools

127 Norwich Avenue, Suite 202
Colchester, CT 06415
860-537-7208

jburt@colchesterct.org

"We create innovative thinkers for a dynamic world."

On Thu, Apr 30, 2020 at 9:33 PM Katherine Kosiba <kmk178@att.net> wrote:

Dear Jeff,

I was on the budget call this evening for the Board of Education Budget. Now hearing the expense side of the budget, the most recent reduction suggestions and several issues that are still important to different groups, I am looking forward to hearing about the revenue side in the next series of meeting calls.

One area that may still help our community is pursuit of grants, although I would expect competition to be very significant.

What is the process in our educational system to identify the needs that could be met by pursuit of a grant, and what is the process for its research, writing/approval /submission processes? Does the School system maintain an inventory of potential grants from a variety of sources to consult when the need arises?

As a townsperson, I rarely hear about the town or schools receiving grants which I'd be very interested in knowing more about the extent of grants positively impacting our community, funding various needs to assist our community, and helping to keep taxes affordable at the upcoming Board of Finance Budget meetings.

Thinking creatively...is this an area that the town government/schools can reach out to townspeople to volunteer to assist with research to pursue additional revenue through grants as there are various non profit organizations in town that have members likely with some experience (some significant, some limited) with grant writing. Also there may be other people in town who may also have this experience. Why not tap into? Might this be something that town volunteers could help with?

I heard reference to the need for a xylophone being cut from the school's budget. Is this something that could be sought through a grant?

With a quick search done just to locate potential grants, I found:

- <http://grantsguys.com/grants-for-school-music-programs/> (11 sources)

- Grant possibilities for music teachers - <https://www.musicmotion.com/info/grant-possibilities-for-music-teachers.asp>
- Grant possibilities for music teachers - <https://aosa.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/grants-list-8-9-12.pdf> **S&S Worldwide in Colchester is on this list as a grant source.** <https://www.ssw.com/grants/index.php>
- The D'Addario Foundation <http://www.daddariofoundation.org/grants> prefers not to provide funding for the purpose of purchasing equipment or instruments. If you have instrument needs we recommend reaching out to the following organizations: [Hungry for Music](#), [Instruments in the Cloud](#), [Todd Rundgren's Spirit of Harmony Foundation](#), [Guitars 4 Gifts](#), [Reverb Gives](#), or the [Guitar Center Music Foundation](#).
- Article with multiple grant resources for instruments: <https://www.theclassroom.com/school-grants-for-musical-instruments-13607517.html>
- Article with reference to grants for musical programs/ other <https://www.theclassroom.com/grants-for-band-music-programs-13600352.html>

Are there other needs within the school system, once identified that grant research could be done by citizens, then grant written with involvement of citizen or only school personnel? This is another way to engage people in town who want to help in some way during this pandemic and may also benefit our town financially.

Additionally, attached is a list of the organizations/groups participating in the Colchester Community Partnership, that may also be a source of potential assistance in this area. Last year the CCP held a grant research/writing workshop that many attended. I personally attended a grant writing workshop for non profit organizations sponsored by the Hartford Foundation of Public Giving with a professional from New York City who was excellent and have the materials from this workshop that maybe useful if others were interested in reviewing.

Thank you for considering this suggestion. Take care and stay healthy,

Warm regards

Katherine M. Kosiba

From: Katherine Kosiba <kmk178@att.net>

Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 10:49 PM

To: Colchester Town Budget <townbudget@colchesterct.gov>

Cc: First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>

Subject: Question on Revenue Exhibit: Housing Authority -- Dublin Village - Does that include Ponemah Village?

Doesn't Colchester Housing Authority have two senior housing?

Dublin Village and Ponemah Village

Why is there only a revenue line for Dublin Village?

Town web site: " Housing Authority

The Housing Authority's mission is to provide clean, safe, affordable housing for our most in need senior population since 1967. The Colchester Housing Authority oversees Ponemah and Dublin Villages. All meetings are open to the public except for those items required by law to be handled in executive session."

From: Katherine Kosiba <kmk178@att.net>

Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 11:00 PM

To: Colchester Town Budget <townbudget@colchesterct.gov>

Cc: First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>

Subject: Budget meeting - Revenue..... Grants REVISED QUESTION...

Dear BOF,

I only see two grant on revenue exhibit on 5/5/2020 meeting (Town Stabilization Grant and Youth Services)
Are there other grants to add to revenue side for town or school budges? Where are those shown? Thank you.

Katherine M. Kosiba

178 Bull Hill Road

Colchester.

From: Katherine Kosiba <kmk178@att.net>

Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 11:12 PM

To: Colchester Town Budget <townbudget@colchesterct.gov>

Cc: 'Mary Bylone' <mbylone@gmail.com>

Subject: Town Budget - Revenue - Could the Recreation Fees be defined for callers. (Line 35).

Dear BOF,

Could the Recreation Fees be defined for callers. (Line 35).

Thank you.

Katherine M. Kosiba

178 Bull Hill Road, Colchester

From: Joanne Philips <joannephilips@sbcglobal.net>

Sent: Friday, May 29, 2020 2:44 PM

To: Colchester Town Budget

Subject: Town Budget

I support the proposed town budget and respectfully request that the Finance Committee vote to pass it.
Joanne Philips

Sent from my iPad

From: Clem McGrath <clemmcgrath@sbcglobal.net>

Sent: Friday, May 29, 2020 5:34 PM

To: Colchester Town Budget

Subject: Sidewalk

Hello Mary,

My name is Clement McGrath and I live in The Village at Colchester on Rte 85.

Many of us seniors in here like to walk and we only have partial sidewalks on Rte 85 which makes it dangerous to get to downtown.

I know money is tight right now, but maybe you could put us on a wish list in the future.

Also, There is a push button walk light at the intersection of Rte 85 and Broadway but the road is not cross hatched as a crosswalk should be. Any chance of getting this done ?

Thank you and keep up the good work

Clem McGrath

From: David Laspino <davidlaspino@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, May 4, 2020 1:41 PM
To: Colchester Town Budget
Subject: Town budget question

Good morning,

Per the town budget presentation, \$95,957 has been allocated for COVID-19 response. This seems like a lot of money. Most towns around Connecticut have spent money on personal protective equipment and disinfection equipment. However, it doesn't appear that Colchester has been hit that hard. What exactly are these funds getting spent on?

Respectfully,

David Laspino

Sent to: BOFChair Correspondence

From: Sheila Horvitz <sshesq@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 5:47 PM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>; Michael Hayes <michaeldh@yahoo.com>; Mike Egan <ctbridgeboy@gmail.com>
Subject: Budget

Dear Board of Finance,

Now that you're coming down to your final considerations, I wish to reiterate again my concerns about cutting budget items that will be counterproductive to what is best for the health and safety of our community and the future of Colchester and its potential draw for new citizens and businesses.

Most specifically in the town budget - Please do not take out the 2 firemen/EMT positions. I have heard that there was a 2nd alarm structure fire recently and both ambulances were out on other calls and short-staffed - and no staffing available at the fire station. Surrounding towns were needed to help with the fire. I understand that this is not a one-time occurrence but happens on a regular basis because of understaffing.

I reiterate the remarks I made in my prior letter to you.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the town in these difficult times.

