

**Town of Colchester  
Board of Finance Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, June 3, 2015  
Town Hall Meeting – 7:00 p.m.**

**Members Present** Chairman Rob Tarlov, Art Shilosky, John Ringo, James McNair, Rob Esteve, Tom Kane

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Selectmen: Stan Soby, Kurt Frantzen, Denise Mizla, Rosemary Coyle, John Reever; Board of Education Members Brad Bernier, Mary Tomasi, Mike Voiland, Ron Goldstein, Mike Egan, Don Kennedy; CFO Maggie Cosgrove; Registrars of Voters Dot Mrowka and Diana Giles; Tax Collector Michelle Wyatt; Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu; Principals: Chris Bennett, Amity Goss, Charlie Hewes, Deb Sandberg; Director of Teaching and Learning Barbara Gilbert; Director of Pupil Services Katherine R. Shaughnessy; Town Clerk Gayle Furman; Others in Attendance: Stefani Lowe, Jim Ford, Don Levine, Susie Hawkins, Mike Caplet, Dave Dander, Nancy Groger, Cindy Praisner, Tamara Dimitri, Vince Rose, Joy Tyler, Tony Tyler, Mitchell Hallee, Dina Graham, Maggie Nolan-Thibault, Meaghan Kehogreen, Liz Bradstreet, Michelle Komoroski, Tom St. Louis, Sharon Cuardo, Renee Anderson, Ursula Tschinkel, Andrew Couyner, Cara Lovering, Caroline Lovering, Taylor Dupery, Peg Tartsinis, D.J. Tartsinis, and additional citizens.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Tarlov called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. **ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:** None

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- **May 20, 2015 Regular Meeting:** J. Ringo motioned to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2015 regular meeting, seconded by R. Esteve. Members voted in favor with T. Kane and R. Esteve abstaining. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- **May 28, 2015 Special Meeting:** J. McNair motioned to approve the minutes of the May 28, 2015 special meeting, seconded by J. Ringo. Members voted in favor with J. Ringo abstaining. **MOTION CARRIED.**

4. **CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:** None

5. **CORRESPONDENCE:** Chairman Tarlov submitted copies of questions from Deanna Bouchard and his responses to the questions. (See attached)

6. **PRESENTATION OF BOARD OF EDUCATION REDUCTIONS:** BOE Chairman R. Goldstein said the BOE had met and discussed possible cuts based on \$280,000 in reductions. Superintendent Mathieu reviewed previous cuts made prior to the previous budget referendums and then presented a list of possible additional cuts. (See attached)

RECEIVED  
TOWN OF COLCHESTER, VT  
JUN -5 PM 1:24  
TOWN CLERK  
GAYLE FURMAN

## 7. CITIZENS COMMENTS:

Stefani Lowe - Would like \$23,000 for a new tractor cut and not teachers.

Peg Tartsinis - It is important to realize colleges are looking for the "whole package", wants sports and all the other programs as well as just academics. Our students need to be competitive. If people don't want their taxes to go up they must support the businesses coming into Colchester.

Vince Rose - Supports the least amount of cuts possible. "Slicing & dicing" is a short-live approach with long-term consequences. People look at our schools when picking a town to move to.

Chris Faulkner - As a coach of lacrosse has seen over 250 kids in town playing. Cutting lacrosse will not only affect the 93 playing at Bacon but the younger kids that might quit because there is not a high school team to play for. Lacrosse is the largest growing collegiate sport. The lacrosse jamboree would not happen each year which is a revenue source for not only lacrosse but businesses in town.

Maggie Nolan-Thibault - Wanted to know if anyone can vote. Urged the young lacrosse players of legal voting age to come vote. There have been administrative concessions in past years. Perhaps administrators could cut cell phone reimbursement as a concession before cutting teachers or a tractor needed for snow removal. BOE should not be paying for cell phone usage, certainly not the whole cost of having one.

Don Kennedy - Administrators are expected to be on call 24/7 and that is why their cellphones are paid for. Teachers do not have cell phones paid for by the town.

Dave Dander - Was a formal analysis done on comments left in the suggestion box after the previous two referendums.

Rob Tarlov - There were not many comments and not much consistency in comments but it appeared a plurality of the people thought the BOE budget was too high.

Eileen McGrath - Parents have put a great deal of money into the lacrosse program including \$7,000 towards seeding the field and \$3,000 for a shed.

