



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

**Board of Finance
Public Budget Forum
Wednesday, January 4, 2017
Colchester Town Hall**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Rob Tarlov, Thomas Kane, Andreas Bisbikos, Andrea Migliaccio, and Roberta Lepore

MEMBERS ABSENT: none

OTHERS PRESENT: First Selectman A Shilosky, CFO M Cosgrove, Superintendent J Mathieu, Board of Education B Bernier and R Besaw, TC G Furman, BOS D Mizla, Registrar D Mrowka, PW J Paggioli, Lowe, M Paggioli, J Maine, J Kelley, T Peters, M Hayes, S Schuester, J Spaulding, Mr. & Mrs. Curtis, D Bouchard, J McNair, and Clerk T. Dean

R Tarlov opened the Forum at 7pm

R Tarlov explained the open forum and that it is unlike citizen's comments at a Board of Finance meeting. Everyone is encouraged to ask questions.

D Bouchard asked about Youth & Social Services and the Senior Center with the possibility of combining into one. R Tarlov stated that it is separate due to distinct difference in services. Also asked about level of capital funding and usage.

J Maine asked about student enrollment. J Mathieu stated currently a decline of 88 students.

S Schuster spoke about the 50 million cut to municipal funding, also the saved cost in items should go back into the budget. Spoke about shared sacrifices to the BOE.

L Curtis stated she feels that Cragin library is being underutilized. Should be open longer to accommodate meetings in the evenings. Would like to see building space available if not services.

R Tarlov asked the audience where residents get information on the budget. Most replied that it's from the town's website and Rivereast newspaper. Some stated they would like to see information in the Hartford Courant community section.

R Tarlov stated the Friday and Monday First Selectman's email blast will incorporate weekly link to articles about the budget. Also talked about the budget books, facebook and twitter.

T Peters suggested that the budget be simplified; break down this year, last year and what changed and why.

M Hayes stated he feels most people want the bottom line only and not too much information.

D Bouchard talked about BOE lack of transparency in listing line item costs and where the savings were applied.

L Curtis asked about this year and last year grand list and where it stands.

R Tarlov stated that this coming fiscal year will be based on revaluation. The final amount will be received the end of January.

D Bouchard asked about state cuts and how it impacts Colchester. Also asked about the WJJMS bonding. CFO stated the school project has nothing proposed to be cut, already received 1 million.

R Tarlov posed the thought of why residents vote or not. Audience suggested more signage throughout town.

J Kelley stated he believes that credibility and transparency are factors in people voting. Stated the BOF should challenge both BOE and town to present clear, fiscally responsible budgets.

J McNair stated that the State of CT updated data recently. Schools systems needs to be conveyed, special education, gender gap, free and reduced lunch, and fitness issue. Need to know where we are and where do we need to move the needle. Implement strategy based on that.

Forum closed at 7:45pm

Respectfully submitted,

Tricia Dean, Clerk

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