Sheila Horvitz
108 Jaffe Terrace
Colchester, Ct. 06415
860-884-8945

From: jmcnair3@comcast.net <jmcnair3@comcast.net>
Sent: Sunday, May 24, 2020 4:06 AM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Cc: First Selectman Bylone <mbylone@colchesterct.org>
Subject: Rob missing FD data??

2 Attachments could not be copied

Rob,

Though I am only one person asking, I suspect others wishing to look into the fine print of the budget proposal may share my interest. The bottom line is not enough for those like me. How we get there is equally important. This will be especially true if some want to use the GFB to cover increases in total labor costs.

I have tried to pull public data on FD activity. It seems to me that to add 2 new full time staff members with benefits, there must be some needs assessment floating around. The best I could find is:

Image could not be copied

Have you seen any projections for this 2020 or 2021? Assuming my math is correct, we are saw a decline in activity from 2018. Also, any data by shift year over year and projections for 2020 and 2021? My recollection was when I was on the BoF getting this data was problematic. Hopefully, things have greatly improved.

Also, in my opinion there seems more a medical calls issues than fire protection. FS Bylone stated the positions address staffing the 4-12 shift. This seems to me an alternative approach to the volunteer incentive program. If this is the case, it may not be a head count increase per se. Yet, paying volunteers \$"x" to cover that shift is not the same as using full time staff. We know the 2 firemen will cost tax payers about \$93K. On top of that would be the benefits. Lastly, given they would fall under the collective bargaining agreement, there are long term consideration for the 6.9% step increases. Which makes me wonder if it would be better to increase the volunteer incentives to cover the shift.

On a personal level, I know you have been reviewing fire department budgets for many years. I strongly disagree with our FS statement that unlike you she understand complex labor issues. When I was a CEO, I had new staffing request all the time. When I was on the BoF I was always impressed you dispassionately were able to separate needs from wants. I also appreciate your looking out for those without the power of special interests to calmly cast a vote for them. In my opinion, in the face of the attacks upon you by special interest, there is the real courage.

Be well,

James McNair

From: Stan Soby <soby@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 8:42 AM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Budget

Members of the Board of Finance,

Thank you for your service during this extraordinary time. Your critical role in the budget process in Colchester is even more important this year, given the Governor's Executive Order 7HH suspending annual Town Meetings and Referendums to adopt budgets.

Many parallels have been drawn between the pandemic and other events, such as the 1918 flu, the Great Depression and the Second World War. The most recent such instance is the one that I would cite: the Great Recession and how we responded at the time.

I believe it is important to do so, as the proposed Budget I have seen presents as pre-COVID aspirational; we need to address COVID reality. In 2007, in response to the onset of the Great Recession, the budget included cuts, freezes and only one new initiative - for new computers, so that all of Town Hall could be on the same operating system and we could end the process of data transfer via "sneaker net".

If the two new firefighter/EMT positions are needs for public safety, we should be looking at offsets within the budget from items that are less critical. Over multiple administrations, we have built up our reserves, only used those reserves for capital or one-time expenses, improved our bond rating and quality of life, even as State aid to municipalities was being reduced. A number of you have been part of that effort.

This pandemic is projected to have a long tail, both as a public health issue and as a economic issue, at all levels of government. I believe it would be most unwise to approve a budget that makes us more vulnerable as a community in the future.

Respectfully,

Stan Soby

Stan Soby
40 Ude Way
Colchester, CT 06415
860-705-2252
@Citizen_Stam

May 25, 2020

Colchester Board of Finance
127 Norwich Avenue
Colchester, CT 06415

Dear Chairman Tarlov and the Colchester Board of Finance:

I would like to reiterate my comments from the meeting on May 21, 2020. The use of unassigned fund balance to pay for operating expenses is a bad idea and one that creates two problems in the coming fiscal year, a decline in unassigned fund balance and an un-covered expense that has to be filled just to get back to even.

It has been said multiple times that "We have done this before". This is true but the sentence needs to be completed "...and it took the town nearly ten years and several credit downgrades along the way to recover". All this during a time of a much better financial outlook. Has anyone considered the impact on the senior center building of another credit rating downgrade?

On the subject of zero spending increase and adding two new firemen. These two subjects are not mutually exclusive. After hearing the testimony of Firefighter/EMT Seth DeAngelis and Fire Police Captain John Jones I am convinced there is a real and immediate need there. I have the utmost respect for these two gentlemen and the fact that they objectively represent paid and volunteer ranks is very powerful to me. The money can be found to pay for these positions without creating a spending increase. The unfilled youth services position can be eliminated. A salary freeze can be implemented.

The financial reality is no one is going to get what they want, this year and for the foreseeable future. A compromise is needed looking at the reality of the situation and not plan for the future we all wished for. I ask the board to continue their difficult work and find an equitable solution with an eye to positioning the town to navigate the upcoming storm.

Respectfully
Rob Esteve
11 Blueberry Lane
Colchester, CT.

From: Jo-Ann Holmes <jpholmes32@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 7:48 PM
To: Robert Tarlov; Mike Egan; Mike Hayes; Bernard Dennler; Andrea Migliaccio; Andreas Bisbikos
Subject: Support for the Budget

Dear Board of Finance Members,

First, thank you for your hard work on this years budget and for your service to the Colchester community.

I am writing to show my support for the current budget that has been proposed. The education budget ensures that pupil services are maintained while honoring the contractual obligations for our town's finest teachers. A win-win for everyone!

I also support the town budget. The proposed 2 firefighters / EMT's are greatly needed and the necessity for them should not be dangerously underestimated. Unfortunately, the example from last week's situation of F of Bull Hill highlighted this need and should not be ignored.

With a healthy Rainy Day Fund Balance, now is the time to use it. This will result in a zero percent mill increase for taxpayers. The citizens of Colchester deserve the approval of this prudent budget.

Thank you for your time,

Jo-Ann Holmes
5 Gary Lane
Colchester

May 25, 2020

Dear Board of Finance,

As a volunteer EMT for the Town of Colchester at the Colchester Fire Department and a tax paying resident, I support the proposed budgets as presented with the inclusive request for 2 additional career FF/EMTs. I have been a member of the Colchester Fire Department for 20 years and have held an EMS officer position in many capacities for most of that time. I currently serve as the Assistant Chief of EMS.

With this ongoing time as an officer I have spent countless hours running reports and creating data, all of which you have repeatedly asked for. The reports you received are accurate to the best of our abilities. Unfortunately, medical and fire data do not follow protocols and rules that fit nicely into data sets like other departments may be able to provide you. There is no feasible way to accurately track or foreshadow collection and revenue rates. The numbers and statistics are ever changing. We are in the healthcare business; it is our goal to promote health and wellness. With that said, emergencies happen, and that is when we step in and pick up the pieces to the worst day of someone's life. People cannot replace numbers in every situation, because every situation, every call for service is unique!

During my time as an officer, I have been tasked for many years to "fill the schedule". This means promote open shifts for volunteer EMS staff to fill to assure our first due ambulance is covered. The challenge is real. The times have changed and a person's ability to volunteer has also changed. Life, family, and finances play big roles in these changes. It is often easier for someone to provide only a small portion of their "free time" than it is to commit to a full shift and hang around the fire station waiting for a call. That has led to creativity and incentives to make those commitments easier for our members.