Cindy Praisner - Would like to see cuts minimal as possible. We need to be competitive with magnet schools. The more we cut from our schools more kids will choose to go to magnet schools costing us even more.

Lynne McCune - Would like cuts as small as possible. Paras "fill the holes" in the school helping those kids who need it. These kids otherwise might not be gotten to. Worried how cutting back on English at WJJMS will impact her son's education. Sports are important also.

Meaghan Kehogreen - Citizens need to remember this moment next May at first referendum and how they are feeling when something they care so much about is in jeopardy of being cut.

Maggie Nolan-Thibault - Questioned if the town is legally bound to reduce the budget below the amount that was on the last referendum.

Rob Tarlov - No

Tony Tyler - It would be detrimental to cut lacrosse.

Mike Caplet - This is not a budget problem but a vote turnout problem. There is community attention now. Cut \$100 and put the budget back out to referendum.

Dot Mrowka - Voters must be a US Citizen, 18 years of age, and own at least \$1,000 in property to just show up and vote on day of referendum without being previously registered.

Jim Ford - Attended a CCM sponsored event on economic development. It was stressed at the event that businesses look for towns that have well rounded, well funded schools.

D.J. Tartsinis - BOE said lacrosse was cut because it was the last sport added. Believes fencing was added after lacrosse.

Jeff Mathieu - Will look into fencing.

Luther Hahn - We are 18 out of 24 in what we spend per student. Students will go to magnet schools if we keep cutting and it will cost us more.

Ron Goldstein - Magnet schools require us to pay their set tuition. It varies in cost from each school. There are some that don't charge anything. The town is still required to keep spots available to for these kids so if at any time a child decides to return back to our schools there is spot for him or her. Approximately \$330,000 was paid to magnet schools this year.

Rob Tarlov - There is not a significant cut in cost to the town when a child goes to a magnet or private school.

Mike Egan - Congratulated the lacrosse team on having a good season.

Questioned how many kids that play lacrosse would now consider a magnet school, that otherwise would not, just so they can play the game. That would cost more than the program will. The increase is very minimal.

Rob Tarlov - commented that the BOE budget on the last referendum was up .02 mils of the total .24. Because the Town was approved at +.22, we are no longer reducing from +.02 but from +.24. To arrive at zero tax increase, the BOE would have to reduce by their .02 plus the Town's +.22

Nance Groger - Just go with the budget as is and put it back out there to vote again.

Peg Tartsinis - We need to support businesses. Don't change the budget. We need to get more "yes people" out.

Mike Caplet - Asked how many people in the room thought they could get 2-5 more people out to vote yes next time. Charter Revision is being worked on. Attend the meetings. There are other forms of government that could work for Colchester.

John Consiglio - Colchester's mill rate continues to go up. We need to find a way to make Colchester affordable.

John Reever - When we cut things they never get put back in. Believes people will get others to come vote yes. We do need to bring in business to help with the taxes and add to the growth.

Tamara Dimitri - Encouraged people to get involved and come to other meetings. There are jobs and kids on the line. Urge BOF to make minimal reductions. Appreciate the board as volunteers

Jeanne Bussiere - Reduce the budget by as little as possible. These cuts are putting the varsity teams against one another as to who should be cut. Teachers are put against each other as to which subject is more important

Dave Dander - Has having the WJMMS building project referendum and the budget referendum on the same date been considered.

Rob Tarlov - There isn't enough time due to a 30 day warning period for the building project referendum to change the date.

Mitchell Rathbone- Looks forward to playing lacrosse in high school. Please don't cut it.

Citizen - Works with high school athletes and thinks it is wrong to cut sports. Colleges look at student athletes. Many of the athletes are good students due to learning how to manage their time.

Maggie Nolan-Thibault - Wonders if having the two referendums on the same day would result in backlash.

Nancy Groger - Agree that having them at the same time would be good. Think it will be hard to get the yes vote out twice

Luther Hahn - Are there talking points that can be put together to be used as a reference to correct inaccurate data that is being put out there

Stan Soby - According to government guidelines, the town can only provide factual information and therefore cannot create talking points to advocate for a referendum.

Mike Egan - Individuals can organize themselves and put together talking points even if the town cannot.

