

June 19, 2023

Dear BoF,

As an ex-member of the BoF, I am deeply concerned about:

That internal conflict is in motion. When I was on the Board, the rule was clear. Once a motion was approved by the BoF, ALL members supported the decision. To have two members actively, re-adjudicate that decision at Town Meeting and encourage the “get out the no too low vote is a first”.

A Board member questioned the competency of the Chair of the BOF and Finance Director. He stated the mill rate of 27.22 was based on bad revenue numbers. He then suggested the BOF recommendation was too low given more revenue was available. It’s my understanding he never raised these concerns at the BoF meetings. It’s my concern that he waited to present his case at Town Meeting. I could never imagine a Chair of the BoF being blindsided by their own member.

An inaccurate narrative is being pushed on social media to influence the BOF next steps with the budget.

It is accurate that 64% of voters rejected the Town Budget and 74% rejected the BoE budget. It is true 52% of voters made comments the Town Budget is too low and 55% the BoE budget is too low. What’s not said is over 300 people voted yes and made a comment. This muddies the water. On one hand, they felt the budget was too high or too low. Yet, when it came time to make a binding decision they decided to vote Yes. As a result, I suggest you take pause reading the tea leaves.

The following is a model that could explain the data. The assumptions in the red boxes are:

- Those that did not leave a comment had no issue with the budget and voted yes.
- It is highly improbable those feeling the budget was too high also voted yes. Their numbers are consistent with past budget no votes.
- It’s highly probable that hundreds voted yes that also wished the budgets were higher.

	Town				BOE			
	No	Yes	Total		No	Yes	Total	
too high	685	0	685		728	0	728	
too low	650	423	1,073	1,758	818	328	1,146	1,874
no comment		318	318		201	201		
total	1,335	741	2,076		1,546	529	2,075	
	423				328			
yes+no too high	1,426				1,257			
yes+no too low	1,391				1,347			
	-35				90			

Under these assumptions, the “no too low” vote is about 30% of the Town vote. It is also 39% of the BOE vote. Some may argue against the assumptions. Yet, it needs to be emphasized the important consideration needs to be the binding actions; not nonbinding. Given that, people are leaning toward a lower budget. Yet, it is not a huge mandate.

Lastly, before considering adding any money to the BOE budget please press them for their plan to handle the \$5.5 million in ARPA funding when it runs out. Taxpayers will have to pick up the costs. To vote on a present budget without knowing longer-term liabilities is irresponsible.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

James D. McNair III

Colchester, CT