I assure you, the need for additional staff does not require more data to prove itself. The amount of vacancies in shifts is all the data that you should need. These vacancies leave our department vulnerable and unprepared for the task we have all signed up to do, which is to serve and protect our community! Continued vacancies will leave our department open for a catastrophe. It is not a matter of if, but when it will occur if we continue down this road.

In closing, and in recognition of the end of National EMS week 2020 I ask you to reflect upon this year's theme: "Ready Today. Prepare for Tomorrow." We hope we are ready, however, we are NOT prepared! Please be assured, I am here to support you in the event of an emergency! I hope that you will be there to support us!

Respectfully,

Audrie Babineau
Assistant Chief EMS, CHFD
19 Oak Ridge Dr

From: Betty Wagner <wfwagner01@snet.net>
Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2020 10:16 AM
To: Andreas Bisbikos <abisbikos@aol.com>
Cc: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Re: Action on the Budget

Thank you for doing this, Andreas. I favor option 3 plus a freeze to the First Selectman's pay. I believe you are correct that it will be a difficult year with many challenges and the town taxpayers should not have the additional burden of a tax increase.

I would like to add that I have great respect for Val as head of Youth and Social Services. She and her small team do a lot for our town. Nevertheless, I believe that cutting an unfilled position might be the best route this year, with the option that she could request to have it reinstated next year if needed.

I don't know the First Selectman, but do know Rob Tarlov who has given so much of his time and expertise for the betterment of our town. He deserves many thanks. It is disappointing that the First Selectman chose to insult him instead of expressing her appreciation. I send many thanks his way for his all volunteer service to Colchester.

Betty Wagner

From: jmcnair3@comcast.net <jmcnair3@comcast.net>

Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2020 5:14 PM

To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>

Subject: Comments for tonight's meeting

Rob,

I work over night so cannot make meetings. I'd like to offer some comments for tonight.

I am concerned people are combining several issues about the firemen. In general, if we need them and how to finance. Others can advocate if they are needed. The BoF is the expert how best to fund if needed.

Do we need them now or can a decision wait another year when people can vote? I've seen no data yet that answers this question.

Can the volunteer incentive program be tweaked to address the issue. Has anyone asked if adding say \$50,000 would solve the problem versus about \$94K in regular payroll plus overtime and benefits?

Are people willing to increase their taxes? Anyone saying definitely yes is being naïve. The will of the voter has been and will be unpredictable.

Can we use the rainy day fund? I agree with others that is a bad practice to fund recurring operating expenses. Lastly, can we freeze increases or cut operating expenses? I'd like to remind the Board of the past. Looking at the annual audits, the Town Budget always seems to be more than what was approved.

Respectfully submitted,

James D McNair III
Colchester, CT

From: Ron Silberman <ron@aslockco.com>

Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2020 8:05 PM

To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>

Subject: citizen's comment

As a reasonably active citizen of Colchester, I strongly encourage you to support the inclusion of the paid Firefighters as well as adding EMT services.

Ron Silberman

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From: DENIS GODBOUT <kergodbo@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2020 10:34 AM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Public Hearing - 5/26

To the Board of Finance members -

First, I would like to thank you for your commitment to keep Colchester fiscally responsible and for your work in this unprecedented budget season.

I was very upset when I heard there would be no referendum for the Colchester tax payer to support / vote down the annual budget.

I am Karen Godbout and I have lived at 883 Norwich Avenue in Colchester for the past 27 years. I am active in local government.

The state is facing a \$900 million dollar shortfall this year and is projected to face a 2.3 billion dollar shortfall which starts this July for the upcoming fiscal year 2020-2021. There is a current unemployment rate of 29% due to the COVID-19 crisis.

The unemployment rates for the State of CT have never been higher.

I listened in on the call and could not believe that folks think it is ok to use the unassigned fund balance to pay for salaries and recurring expenses. Those dollars should be used for a capital item or a one time expenditure.

I support hiring the two firemen and holding off on filling a vacant position with youth services. I understand this position has been vacant since FEB 2020 and without a cure or a vaccine for COVID-19 I don't see the youth gathering at the center in the foreseeable future. The dollars for that position would help cover the additional cost.

There will be time in the future to secure that position.

Thank you for your service to the town of Colchester.

Karen Godbout

From: Jessica Morozowich <jmorozowich@colchesterct.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2020 12:27 PM
To: 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>; Mike Egan <megan@colchesterct.gov>
Cc: Mary Tomasi <mtomasi@colchesterct.org>
Subject: Considerations Regarding Extra Busing Savings

Excellent Article Highlighting Concerns Regarding Schools/Food Services:

<https://ctmirror.org/2020/05/26/connecticut-public-schools-are-out-but-their-kitchens-are-busier-than-ever/>

Dear Board of Finance Members,

At our last meeting focused on the Board of Education budget we discussed the updated M&J bus company savings. Initially the savings were estimated to be approximately \$15,000, but we now know those savings are closer to \$100,000 which will be credited to FY 20/21. As the agreement with M&J has not yet been finalized the number is still only an approximation, however we're confident it is within the \$100K ball park.

At the last meeting there was much discussion about these funds. I'd like to make sure it is understood that for every "savings" that is identified there is an equal new "expense" for next year that we have yet to incur, or even plan for. There are several priority areas in which this savings can offset. For instance:

1. The importance of maintaining the capital reserve account cannot be overstated. Superintendent Burt as well as many members of the Board of Finance and Board of Education have made the point that building this reserve to offset future large-scale capital projects (Bacon roof and boiler to name a few) is essential.
2. The cafeteria fund is also of tremendous concern. This account is separate from the Board of Education however they have incurred extensive losses from the closure as their sole revenue source (school meal sales) is non-existent. Yet they have continued to feed the children of our town for almost 3 months. It has been an essential need that our families remain extremely grateful for. It is estimated that the cafeteria fund (which was in the "black" before this event) will be at an almost \$90,000 debt by the end of this school year. End of year savings are being used to bring this account back to balance and make it whole. However, if meals are continued to be needed and served through the summer, or if school continues to be offered remotely in the fall, this account could again be at a \$20-\$30K loss again before Fall begins. Just for clarification, the cafeteria ONLY gets reimbursed from the state for the meals served to those designated as Free/Reduced Lunch, HOWEVER due to privacy we cannot identify these students when they drive-up to accept meals. Therefore, significantly more meals are being served to all students under the age of 18 that need assistance. Free/reduced forms are being provided to everyone in an attempt to identify and get reimbursed for these additional meals. Not many new forms have been received to date. FEMA funds are also not applicable here, as of now FEMA will only cover costs of "income lost" and does not apply to meals such as this.
3. Although CPS was able to keep almost all employee's whole there were lay-offs in substitutes and we will not know the financial impact to our unemployment tax until September/October.

These are only 3 examples of areas of concern. This does not even touch on any new expenses for adjusting the way school may be structured in the Fall (masks, extra nurses, buses, teachers etc...). We are doing everything we can to remain fiscally responsible and prepare for all scenarios. These funds will be essential in being able to remain flexible and/or better adjust to some of the expenses listed above. Please take this into consideration when making final decisions. Please do not consider these funds as reductions to an already lean budget request at 0.4%. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Jessica Morozowich

Member, BOE

From: Maresa Welch <maresawelch@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2020 12:47 PM

To: Mike Egan <megan@colchesterct.gov>; Bernard Dennler <BDennler@TownofColchester.onmicrosoft.com>; Andrea Migliaccio <amigliaccio@colchesterct.gov>; Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>; Andreas Bisbikos <abisbikos@colchesterct.gov>; Mike Hayes <mhayes@colchesterct.gov>

Subject: Budget support letter

I support BOTH the Town and BOE budgets as they stand. I support using fund balance to ensure there is a 0% mill increase. These budgets move our town forward and better protects our citizens and MAINTAINS our school's programs and services while still being fiscally responsible.