**8. DISCUSSION OF BOARD OF EDUCATION REDUCTIONS:** Members expressed what amount they felt the budget should be reduced by to have best chance of a positive referendum outcome while balancing the needs of students and parents. J. Ringo proposed a \$50,000 reduction. T. Kane and Art Shilosky agreed with that amount. R. Esteve, J. McNair and R. Tarlov thought a larger cut was necessary to achieve a lower mill rate increase. R. Esteve and J. McNair thought that 183,000, the amount to result in no BOE expense increase. R. Tarlov said he thought the amount should be 280,000, the amount to result in zero tax increase, but would agree with McNair and Esteve at 183,000. R. Tarlov asked if BOE knew what would be cut if the budget was reduced by only \$183,000. R. Goldstein said the BOE had not entered into a long dialogue regarding that but administrators have talked about restoring teachers but have also recognize the pleas of those present to not cut sports. Reduction in staff compared to that of students was questioned. R. Goldstein said over the years approximately one teacher has been eliminated for the decline in every 19 students. Since 2011 there has been a reduction of 466 students and a 26.4 reduction in staff. One assistant principal was cut at WJJMS. R. Tarlov recognized that we have twice as many students per administrator compared to our DRG and we have about 60% more students/administrator that the state average. Members continued to discuss cuts of \$50,000, \$183,000 or the full \$280,000 and if the referendum did not pass this time what the reduction would have to be. It needs to be communicated that no matter what the reduction to the BOE is the majority of the increase in the mill rate this year will be from the Town budget which has already passed. R. Tarlov said he has had a lot of dialogue lately regarding administrators cell phone reimbursement and that we need to improve the approval process of reimbursement as with unlimited calling, we should only see reimbursement for additional GB's which likely should not be more than \$10 or \$20/month. He also added although this should be corrected, he recognizes that this would be a small amount when looking at \$280,000 worth of cuts. Superintendent Mathieu said that if reductions were only \$50,000 the current list of cuts would be relooked at. He also explained that the new tractor is for snow removal. The snow removal contract is only for parking lots. Sidewalks are cleared by staff with the tractor. R Tarlov said the Town has a capital replacement plan and even if replacement is called for in a given year, we often postpone replacement if

the equipment is still reliable and cost of repair is reasonable. Once equipment becomes too expensive to repair or is breaking down at critical points, it is replaced.

#### **9. CITIZENS COMMENTS:**

Stefani Lowe - Thinks that items on the proposed list were chosen to upset citizens and get them to come out and vote yes. Money received from out of town tuition is put in the general fund. It should be used towards the BOE budget to offset the budget.

Rob Tarlov- The money is put in the general fund, assigned fund balance to be used for school capital needs.

Stefani Lowe - Use the money for the tractor.

R. Tarlov - We have to at some point put money into capital. People complain about deteriorating schools, they are a result of not putting money into capital in the past waiting for better times. The better time never comes and here we are with years of deferring what should have been done.

Maggie Nolan-Thibault - Would like the list looked at again and reconsider the line item. Don't cut the proposed ones

Meaghan Kehoegreen - BOF needs to submit a fiscally responsible budget, not just one they think will pass.

Tom St. Louis - As a coach at WJMS he sees sports as one of the most cost effective afterschool programs. What kids get out of participating in a sport adds value beyond the monetary amount.

C. Praisner - Last year we were able to restore sports with the extra money from the health insurance fund. Is that possible again this year.

Rob Tarlov - After years of underfunding, followed by years of catching up, we now have a formula in place to determine the funding level, including reserves, our annual risk. Although our exposure is 125%, we are funding at 120% as the probability of incurring the extra 5% is very low. That number is based on the projected claims and reserves on a specific date. Claims experience will vary, higher and lower, from month to month and year to year. Our experience since that date has been favorable and we currently have more reserves than assumed, but claims experience is like the weather, sunny today with thunderstorms expected tomorrow, and then an unexpected tornado wipes everything out. One serious auto accident with an employee, spouse and two children, can wipe out the extra and use up current funding reserves. Excess reserves are accounted for on the next funding determination and would be used to lower the budget requirement. Last year we had no formula and BOE reduced the health insurance funding to restore some sports, taking the dollars that would have been available for this year. A year later we don't have those dollars for this year's budget and we're still talking about the same sports programs.

Lynne McCune - Would like to see the \$50,000 in cuts or a compromise of say 100,000. The proposed list of cuts is very impactful.

Nance Groger - No voters will vote no no matter what. Give the yes voter a chance to get out there and get more yes votes.

Sharon Cuadro - Believes the proposed changes were picked to create uproar among sports families. Would like to see cuts somewhere in the middle of the \$50,000 and \$183,000.

