

From: James D McNair III <jmcnair3@comcast.net>

Sent: Monday, December 4, 2017 5:26 PM

To: Robert Tarlov

Subject: letter to BoF for the Dec 6th meeting

Dear Bof Members,

As a past member that worked on several budget surveys, I read what was posted on line for 2018. I see again the Board is wrestling with what to say and what to get out of the survey. I would suggest adding back in a linkage question of what % increase would a voter tolerate. At the moment without it, your data may give you much to work with. As examples:

Maintain spending is acceptable to many as long as the % increase is reasonable. Yet, if revenues don't keep pace, then the increase would be higher and voter decide spending reductions are necessary. The same could be said for increase spending. Again, if the % increase is reasonable people tend to say yes. On the other hand, if the % increase is too high then spending acceptance changes.

In a recent analysis of voter behavior, certain scenarios exists. A large number of voters stay home the 1st Referendum increase is too high. That increases the odds of the budget failing as did 2014, 2015 and 2016. Conversely, once the increase hits the sweet spot, large numbers of No voters stay home and no longer push against increases.

Your questions 12 and 13 definitely needs some qualifiers or how much of an increase and clarity on the maybe responses.

I know past members on other boards lobbied to remove the "how much" aspect of the tax increase.

As a reminder, here is the data from the 2015 survey.

2015 survey town vs tolerance Query Query	
# respondents	Tolerance
43	No comment
95	>3% increase: Possibly Increase Services
142	0.1 to 2% increase: Likely Reduce Services
192	2.1 to 3% increase: Estimated to Possibly Maintain Services
185	No increase: Will Reduce Services

Best regards,

James McNair

From: Rosemary Coyle
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2017 12:19 PM
To: Stan Soby; Roberta Lepore; Robert Tarlov
Cc: Brad Bernier; peters.tearice@att.net
Subject: Re: 2018 Survey for BOF Agenda

Sorry for the late response, but I haven't been on the computer. I agree with Stan. I still have concern with items 6 and 12, the two I made comment on previously.

From: Stan Soby
Sent: Saturday, December 2, 2017 9:57:54 PM
To: Roberta Lepore; Robert Tarlov
Cc: Rosemary Coyle; Brad Bernier; peters.tearice@att.net
Subject: Re: 2018 Survey for BOF Agenda

I will reiterate my concern that we have not had a live discussion of the content, process, expectations and elucidation of this survey before moving it forward. I may be a minority of one, but my uncertainty of whether we are at agreement on some items raises questions about alignment going forward.

Stan Soby
Selectman
Town of Colchester
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Colchester, CT 06415

Cell: 860 705 2252
Twitter: @SelectmanStan

From: Roberta Lepore
Sent: Friday, December 1, 2017 8:20:57 PM
To: Robert Tarlov
Cc: Rosemary Coyle; Stan Soby; Brad Bernier; peters.tearice@att.net
Subject: 2018 Survey for BOF Agenda

Rob please find the survey attached. We have been through two weeks of comments and all comments that have been agreed to have been incorporated. The only open question is if we should include question 6 or not. I defer to your guidance on how we resolve that open point.

When you send to BOF please remind them who has been part of the review. Also let them know that we will add a comment box to each question.

Thanks. Let me know if you have any questions.

From: Stan Soby
Sent: Tuesday, November 28, 2017 10:31 PM

To: Roberta Lepore; Rosemary Coyle; Brad Bernier; Donald Peters

Cc: Robert Tarlov

Subject: Re: Survey

Surveys like this may be illustrative, but should not be considered predictive, for both technical and practical reasons. Singling out potential respondents on the basis on employment would skew the results in and of itself. Respondents could make the choice to not be forthcoming about their employment, yet respond based on it. I do not believe we have the tools at our disposal to parse these things effectively.

Stan Soby
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From: Roberta Lepore

Sent: Tuesday, November 28, 2017 7:28:58 PM

To: Rosemary Coyle; Brad Bernier; Donald Peters; Stan Soby

Cc: Robert Tarlov

Subject: Survey

Hi again, I am heading to the city and will not be able to respond until Thursday so I wanted to get you this information tonight. Attached is the latest version of the Survey with all comments incorporated that have been agreed to. I am still available to meet at 12 on Friday if you want to or on Saturday morning if that is easier for everyone. Just let me know.

Here is some additional information from Tearice on question 6:

the only way I would view it is there are very few jobs in the world where you actually get to vote on a budget that effects your job, salary and or bonuses. I would think it would be of great knowledge to know who actually is taking the survey. Actually, most surveys don't even let you participate in a survey if you or anyone in your family works for or has an association with who is putting out the survey. The survey is anonymous and is just more information as to why sometimes the survey doesn't match reality when the referendum vote is taken. If everyone is truly interested as to how people feel, then this is a question that should be included. I guess I would question back why not include it,

If you have any questions on question 6 please send your comments to Tearice so she can respond to you.

Thanks, talk to you soon.

From: Brad Bernier <bbernier@colchesterct.org>

Sent: Sunday, November 19, 2017 10:49 PM

To: Stan Soby

Cc: Roberta Lepore; Rosemary Coyle; Robert Tarlov; Tearice Peters

Subject: Re: Survey Questions - Please Action Before Nov 27th.

Hi Roberta,

It looks like Stan has made most of the edits that I would have suggested but I do have thoughts regarding question 12.

As reductions in Municipal Aid from the State may not necessarily be limited to the ECS grant, I suggest a more encompassing question-

12. The State of Connecticut has reduced the level of municipal aid provided to Colchester.

Please indicate how this reduction should be managed:

Increase taxes.

Reduce programming/services.

A combination of increasing taxes and reducing programming/services.

Thank you for the work you have done on this, you have put forward a great starting point.

Brad

From: Roberta Lepore
Sent: Saturday, November 18, 2017 8:37 PM
To: Stan Soby; Rosemary Coyle; Brad Bernier
Cc: Robert Tarlov; Tearice Peters; Donald Peters
Subject: Survey Questions - Please Action Before Nov 27th.

Hello, Attached please find the draft 2018 survey questions for your review. I have done research into other town surveys and also reviewed our prior year questions and results to come up with what we are proposing for 2018. Tearice the other BOF representative and I have met and all of her comments have been incorporated. There are a few general guidelines I tried to stick with:

- Survey should be less than 20 questions so people don't lose interest
- Survey should be understood by all education levels
- We need to understand demographics to help better inform how people are answering questions
- All questions will have a comment box to enable more information where possible

You can comment in two ways:

- 1 - Send comments through e-mail for consideration before Nov 27th
- 2- Join meeting on Monday Nov 27th at 7:00 at town hall (pending getting room)

Here is the proposed process for completing the survey:

- Questions sent to BOS, BOE - Today
- **Meeting on Nov 27th** for any discussion at 7:00
- I will update and send final copy for review on the 28th
- Final comment period until Nov 30th
- Dec 1st questions sent to Rob
- Dec 6th on BOF agenda for final approval (this is the last BOF meeting of the year)

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns on the process. Thanks

HAPPY THANKSGIVING! 😊