Thank you,

Maresa Welch

From: THOMAS KESSLER <tskessler@comcast.net>

Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2020 3:42 PM

To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>

Subject: 20-21 Budget

Chairman Rob Tarlov,

Please consider this an affirmation of the current education budget for FY 2020-21. I hope you agree that our students' education at this moment needs to stay continuous with familiar programs and trusted staff members to begin and progress their work. Please move the .4 increase move forward.

Thank you for your work for our town.

Lisa & Tom Kessler
15 Silver Meadow Dr.

From: LYNN <lymagoo@comcast.net>

Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2020 5:47 PM

To: Robert Tarlov

Subject: BOE budget 2020

Mr. Tarlov,

Thank you for your service to our town. I am writing today to ask you to please vote for the .4 increase. My husband and I would have voted yes for a 2.99 increase and the 1.43. We are disappointed that it has gone as low as .4.

Please do not go to 0. When this pandemic ends, and it will, we need our school system to be strong.

Any and all cuts effect our children. Please don't ask the yes voters to compromise any more than we already have.

Please vote yes to the .4 increase.

Sincerely,

Lynn Goodwin

From: jmcnair3@comcast.net <jmcnair3@comcast.net>

Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2020 8:19 AM

To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>

Cc: First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>

Subject: Rob assessing public hearings

Rob,

Good day. I hope you are well. When I was on the BoF, public hearing never were a good gauge of public opinion. The rooms tended to be packed with people having a direct benefit from budgets getting approved. There would be a few brave souls questioning the budget or advocating against it. The vote was the real indicator.

In the upcoming weeks, how will the BoF try to get an accurate read of the entire community? For example, the 70 and over age group are significant voters. They have the highest propensity to vote. Are they using zoom an email in representative numbers? Will the hearings be skewed like in the past? How will the BoF adjust for that?

Thanks for your time and consideration,

James

From: Kim Lewis <kimlewis826@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2020 10:20 AM

To: 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>; Mike Egan <megan@colchesterct.gov>

Subject: Re:BOE budget

Dear Board of Finance Members,

Thank you all for your service to the town of Colchester. I appreciate the difficult job you all have to do. I am the mother of two children in our schools, and I am writing to ask that you vote yes for the .4 increase for the BOE budget. I would have voted yes for the 2.99 increase, and the 1.43. There are many Yes voters. Please don't ask us to compromise any more than we already have with the cuts that have been made. Passing a 0 percent increase will impact the children of Colchester significantly and the education they receive. Please support our wonderful schools and vote yes for the .4 increase.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Kim Lewis

Kim Lewis

41 Tanglewood Dr.

Colchester, CT 06415

860-531-9462 home

443-458-2413 cell

From: Paul <padago@comcast.net>

Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2020 2:12 PM

To: Robert Tarlov

Subject: BoE budget

Mr. Tarlov,

I am writing to you to express my support for the 0.4% increase to the BoE budget. I do realize that the times ahead of us are uncertain, but we have been wise enough to set aside funds for times such as these. I believe it would be a grave mistake to cut down to a 0 increase budget when we have rainy day funds available to help bridge the gap. This situation is temporary and now is the ideal time to use these funds to help us maintain the quality of our schools through this situation.

Thank you.

Paul Goodwin
34 Harvest Lane

Members of the Board of Finance,

I am troubled by a number of things going on in our state and our town government. The budget meetings are not the forum to debate whether citizens should be voting on the budget or the lack of professionalism in some of the statements and actions of elected officials. So I will address only my concerns about this year's proposed budget.

I do not believe that there should be a tax increase this year when there are so many questions about the economic health of the citizens. Elected officials can debate all they want about what they think the health may be. The truth of the matter is that we, as a community will not know for many months to come and that time is, obviously, past our decision point.

There are, however, some critical needs for our town. I have always believed that the point of government is to provide services, and only those services, that individuals or groups of individuals cannot reasonably provide for themselves. A road network and the means to maintain it. A police force and justice system. And a fire department. The volunteer fire department has stated that they have a need for two more firefighters to offset, in part, the dwindling number of volunteers. This is also not the forum to discuss why there may be less volunteers. We need the firefighters. The question is, how do we get there.

When I was in the military for nearly 30 years, I held various levels of responsibility and command. At every level and at every leadership class I attended, the art of command was discussed. It didn't always have to do with subordinates. Just as often, the way that you deal with your superiors has as much to do with the success or failure of your command. More times than I'd like to recall, a superior commander asked too much of whatever unit I was leading. I learned early on to respectfully ask, "Sir (Ma'am), what are your priorities?" It was not a snarky retort or an attempt to get out of doing any task that was asked of my unit, it simply reminded the superior commander that I may not be able to accomplish all the tasks asked of me with the assets at my disposal.

We do not have all the assets we would want at our disposal. We never will. For as much tax money as we could raise, there is always another "good idea" we could spend it on. It is imperative that the elected officials weigh this and, as stated by the First Selectwoman, make the decisions that you are being forced to make. You should make these decisions with short and long range fiscal responsibility. There are enough line items that can be cut or reduced to make the needs happen without a tax increase and without jeopardizing our town's credit stability. I do not feel that raises and new hires are prudent this year.

I know it may be "difficult" to be short staffed or not make as much money as we would like, but we can do "difficult" for a short time. I did it for almost 30 years.

MAJ Evan A. Evans, USA (Ret.)

23 Joseph Lane
Colchester, CT

From: Ehren Brown <ehren@ehrenbrown.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2020 4:24 PM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Support for school budget

Good afternoon - I live at 104 Boretz Road and I'm writing in support of fully funding our schools for next year. I am a parent of a 3-year old and an educator in East Hampton. That's to say - I understand that education is the cornerstone of our community. I intend to vote in support of education for the rest of my life - regardless if my taxes are raised to do so. Our teachers and schools are essential components in the effort to create fully developed young adults and should be treated as the professionals and heroes that they are.

If there were a vote this year, I'd vote to pass the budget.

Thanks!
Ehren

Ehren Brown
Director of Choirs, East Hampton High School
Artistic Director, The Vernon Chorale

From: MERJA LEHTINEN <colchestereditor@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2020 4:39 PM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Budget

Please do not increase spending \$1. No spending increase, no mill rate increase, it is time to return surpluses to taxpayers and reduce the tax burden. These are more than difficult times. 20% of workers are laid off or experiencing reduced wages and income. If you spend more, it is irresponsible and unconscionable. Do what the law dictates, and surplus must be used to reduce taxes and pay down debt. Enough is enough.

Sincerely,
Merja Lehtinen
39 Homonick Rd, Colchester, CT 06415
860-800-4423

From: HAROLD CLARK <harleyfrostysnowman@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2020 5:23 PM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: not to use rainy day

DO not use rainy day fund in this year's budget for Labor makes cuts maybe no raises foe FS and her help

From: James Shuman <ellanpops@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2020 5:49 PM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Budget

I would like to respectfully request that you fully support the education budget of 4%. It is vital for our children that we adequately fund their education. Cutting corners can be done elsewhere, but not with the future of our children at stake. I for one don't want to see cuts to band, art, textbooks, supplies, staff etc.