Chris Faulkner - If proposed state budget passes the town how will it affect the budget of the town.

S. Soby - Reviewed the budget and what money would be received from the state under the current proposed state budget. The only real change to the budget would be a \$30,000 reduction in what the town now has to pay for the Resident State Trooper.

Peg Tartsinis: When posting information, be very clear that the town is the bulk of the mill rate increase.

Tamara Dimitri - Doesn't want sports cut or programs cut Citizens want to see the little cuts here and there to reach the \$50,000 in reductions.

Maggie Nolan-Thibeault - Cell phones could be a concession by the administrators

Nance Groger - Has a problem with people voting no for a .02 cent increase. Give up the cell phones and make people happy.

Rosemary Coyle - Raising class size makes a big difference in learning. Supports no decrease but if have to, go with the \$50,000 and don't decimate these programs and teachers.

**10. POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET:** Members again discussed the level of cuts each of them was comfortable with. R. Tarlov proposed a compromise of 100,000 in reductions. R. Esteve said he thought it was too low, but would support the level. A. Shilosky and T. Kane said they would not change from 50,000. J. McNair asked if the vote was three for 50,000 and two for 100,000, could R. Tarlov vote as Chairman to make it 3 -3. R. Tarlov stated that procedure does not allow the Chairman vote if it creates a tie. J McNair proposed that someone make a motion as there were already 3 members not changing from 50,000 and the Chair could not vote. J. Ringo motioned to reduce the BOE budget by \$50,000, seconded by T. Kane. Vote was 3-2 in favor with R. Esteve and J. McNair opposed. R. Tarlov could not vote as his vote would have created a tie. **MOTION CARRIED.**

#### **11. DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

a) **Finance Department:** None

b) **Tax Collector – Reports and Discussion:** None

#### **12. FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT**

a) **Transfer Requests:** None

b) **First Selectman's Update:** A recount was done on the Town budget vote resulting in the budget passing by 8 votes instead of 9 as originally thought. There has been a fair amount of police activity recently. This will be looked at and discussed with the Police Commission. The sports arena proposal has had some changes, including location, and will be going back to Planning and Zoning. A contractor will be selected for the Norton Damn project. Cheryl Hancin has returned to Park and Rec from maternity leave on a limited basis.

#### **13. LIAISON REPORTS:** None

**14. NEW BUSINESS:**

- a. **Discussion and Possible Action on Town Purchase Policy Section B:** First Selectman Soby, along with CFO Cosgrove, explained that the proposed change in purchasing policy would allow the Town to consider a local bidder within 7.5% (a change from 5%) of the lowest bid, provided the local bidder would then match the lowest bid. The policy change would open up more opportunity for the town to do business locally. T. Kane motioned to approve the purchasing policy as amended, seconded by A. Shilosky. Vote was unanimous. **MOTION CARRIED.**

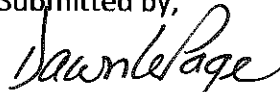
**15. OLD BUSINESS:**

- a) **2015/2016 Planning Objectives:** No discussion  
b) **Capital Plan - Equipment and Road Improvements:** No discussion  
c) **Capital Improvement Plan - Facilities-creating a funding schedule:** No discussion  
d) **Review of Program Fund:** No discussion.

**16. CITIZENS COMMENTS:** Voter population was discussed among BOF members and those remaining in attendance.

**17. ADJOURNMENT:** A. Shilosky motioned to adjourn, seconded by J. McNair. Vote was unanimous. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chairman Tarlov adjourned the meeting at 10:02 pm.

Submitted by,



Dawn LePage, Clerk

*Questions asked by Deanna Bouchard in a Facebook PM to BOF Chairman on 5/25/2015:*

Why after monies & monies - commissions & groups & committees - all spent on researching "assessment" studies (original from 2001), then Norm Dupuis "Friends of Senior Center" Study Group (Commission on Aging) & this Rec needs assessment all concluded we needed to move forward with a Senior Center /Community Center why it never materialized? There was no mention of a new middle school on the horizon?

PLEASE

At least review some sort of consolidation - it can be done - without expending 48 MILLION & preventing any further projects this town needs for at least 10-15 years

The Seniors whom have supported building after building project will be dead before they ever get to enjoy what was promised to them.

