

Fw: Out-of-District Tuition -FWD for BOF AGENDA

Andrea Migliaccio <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>

Tue 7/11/2023 10:01 PM

To: **Boards & Commissions** <b-c@colchesterct.gov>

Please attach to BOF Agenda: Correspondence

Andrea Migliaccio, Chairman, Board of Finance
860-705-1118

From: Michael Dubreuil <dubreuilm@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, June 30, 2023 8:54 AM

To: First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>; Rosemary Coyle <rcoyle@colchesterct.gov>; Deborah Bates <dBates@colchesterct.gov>; Denise Turner <dturner@colchesterct.gov>; Jason LaChapelle <jLaChapelle@colchesterct.gov>; BOE@colchesterct.org <BOE@colchesterct.org>; Andrea Migliaccio <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>; Mike Egan <megan@colchesterct.gov>; Tim Vaillancourt <tVaillancourt@ColchesterCT.gov>; John Thomas <jthomas@colchesterct.gov>; Art Shilosky <aShilosky@colchesterct.gov>; Mike Hayes <mhayes@colchesterct.gov>

Subject: Out-of-District Tuition

All,

Please read the below email and include it in correspondence for the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and Board of Education. It raises questions that cross all boards and may require input from the town attorney.

To support the 2023 to 2024 budget season the BOE commissioned a report on projected school enrollment. This document is called "Colchester Public Schools Enrollment Projected to 2032", was authored by Peter M. Prowda, PhD, and dated January 27, 2023. In the document, the enrollment for the 2023 to 2024 school year is projected to be 2,210 students.

On February 23, 2023 the BOE adopted a budget for the 2023 to 2024 school year of \$46,157,862. Therefore, given their enrollment projection, they have proposed a per pupil expenditure of approximately \$20,886.

On June 13, 2023 the BOE set the out-of-district tuition cost for the 2023-2024 school year at \$12,900 per student. Therefore, giving non-Colchester students an almost \$8 thousand dollar discount, or approximately 40%.

The June 13, 2023 meeting minutes note the following, "Mr. Sullivan [the superintendent] believes it is valuable to the Board to reevaluate the cost of tuition in regard to help bring in more students to the district as well as a benefit to staff who send their students to Colchester schools."

As a citizen, I have no issue with the town of Colchester offering the benefit of no-cost school tuition for the children of employees of the town. This should be relatively non-controversial.

What I don't understand is how it benefits the taxpayers of Colchester to "bring in more students to the district" at a discounted rate. It would seem to increase the budget required to operate the Colchester school system with no discernible benefit to the citizens of Colchester. To put it simply, I have a major issue subsidizing the cost of education for citizens of other towns.

I think it's highly controversial to offer such a large discount to other towns while the BOE is in conflict with the BOF on their massive budget request. When we're discussing the positive impacts \$200k could have on the school budget, that's also the cost of 25 out-of-district students at \$8k lost per student. Frankly, this seems like madness.

The questions the BOE's actions raise are as follows:

A.) Under what authority does the BOE have to set the out-of-district tuition? (town charter, state law, usurped power)

B.) Given the fact that the tuition rate has an effect on the budget, why is the tuition rate not approved by the BOF?

C.) Is it lawful to provide a significantly discounted tuition rate (outside an employee benefit) to the residents of other towns at the expense of Colchester citizens? As a citizen, I feel my rights are being violated.

Thank you,
Michael Dubreuil
Woodbine Road

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