Please consider completely funding the education budget, as cutting it will negatively impact our town and its future-

Jim Shuman

From: John Farrell <john.e.farrell@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2020 5:50 PM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Firemen

Mr. Tarlov,

I'm emailing you in support of the proposed budget and the hiring of two additional firemen.

During these anxious times, it's important to defend our neighbors from further economic loss, and protect businesses in town from the devastation of a fire.

Having the coverage from two additional could be the difference between a small fire and nd a local home or business being burnt to the ground.

If rainy day funds are for situations where money is tight, then it is extremely appropriate to utilize these resources during the current unprecedented economic downturn.

Best, stay healthy,

John Farrell

From: Roger Kizer <rogerkizer@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2020 6:06 PM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Colchester Budget

The "Rainy Day Fund" shouldn't be used to augment the First Selectman's salary, nor should it be used to give any pay raises to any Town employees that aren't contractually obligated.

The BOF should be looking to get the budget to a zero percent mil rate increase by asking all departments, education included, to defer as many projects as possible, defer all CIP items and any funds not yet spent in the current FY be returned to the general fund.

Roger Kizer

From: Erin Shuman <ebowers79@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2020 6:15 PM
To: Robert Tarlov
Subject: Budget

Hello,

My Name is Erin Shuman and I live at 162 Prospect Hill Road. I'm writing to urge you not to cut the school budget. Next year is going to be a difficult one for teachers and students alike. Our community will need to have all staffing and programs in place to address the unique challenges to come.

Again, I urge you to fully fund the BOE budget. It's what's right for our kids.

Respectfully,
Erin Shuman

From: L Nauss <ljnauss@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2020 6:30 PM
To: Robert Tarlov
Subject: School Budget

To the members of the Board of Finance,

Please reconsider passing the 0% increase in the school budget. I am concerned that this will eliminate programs, supplies, school maintenance, staff...etc. My son will be a 7th grader at WJMS during the upcoming school year.

Thank you,
Laura Nauss

From: Jessica Trusz <jtrusz@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2020 6:31 PM
To: Robert Tarlov
Subject: Budget

I would like to respectfully request that you fully support the education budget of 4%. It is important that we adequately fund our children's education and our schools! I don't want to see major cuts, which would probably need to be done if you cut the education budget.

In order to positively impact the town and our children, please consider completely funding the education budget.

Thank you,
Jessica Trusz

From: Wilmarie N. <marie92298@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2020 6:32 PM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Education Budget

Good evening,

I am writing to oppose your proposed budget of 0% increase in the education budget. Now more than ever, our schools will require more funding. There are so many unknown variables that will be affecting the budget next year. For example, it has yet to be determined if PPE for both students and staff will be provided by the state, or if the school district will have to pay for this. We don't know whether or not schools will be providing both virtual and in-school classes and if that's the case will need to hire more teachers. If we do additional bus runs in order to keep the number of students in a bus at one time down, we will need additional funding for that as well. Our students, teachers, and staff need our support at this time.

Thank you for your time,

Wilmarie D. Franceschi

Member of the Colchester Community

From: Robert Parlee <robertparlee@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2020 6:49 PM
To: Robert Tarlov
Subject: Increase

Hi I am not in favor of that large of an increase And please do not use the rainy day fund to offset such increases! There should be no increase, raises or addition of personnel of any kind in this year's budget!

From: Laurie Buyniski <lauriebuyniski@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2020 6:51 PM
To: budget@colchesterct.org <budget@colchesterct.org>; Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Town and School Budgets

To whom it may concern,

We are writing today to express our strong support of the proposed town and school budgets. As parents of four children in the district, we ask that you do not make any further cuts in these budgets.

We request that you pass the proposed budgets.

Sincerely,
Laurie & Alex Buyniski
44 Brookstone Dr
Colchester CT 06415

From: jmcnair3@comcast.net <jmcnair3@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, May 29, 2020 4:24 AM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Cc: First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: GFB policy

Rob,

Good day to you. I hope you and Mary are doing well. Though I am only one guy and not sure if others are asking, I feel this should be part of the public record.

There is a narrative of using the GFB to offset the increases in labor costs. The focus seems to be to fund the 2 firemen that some argue has to be this year regardless if the voters can't vote.

Others and myself have gone on record this should not be done. There are several alternatives to finding the money in the existing proposal.

It just occurred to me however, as a past member of the BoF, there is a policy. That policy seems to conflict with the narrative. In particular, it forbids use for recurring operating expenses. That was my understanding why it was created. It addressed the previous practice during the Democrat administration to use GFB to manipulate mill rate increases due to labor costs increases.

So I am curious about two things. The math to determine how much of the GFB can be used for the upcoming Fiscal year. Also, how would its use be stated in a motion to be passed by a majority (i.e. at least 4 members)?

Thanks in advance for your time and consideration,

James D. McNair III
Colchester CT

From: Susan Curry <currys@sbcbglobal.net>
Sent: Friday, May 29, 2020 2:37 PM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Sending Support for BOE Budget

Dear Mr. Tarlov,

I am writing to express my full support of the BOE budget that is before you. I fully believe that all resources available should be invested in education and that we as a town should go out of our way to provide this. I say this because I truly believe a strong and decent society springs forward from solid foundations in education. Please do what you can to provide that opportunity to Colchester's youth.

Kind Regards,
Susan Curry

From: Tracey Bruni <teb516@yahoo.com>

Sent: Sunday, May 31, 2020 4:46 PM

To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>; Mike Hayes <mhayes@colchesterct.gov>; Andreas Bisbikos <abisbikos@colchesterct.gov>; Andrea Migliaccio <amigliaccio@colchesterct.gov>; bdennier@colchesterct.gov <bdennier@colchesterct.gov>; Mike Egan <megan@colchesterct.gov>

Subject: budget

BOF Members,

I am contacting with regard to this years budget and urge you to listen to the residents of Colchester and what they want. I have voted on past budgets and am not happy about the fact that this year we cannot. I urge you to please think about the cuts that you are asking the BOE to make in such uncertain times. There is no way that the BOE can predict what will happen in the fall or what it will cost to roll-out the necessary precautions needed to get kids back to school. As a parent of two school-age children I'm not ok with the reduction of almost \$1M of what was proposed and feel that what they are working with now provides the minimum to our students. Our schools are a long-term investment in our future!

Another point that concerns me is the staffing, or lack of for our firefighter/EMT positions. Our town needs those positions for the safety and well being of our town. I'm also not comfortable with the fact that there are gaps in coverage for some shifts as it puts our citizens and first responders at risk. I just don't understand why this would even be a sticking point when it comes to funding the fire department, especially given the healthy "rainy day" fund that our town has.

That being said, I do not want to see anymore cuts to the BOE budget and would support it as it stands now because it maintains the current quality of our programs with a minimal impact on our students. I also support using the fund balance to ensure a 0% mill increase and urge you to consider the staffing of our fire department.

Thank you and I hope that you vote as the citizens of Colchester want you to.