Please show the fiscally responsible leadership we all expect from the Chair of the BOF



*Response to Questions asked in a Facebook PM by Deanna Bouchard on 5/25/2015:*

**From:** Robert Tarlov  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 27, 2015 9:11 PM  
**To:** Deanna  
**Subject:** Senior Center Priority

Deanna,

Sorry for the delay in replying, a lot of research to do.

You point out all the time and money invested over the last 15 years in researching and assessing the options. Whether these were the right levels, much time has been devoted to studying many options. You and I may not agree with all the findings, and since 2010, I have expressed my concerns publicly where I thought differently, but each step was moved forward based on the decisions of the majority involved in the research and studies.

I hadn't seen the Recreation Needs Assessment as it predated my involvement. I have reviewed the link you sent for it, and other than a brief mention of a needs assessment and development of a recreational needs program, including the following: a 40,000 sq. ft. community center including a senior center, pool and a gym, I do not see those results in this study. The schools were part of this study as they pertained to the athletic fields, but a study of this type would not have been assessing school buildings.

The Friends of the Senior Center also predated me, but I found out it was a small, independent group advocating for a senior center. I was told that the recommendations came from Norm Dupuis' ideas and he built a model based on his ideas of what he thought seniors needed. I recall that when Norm became part of the Town's Senior Center Study Group he moved from his original concepts and supported the bigger project and at a meeting that I was present, he spoke in favor of the new recommendation, saying he had changed his thinking.

The Senior Center Study Group was a Town appointed committee with its members appointed at the end of Linda Hodge's term and the charge issued at the beginning of Gregg Schuster's. Norm Dupuis was one its members and was later elected Vice Chair. Their report was based on the ideas resulting from 16 months of discussion and research including many site visits and interviews at other Towns. A report with their recommendation was presented to BOS in April of 2011.

I sat in on many of their meetings after becoming a member of BOF. I was the BOF Vice Chair at the time, but I was attending as an interested individual, not in official capacity for BOF. I do not remember any citizens in attendance at any of the meetings I attended, although a public survey was part of their process.

I did express my concern to the Study Group that the study was being done without evaluating the financial cost of the different options under consideration. The Group told me it wasn't in their charge. I also expressed concern for the premises used to arrive at a recommendation, but after 16 months of researching the options, a majority of the 9 members approved the recommendation. The Senior Services Director attended meetings and provided input. On April 1, 2011, the report was presented to the Board of Selectman and they unanimously accepted the report and its recommendation.

You state that there was no mention of a WJMS on the horizon in the Recreational Site Improvements Study or the Friends of the Senior Center plan. These were not the only two studies done over the last 14 years and I don't think those two groups would have had included the study of school buildings as part of their work. A Space Needs Assessment for Bacon Academy and WJMS began prior to October 2007, where I see a draft of the study was produced by McGuire and Associates. The need to fix the structural issues at WJMS with options to remedy the problems was part of this study.

Before my time, but I believe in 2008 or 2009, another study was done for a combined Community Center / Senior Center, although that may have been the Friends of the Senior Center Group and I also recollect from reading newspaper articles back then, that some work was also done on this pre-2007, when Jenny was First Selectman.

Concurrent with the Senior Study Group work, a study was done by a Tri-Board facilities subcommittee combining the BOE Space Needs Analysis and the other studies recommending a Community/Senior Center. I believe this work was also done by McGuire and resulted in about a dozen options to consider. The project that went before the voters was the subcommittee's recommendation presented to the Board of Selectman in 2011.

Gregg Schuster sent out the following to the Town's e-mail list serve in June of 2011:[http://www.colchesterct.gov/pages/ColchesterCT\\_Dept/BOS/SelectmanNotes/past/S01731036?textPage=1](http://www.colchesterct.gov/pages/ColchesterCT_Dept/BOS/SelectmanNotes/past/S01731036?textPage=1)

You ask why a Senior Center/Community Center never materialized. While you and I may not have agreed with the proposal to have it as part of one big project seeking approval to build all 3 buildings upfront, a plan did materialize, and the voters said no. In late 2012 and early 2013, I had publicly expressed my personal concerns for a project this big, and said trying to do everything at once was a big financial consideration and commitment. I felt that that we should solve the most urgent need first, and then move on to the next.

Although it differed with my personal opinion, as BOF Chairman I supported the decisions that had been made by a majority of many volunteer citizens through the years leading to the recommendation of a combined School/ Senior Center/ Community Center project. If the community desired that the school be fixed, a replacement Senior Center be built, and a new Community Center be built, the proposed project was the most cost effective way to have done so. The community showed through the referendum that they did not desire that.

