

## Fw: Budget discussions- FWD BOF AGENDA

Andrea Migliaccio <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>

Tue 7/11/2023 10:02 PM

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

Please attach BOF: Correspondence

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

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**From:** Jennifer Sevigny <jenny.glieco@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Thursday, June 29, 2023 5:35 PM

**To:** Art Shilosky <aShilosky@colchesterct.gov>; Andrea Migliaccio <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>; John Thomas <jthomas@colchesterct.gov>; Mike Egan <megan@colchesterct.gov>; Mike Hayes <mhayes@colchesterct.gov>; First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>; Tim Vaillancourt <tVaillancourt@ColchesterCT.gov>

**Subject:** Budget discussions

To the Board of Finance and First Selectman,

I wanted to send a message following last night's meeting. To begin, I apologize for allowing my emotions to get the best of me during the meeting last night. I allowed my frustration at what is happening to take over and I apologize if I came off as rude or disrespectful. That was not my intent. Do not think that my disagreement with you is a lack of appreciation for the work you do. Our disagreement in what the budgets should be does not mean we do not recognize the work that goes into this. That being said, rude and unkind comments were also made by board members. Not only do townspeople need to maintain decorum, but you do as well.

Concerning discussions last night, I would reiterate that it is not your personal decision how to set the budgets. We are here because despite repeated public comments requesting a higher budget, a low budget was put forth and those who voted clearly stated it was too low on both the town and education sides. One member of the board stated during the meeting that we can't accept the results of the referendum due to low voter turnout but again, the same comment would not be made had it been voted too high. This turnout was higher than others through the years and the others were not questioned. This was a fair and free referendum that all could participate in. We cannot presume to know how those who did not vote would have voted. While you disagree with the results, they are what they are and you represent those who voted as they did and now need to make decisions accordingly even if you don't agree. I thank the Board Chair for recognizing in the meeting that this was a fair referendum.

I do appreciate that the Board of Finance Chair (and Art!) offered an increase of \$100,000 and followed the advisory question results. While I do not believe that is enough, I appreciate the willingness to follow the vote and play ball. That being said, when there was clear indication on behalf of the crowd that this was not enough of an increase, the response was to threaten to send it

to referendum like this, remove the advisory question and then cut it if it fails. This was further exacerbated by the indication that voting “no/too low” was a fad or something that is just silly. People voted as they did because there was no choice left to have our concerns listened to. That is the purpose of voting. Your threatening to take away the power of the voters is incredibly concerning.

I was glad to hear that you were open to ways of better funding the town. I am hoping you will take into consideration the comments made by John last night (my apologies for not knowing his last name). He shared candidly with you that he is understaffed, overworked, overwhelmed and underpaid. He also shared that this is across the board in our town and that we lose good people to other towns due to such low salaries. I included the first selectman on this email due to this. The statement that there will be a surplus this year and that his budget was based on talking with supervisors is concerning based on the comments made that seem to paint a very different picture. I implore all of you to discuss possibilities for raising salaries and/or providing staff to the teams who need it.

When it comes to the Board of Education budget I would respectfully request the increase to the board of education be a higher number, as was suggested by Mike and Mike, of \$300,000-325,000 to allow the board of Ed to reinstate particular programming and educators. Investing in our educators and the course offerings is a benefit to students. This is a small increase to the initial referendum number and would allow for the maintenance of some of the programs on the chopping block. I thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,  
Jennifer Sevigny  
Berry lane  
Colchester

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