Sincerely,

Tracey Bruni

From: Betty Wagner <wfwagner01@snet.net>

Sent: Monday, June 1, 2020 4:16 PM

To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>

Subject: Fwd: Action on the Budget

To the Board of Finance

I favor a zero budget with two firemen in, removing a youth services position that hasn't been filled since February and a freeze to the First Selectman's pay. This will be a difficult year with many challenges and the town taxpayers should not have the additional burden of a tax increase.

I would like to add that I have great respect for Val as head of Youth and Social Services. She and her small team do a lot for our town. Nevertheless, I believe that cutting an unfilled position might be the best route this year, with the option that she could request to have it reinstated next year if needed.

I don't know the First Selectman, but do know Rob Tarlov who has given so much of his time and expertise for the betterment of our town. He deserves many thanks. It is disappointing that the First Selectman chose to insult him instead of expressing her appreciation. I send many thanks his way for his all volunteer service to Colchester.

Betty Wagner

From: Betty Wagner <wfwagner01@snet.net>
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2020 5:36 PM
To: Robert Tarlov
Subject: Withdrawal of my earlier comments

Rob, I have rethought my comments and believe the position in Youth and Social Services should not be eliminated without consultation with the manager of that department regarding how she is coping presently without that person. Her small team does a lot for Colchester.

I strongly support the two firefighter/EMT positions. My family recently had experience with many dedicated firefighters/ EMTs and anything I say in praise of emergency services cannot come close to being enough.

I also believe that the residents of Colchester should not be subjected to any kind of tax increase this year. Thank you for replacing my first email with this one.

Betty Wagner

From: Rachel Fuller <rfullerct@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2020 8:40 AM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Budget

Dear Colchester Board of Finance,

I am writing a letter of support for a combined zero budget increase, a zero tax increase, and a responsible use of our Rainy Day fund that takes into account both the needs of today and a very uncertain tomorrow. Please include the two additional firemen in your budget and remove the unfilled youth service position until we have a better grasp on Covid-19. I am also in support of a salary freeze across the board, especially for the First Selectman who appears to be tone deaf to the realities in our community

When it comes to decision making, I believe it would be wise for the three newer members to listen to the experienced trio (Tarlov, Bisbikos, and Migliaccio) as they have previously navigated the community during difficult times. It has also been during their tenure when our bond ratings improved. I'm afraid that using our Rainy Day funds for salaries and operating costs could jeopardize important projects like the Senior Center when increased budgets combined with poor use of fund balance could potentially hurt our ratings.

Sincerely,

Rachel Fuller

From: Kassiani Bisbikos <bisbikosk@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2020 3:16 PM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Colchester Budget

Dear Colchester Board of Finance,

I have been following your meetings and conversations. I believe that this year we should have a combined zero budget with no new taxes. Too many people are hurting in our community right now as small businesses are trying to keep their head above water and nearly a third of our state is facing unemployment. The people that do have jobs are seeing pay cuts and reduced hours. The fact that the First Selectman is still pushing for a salary increase and not looking for a freeze or concession is plain wrong. We don't live on Wall Street, we live on Main Street.

I am also trying to understand why we need to keep a youth service position that hasn't been filled in five months. Until there is a vaccine or cure, things will not be the same. Some say that could be as short as 6 months or as long as 18 months. Why don't we revisit and review this position next year when we understand the situation better? Safety should be greatest priority right now. The firemen are a necessity, this position currently is not.

As a community we should also be worried about the reckless use of our rainy day funds. Certain elected officials want to use that money for salaries and recurring expenses. How are we going to make up those salaries, plus an increase to those salaries next year? And the year after and the year after that? Looks like slippery slope that will either lead to high taxes or an empty rainy day fund. You are not only responsible for today, but for tomorrow too.

Sincerely,

Kassiani Bisbikos

To the Board of Finance:

First, I'd like to thank each and every one of you for the hard work that goes into creating a budget for our town. I know first hand the countless hours that goes into putting something together that is satisfying to all parties including Town agencies, the voters and tax payers of Colchester. I watched night after night the balancing act that my husband Art and other members of the finance board struggled with. It should be the choice of the voters to make the ultimate decision; however, this budget season is very different due to the unprecedented times that we are in. I too, would prefer that the tax payers decide, unfortunately this falls on the Board of Finance's shoulders to make those important decisions that will affect us all.

There is no doubt that the town needs more firemen for everyone's safety, and we should put money aside in this budget, but going into "rainy day" funds is not the sustainable way to do that. Those funds were put aside for one-time capital expenditures and not to pay salaries. Please look at other ways to accomplish what we all need. Some suggestions might be salary freezes. I don't believe that a salary increase is appropriate during the time when our towns people are suffering with loss of jobs through no fault of their own, having to rely on others for food and everyday necessities. Another might be taking a page from some larger corporations and furlough personnel on a rotating basis to cover all areas of need. The savings might be enough to cover our shortfall.

Please consider going back to the table one more time to present a \$0 increase budget and allow people of our town to get back on their feet from this pandemic situation. I believe there is room to do that if you look at the larger picture for the good of us all.

Stay safe and stay healthy.

Julianne Shilosky
53 Stanavage Road
Business owner and Tax payer

From: Judith Barnes <juditha.barnes@att.net>
Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2020 9:29 PM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Colchester Town Budgets

June 2, 2020
Dear Board of Finance Board,

As a thirty-three-year resident of Colchester, I implore you to read my letter in its entirety.

I built my home here in Colchester in 1987. Home prices were steep, and my property taxes were around One Thousand Dollars a year. I did not mind the expense; I thought this was my forever home. My taxes are now close to TEN Thousand dollars a year. I have no town sewer, trash pickup or streetlights. I never had children go through the school system and no one would buy my house for what it is appraised for. With the flip of a switch my income ended. My three months of emergency money is almost depleted.

My question to every member of the board of Finance and the town selectmen is:
Are all of you going to work together responsibly to present a budget with a ZERO increase?

Unemployment is at an all time high; it is higher than the Great Depression. Many businesses are closing permanently. All the college degrees and skills in the world will not help you in this environment. Job searches are yielding nothing. The town's tax collection rate is going to fall drastically. I escrow my taxes and so far, have been able to pay my mortgage payments.

Hiring two full time fire fighters would be wonderful; it just is not practical or realistic in this unpredictable economic environment. In fact, it is **irresponsible** to increase any budget, employee wages or benefits when shortfalls are eminent. The Town of Colchester needs to tighten its belt, do the right thing, and consider its citizens.

The town should NOT dip into its unassigned funds for frivolous expenditures and ideas. Please save those ideas and plans for a booming economy when unemployment is in the low single digits.

I implore you to make conscience, informed, and careful decisions. I thank God every day for Board of Finance member Rob Tarlov's experience, common sense, and dedication to this town. I am appalled at the ill treatment, disrespectful and unprofessional comments which our newly elected First Selectwoman Mary Bylone made towards Mr. Tarlov. The Town should always review the data, the costs, and ramifications of every transaction.

The residents of Colchester are down trot. An unforeseen virus has turned our world upside down. We citizens have cancelled our vacations, postponed our home improvements and purchases. We have DECREASED our expenditures and are counting our pennies. Instead of supporting its citizens, our Board of Selectmen are adding insult to injury by considering NOT have a referendum. How can you take away our right to vote?

I respectfully request, if you are denying the citizens of Colchester the right to vote, the Town officials show the all of us the respect and courtesy of a zero-budget increase.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Judith A. Barnes

From: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, June 3, 2020 9:48 AM
To: Steve Schuster <sas2628@aol.com>
Subject: Re: BOE MEMORANDUMS

They are different funds.