Despite a 3:1 vote against the project, doing nothing was not an option. At the December, 2013 Tri-Board Meeting a lengthy discussion took place on next steps. A significant part of the discussion was on the Senior Center, with some additional dialogue about the problems at the Youth Center. The meeting was taped and can be found on the Town's web site.

A survey had taken place the previous month and the 700 responses showed that the taxpayers voted against the project for many different reasons. Although most felt we should just fix the current buildings, it was already determined that a repair option on the school was not cheaper than a renovation or new construction; and the Senior Center Building is not owned by the Town, but owned by the Bacon Trustees who have no funds for major repairs, and the Town is already fixing the building as we go. In exchange for no rent, as we also do with the original Bacon Academy, we pay the maintenance, utility costs, insurance and do the repairs on both buildings.

A plurality of the respondents felt that the buildings should be handled one at a time, and the Boards identified that the school building was the more immediate need, but recognized solutions are needed for the Senior Center as well as the Youth Center. The failure of any part of the school infrastructure would be more costly due to any delays in repairs, more disruptive and would impact more people than structural failures would be in either the Senior Center or Youth Center. It was decided to focus on the school first. Informal exploration would continue on the Senior Center, but an official, focused building committee would not begin until there is resolution on the middle school. You can check with Stan to see what work has been ongoing.

If the school project is defeated, then additional work is needed to find alternative solutions for the school. In my opinion, this will not put a Senior Center solution ahead of the school solution and will not accelerate the timeline for finding a solution for the Senior and Youth Centers.

The logistical and programming issues for consolidation have been studied through the years. When the Space Needs Analysis was done in 2006/2007, enrollment had not begun to decline, and the study recommended a large addition to Bacon and a renovation of WJJMS, 25% bigger than the current proposal. Conditions have changed since then and subsequent dialogue led to a change in direction. Although I inquired about the option of consolidation several times, it did not come before Board of Finance for financial impact because it was deemed to have too many programming and logistical obstacles; and it was not part of the charge of the Building Committee for the same reasons.

You put forward a very credulous numbers argument for consolidation. Your research shows that the numbers can make it possible if we can find other options for the space currently used for other services or being provided to other groups. I'm a numbers guy, not only do I understand the numbers better than the other issues, but also I put higher emphasis on the numbers than the nonfinancial issues ; but, there are many structural, logistical and

programming issues that need to be understood, and several people, including myself, have recently been doing our own investigations to better understand the current nonfinancial obstacles to see if new conditions will change our original thinking. The planning for this project has stretched out for a very long time and sometimes the premises used in past decisions do change, so a double check in our thinking is prudent.

From a financial perspective, I would like nothing better than to merge three schools into two at lower cost, freeing up a part of the 20.67 million and a building that could be renovated for other purposes, but I also know that what works financially on a spreadsheet doesn't always work best for prod activity. I merged another office with 16 people into my office space with 26 people. The square footage indicated it was doable and I spent a significant sum of money retrofitting the space, only to move to other space less than 2 years later as it didn't work. I also did the same for a family situation with an addition, which didn't work out either.

As I said, several people (taxpayers and non-staff) are doing their own additional research, touring the buildings and interviewing many people to understand the decisions that have been made and to see if conditions have changed, but BOF is not involved in the decisions that BOE makes regarding programming and space needs. The need for a Middle School is a decision that Board of Ed makes, and then Board of Selectman approves, based on the research done by them. Understanding their findings, for both this project as well as the budgets, is important in how we vote when there is financial impact, but overriding their findings is not within the authority of the Board of Finance. In practice, BOF has been able to impact decisions in nonfinancial areas through questioning, and in presenting plausible arguments, causing others to recheck their thinking on action to be taken.

As I said, I think you have a good numbers argument, one that I can concur has the possibility of working, but I need to continue my research, and to hear the findings of others, to understand the non-numerical issues before coming to a personal decision. I think that work will be completed before next Wednesday's Board of Finance meeting. Your e-mail will be read under correspondence at the meeting and a copy of your e-mail and this reply will become part of that meeting's minutes.