I would anticipate that the use of Unassigned General Fund will be discussed tonight.

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

From: Steve Schuster <sas2628@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 3, 2020 5:45 AM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Re: BOE MEMORANDUMS

Am I getting Town's Capital improvement fund mixed up with the Town's "Rainy day" fund?

From: BOFChair@colchesterct.gov
Sent: June 3, 2020 5:35 AM
To: sas2628@aol.com
Subject: Re: BOE MEMORANDUMS

Steve,

I don't expect that the Memorandum of Understanding to come up tonight. We are following the historical budget process as close as possible under the executive orders. Why do you ask?

The Unexpended Funds Policy is not up for discussion tonight, but has come up in the budget discussions over the last 6 weeks and could again tonight.

Rob

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

From: Steven A. Schuster <sas2628@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 3, 2020 4:55 AM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Getting older has it's consequences!

-----Original Message-----

From: Steven A. Schuster <sas2628@aol.com>
To: bofchair@colchesterct.gov <bofchair@colchesterct.gov>
Sent: Wed, Jun 3, 2020 4:52 am
Subject: Getting older has it's consequences!

Sorry about that.
Steve,

From: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, June 3, 2020 4:21 AM
To: Steven A. Schuster <sas2628@aol.com>
Subject: Re: BOE MEMORANDUMS

Steve,

The attachments are the same.

Rob

Rob Tarlov, Chairman, Board of Finance
[860-608-4293](tel:860-608-4293)

From: Steven A. Schuster <sas2628@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2020 9:14 PM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: BOE MEMORANDUMS

Rob, which one of the BOE memorandums is up for discussion at tomorrow nights BOF meeting?

From: Jeffrey Standish <jeffreystandish@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 3, 2020 9:31 AM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Funding of 2 new FF's

BOF,

I would like to extend my support for the funding of two new Firefighter/EMT's. I believe option 2 or 3 are viable a means. The FF's are needed as the national decline in volunteers continues to plummet. Colchester is no exception. I always supported the need for additional manpower within the FD. I have been involved in the fire service in several different communities as both a volunteer and a career Fire Lieutenant/Paramedic for over 20 years and have witnessed a big shift of available staff in the volunteer ranks I am fully aware of our current fiscal situation on the federal, state and local levels, however, public safety is and has always been at the forefront of our ongoing situations.

Public safety and critical staffing needs can not be pushed to the side due to the current pandemic and financial struggles we all face. These two additional positions were needed much before the pandemic began and I know Colchester could use a few more firefighter/EMT as well!! Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions or concerns. I thank you all for the tough job you are doing and look forward to the future of our beautiful town.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey W. Standish, NRP
Fire Lieutenant / Paramedic
Wallingford Fire Department
IAFF Local 1326

From: DIMITRIOS BISBIKOS <dbisbikos@snet.net>
Sent: Wednesday, June 3, 2020 9:38 AM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Re: BOF Letter

Dear Colchester Board of Finance,

This has been a very tough year for many in our community. Statewide unemployment is nearly a third of the working population, those with jobs are seeing their pay reduced or are worried about being laid off, and small businesses are seeing their income take a big hit. Too many of my friends and neighbors are hurting right now. Many wonder how long the pandemic will last, what the recovery will look like, and how long they have until their savings run out. I think that a good amount of people will have economic problems including paying their taxes.

With many in the community hurting, I am asking for a zero budget increase and a zero tax increase. I stand firmly behind the two additional firemen as the Bisbikos family always has. However, I do not believe the town should be holding onto a 5 month unfilled youth service position. Let's review that position when the pandemic clears up. I also don't agree with the fact that the First Selectman is looking for salary increases during uncertain times. A combination of salary freezes, concessions, and/or furlough days should be explored.

Sincerely,

Demetra Bisbikos

Board of Finance Correspondence for June 3 – 2nd of 2 documents

From: Jeffrey W. Standish <jeffreystandish@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 3, 2020 1:12 PM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Funding of two new FF's

Dear BOF Chairman,

The attached letter is to replace my earlier email which did not come out properly due to a technical glitch. Thank you for your consideration in this matter. Please contact me with any questions or concerns. Stay well!

Respectfully,

Jeffrey W. Standish

151 Standish Road

Colchester, CT 06415

BOF,

I would like to extend my support for the funding of two (2) new Firefighter/EMT's. I believe this can be achieved by considering several options. 1.) Entertain freezing salaries/concessions or 2) removing a five month unfilled youth service position to get to a zero budget and include the two firefighter / EMT's. The Firefighters are needed as the national decline in volunteers continues to plummet. Colchester is no exception to this. Time is very limited to most people, especially those with families making it difficult to maintain an active role as a volunteer while meeting all of the required trainings and standards necessary to do the job. We must continue to support the volunteers and focus on retaining them as well. The two new positions will allow for better coverage and to supplement the volunteer force.

I have always supported the need for additional manpower within the FD. I have been involved in the fire service in several different communities as both a volunteer and a career Fire Lieutenant/Paramedic for over 25 years and have witnessed a big shift of available staff in the volunteer ranks. I am fully aware of our current fiscal situation on the federal, state and local levels; however, public safety is and has always been at the forefront of our ongoing situations we face every day.

Public safety and critical staffing needs cannot be pushed to the side due to the current pandemic and financial struggles we all face. These two additional positions were needed much before the pandemic began and I know Colchester could use a few more firefighter/EMT as well! Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions or concerns. I thank you all for the tough job you are doing and look forward to the future of our beautiful town as we all work through these trying times.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey W. Standish
Colchester Resident

To the Colchester Board of Finance,

My name is Duane Palmes and I am the co-owner of Colchester Pizza. I have been a business owner for over thirty years and come in contact with costumers and business owners of this community on a constant basis. All operating businesses, including my own, have seen a loss in monthly income since the beginning of the pandemic. There are many businesses that are wondering if they will ever open up again while others have closed up shop for good. Our customers are also feeling the pinch. Some have lost their jobs while others have seen a reduction in their pay.

Our community is tightening its belt and so should we. There should be a salary freeze across the board. The optics are poor when the First Selectman is pushing for a salary increase when the people she is supposed to lead are struggling. We should also not be holding onto a youth services position that hasn't been filled in five months. That position is not a priority during the pandemic.

In full disclosure, my wife and I have also been volunteers in the local fire department. We realize that there is a shortage of volunteers and that is why I am in full support of the two firemen being put in the budget, but at a zero budget. A budget increase without the say of the voter is unacceptable. Do not take advantage of the situation to meet an agenda. Please do not use the rainy day fund on salaries; they should be used for one time expenditures as written in your policy. You will need those funds to make up the shortfalls coming from the state and for the ancient fire equipment that are long overdue for replacement.

Sincerely,

Duane Palmes

From: Matthew Doucette <matt71896@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 3, 2020 11:52 AM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject:

Dear Colchester BOF,

It's been brought to my attention that the town is considering hiring two extra firemen. I support this decision because Colchester is an ever growing community. Right now we are faced with a gruesome 30%+ and growing unemployment rate. We must do our share in keeping men and women employed in our town for its wellbeing. With any hiring we must consider if this decision will effect our budget. Thats why I'm proposing that we look into getting rid of any unprioritized vacancies in other departments. Perhaps we need to start with a zero budget, and go from there. Its been suggested that a salary freeze could save Colchester some much needed funds, and there are willing participants.

Thank you for your time and consideration
Matthew Doucette, RTC member

Sent to Townbudget@colchesterct.gov - also sent to BOFChair email on week of May 25.

From: Kim Lewis <kimlewis826@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 3, 2020 12:39 AM
To: Colchester Town Budget
Subject: Budget

I support the budget. Please vote yes.

Kim Lewis

From: LYNN <lymagoo@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, June 3, 2020 12:09 AM
To: Colchester Town Budget
Subject: BOE budget

Board of Finance members,

Thank you for your service to our town. I am writing today to ask you to please vote for the .4 increase. My husband and I would have voted yes for a 2.99 increase and the 1.43. We are disappointed that it has gone as low as .4. Please do not go to 0. When this pandemic ends, and it will, we need our school system to be strong. Any and all cuts effect our children. Please don't ask the yes voters to compromise any more than we already have. Please vote yes to the .4 increase.

Sincerely,
Lynn Goodwin

From: James Shuman <ellanpops@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 3, 2020 7:26 PM
To: Colchester Town Budget <townbudget@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Budget

I would like to respectfully request that you fully support the education budget of 4%. It is vital for our children that we adequately fund their education. Cutting corners can be done elsewhere, but not with the future of our children at stake. I for one don't want to see cuts to band, art, textbooks, supplies, staff etc.

I have heard rumors that several BOF members are looking to cut to a 0% budget. This must not happen. People paid for your education, now it is time to do what is right for the children of this town.

Please completely fund the education budget, as cutting it will negatively impact our town and its future-

Jim Shuman

Board of Finance Members,

As a taxpayer I find myself in the unfortunate position of not having a vote on this year's budget. I am depending on the members of this Board to be my voice. I would have voted NO on any budget that shows an increase, due to these hard-economic times. Facing the uncertain future combined with the high unemployment rate, now is not the time for any increases in our budget. Both the Town and Education budget should have a zero increase.

It has been pointed out that our community needs two Fireman to provide safety and balance out the schedule. I agree that if that's what is needed, then we need to find a way to afford them. It seems to me that we are already paying for them to cover the gaps anyway. I doubt that that will end and we will continue to hire them from other towns. I don't think taking the money out of the rainy-day fund is the sustainable answer. Salaries shouldn't be payed in that manner, and the rainy-day fund should be used for one-time expenditures. What happens next budget season if we need the fund to make up any difference of moneys we may not receive from the State.

Please find another way to afford the Fireman, something that is permanently sustainable and doesn't take money out of the unassigned fund. A compromise has to be reached by looking at a salary freeze, eliminating vacant positions or perhaps a furlough day. This seems like reasonable request during these extreme hard times where people are struggling at all levels. These compromises are temporary and will probably change in next years budget.

I've listened to several meetings and I must say that it's been upsetting to me how disrespectful and rude people have been to each other. This is an extremely stressful time and I understand the pressure that you are all under, but please be kind to each other. We are depending on you to make this decision for us and I know you can do it with professionalism and grace.

Thank You for your time and service, I appreciate it.

Sheila Tortorigi

174 Stanavage Road

From: Ihor Rudko <irudko@rudko.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 3, 2020 5:05 PM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Colchester 2020 Budget

Dear Mr. BOF Chairman,

I am reaching out to you in an attempt to voice my concerns with regard to this years proposed budget.

I am a long standing member of this community, a retiree on a fixed income, a veteran, and an active participant in this community. We are currently in completely uncharted territory with regard to the current citation concerning the pandemic and its economic impact to our town, this state and the United States of America as a whole.

As citizens, it is our duty to spend within our means and maintain a balanced budget within our own households. Currently as it stands all new initiatives should be placed on the back burner to prevent further economic hardships to both myself, my family, my neighbors and fellow taxpayers.

It is my believe that tapping the reserve to fund further new initiatives at this juncture is fiscally unsound given the following facts:

1. Salaries are reoccurring and will cause an additional financial burden next year.
2. The collection rate that is being projected is unrealistic.
3. The current unemployment rate of 29 percent should be an eye opening indicator, especially since that number is likely to climb.
4. The right of the people to vote on the proposed budget via referendum has been constitutionally infringed.
5. Should this budget have the opportunity to move to a public referendum, it is my opinion that it would not pass.

Given these circumstances I am asking that this year's budget minimally be a net zero increase to the tax payer if not a decrease.

I thank you for both your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ihor B. Rudko

From: Marli Rudko <marli@rudko.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 3, 2020 3:11 PM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Email to be submitted for record for tonight's budget meeting

Dear Rob,

We are in a time many would liken to the Great Depression. With high unemployment rates and people struggling to just feed their families, never mind pay their bills or taxes.

As a Colchester resident, I practice fiscal responsibility with thoughtful reasoning even in good times within our home finances. The same due diligence should be exercised when it comes to the town and education budget.

This is what I expect to be the responsible end result of all these back and forth conversations on the overall budget.

- Yes, we should have two additional firemen, but not at the expense of dipping into the Unassigned Fund balance.
- Yes, town government should commit to salary freezes and/or concessions. There are MANY in the private sector doing this right now.
- In this uncertain time, the Youth Services position for \$50,000 should be placed on the back burner and those monies allocated be used towards the budget

No new taxes. No budget increase. Don't touch the Unassigned Fund balance for things such as salary increases that should be postponed until the financial climate of our town justifies it.

To do anything other than what is in the best interest of "the people" and not for a few in town government and education is irresponsible and self-serving.

If the mantra is "Community First" and "We Are All In This Together", then let the actions and not the words show the truth of this.

Sincerely,

Marli Rudko

From: Kerri Gesiak <kgesiak@yahoo.com>

Date: June 3, 2020 at 3:05:23 PM EDT

To: BOFChairman@colchesterct.gov

Subject: Fwd: Budget

Hope everyone is doing well. We are in a time right now of uncertainty. The fact that citizens have lost their right to vote in the referendum is not only wrong but disturbing.

One has to wonder what else will be taken away from us. Our vote is basically the only voice we have. I have been hesitant about even reaching out to share my thoughts since I have seen people's concerns brushed over and not even considered in the past. With that being said I decided I had no other option then to say how I feel about our budget.

With the financial instability of the world we live in now there has to be more emphasis on helping our citizens to avoid loosing everything they have. We have citizens that have no money coming in, businesses collapsing, people worried where their next meal will come from, and if they will have a house when all this is over. For our town to even consider one raise is a slap in our face. It plainly says to us we don't care about you we only care about ourselves. Our employees of the town should and I presume they are happy they still have a job while so many others are loosing theirs. We as a town should be making as many cuts as possible in order to give some relief to the people of Colchester and the businesses. Before the virus we had too many people suffering, loosing homes, and struggling to pay bills and put food on the table. Now these same people and even those that were fine before this are suffering even more.

We should not be using our rainy day fund for salaries. In fact, we should not even be hiring people right now. A rainy day fund should be used for emergencies. Never for salaries.

In conclusion I believe the town needs to make serious cuts, including no raises and finding any and all places to cut to help our citizens financially. This is not the time to do business as usual. Thank you for taking my thoughts into consideration.

Kerri Gesiak