Rob

*Sent via Facebook PM to BOF Chairman, with charts, graphs and State correspondence re: MRB. Unable to cut and paste the charts and graphs re: MRB.*



10:14pm

**Deanna Bouchard-Sanchez**

I can't understand why the BOE has stated repeatedly that they can not have a budget less than the previous years spending. The State of CT has allowed towns/school districts to cut their cuts if they meet special conditions. The new law, if signed by Malloy will give towns more flexibility to reduce spending due to reductions in enrollment.

**From:** Robert Tarlov  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 31, 2015 6:19 AM  
**To:** Deanna  
**Cc:** James McNair  
**Subject:** MRB

Dee,

Thanks for forwarding.

At the budget meetings I have been at, BOE has not said they cannot have a budget less than the previous year's spending. They have stated as you have, that there are conditions that can be used that could reduce the MRB below the prior year's spending. This was also stated last week at the BOF Special Meeting on 5/28.

From what I understand, the difficulty is trying to determine the MRB for the current year when we are doing the budget. Using the numbers from the charts you posted, I created the chart below to show how the MRB changed from one year to the next and how it compared to the budget from the prior year.

ECS money is likely to be flat this year, although we won't know the final amount until the budget is passed. If it remains flat I would not expect the MRB to increase much above our 2014-2015 budgeted amount, but we don't have the number at this time.

If we do not reduce our 2015-2016 budget below last year we are exempt from the MRB requirement. Perhaps this is what is being interpreted as BOE saying that "We can't spend less than last year".

As you point out, there are alternate methods that can be used. Discussions regarding the MRB for 2015/2016 are still ongoing.

The \$764,379 number which you hi-lite is not the amount we can reduce this year's budget below last year's.

Rob

	Budget	MRB Amount	Change From Prior Year		MRB Compared to Current Year Budget	MRB Compared to Prior Year Budget
2010-2011	34,409,000					
2011-2012	36,821,590	35,801,807			1,019,783	1,392,807
2012-2013	37,524,160	36,637,482	835,675	2.33%	886,678	(184,108)
2013-2014	39,076,054	37,357,466	719,984	1.97%	1,718,588	(166,694)
2014-2015	39,661,795	38,897,416	1,539,950	4.12%	764,379	(178,638)
2015-2016 *	39,845,611	39,611,795	714,379			

\* increase for 2nd referendum 183,816

Safe harbor amount

**From:** Deanna <deeedeee1963@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 28, 2015 2:15 PM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov  
**Subject:** Re: Senior Center Priority

Haven't had time to read and respond at this moment, but, we pay to lease Old Bacon Academy over \$66,000 for the last three years. Have you been told otherwise?

From information that I have gathered, the current lease expires 6-30-2015.

Dee

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Robert Tarlov  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 28, 2015 3:44 PM  
**To:** Deanna  
**Subject:** Re: Senior Center Priority

That would be about right total for the last 3 years. Was 20 something per year. This year about 24,000 as went up vs the prior 2 of the 3 you are referring to, so probably around 21K, 21K, 24K.

The amount that is paid for the Senior Center and for Old Bacon, are the Trustee's expenses split between the two buildings. We took over certain things, like parking lot plowing to keep the costs down.

Old Bacon is a school expense, so I don't know the conditions of the lease as to the term. The one we have on the Senior Center can be ended by either side with notice; I think maybe 6 months' notice? Don't think it expires, locks in for 12 months and runs for each fiscal year. Maybe the same with Old Bacon. You'll have to check with Maggie as she would have the agreement in her records.

Our share of the expenses, which we lock in each year, in the "rent" on the Senior Center in 2014/2015, was \$19,705. The same in the proposed budget.

Rob

6/3/15

Colchester Public Schools  
Adjustments to Department Budget Requests

**Department requested budget** 40,137,148 1.20%

**Reductions:**

New Position - Special Education - 0.4 FTE Social Worker (CES) 35,311  
New Position - Special Education - 0.4 FTE Social Worker (WJMS) 35,311

New Stipend - Freshmen Volleyball (BA) 3,067  
New Stipend - Club (BA) 2,033  
New Stipend - Farm to School Program (BA) 507  
New Stipend - Farm to School Program - student workers (BA) 1,615

Reinstatement of Team Leaders (WJMS) 25,876

Reduce Summer Curriculum hours - NEASC (BA) 4,058

Parent On-line Student Information System (District) 17,000

Wireless infrastructure improvements (BA) 15,000

Professional Development (IT) 2,000

**Total Reductions** 141,778

**Proposed Budget - Referendum 5/5/15** 39,995,370 0.84%

**5/12/15 Reductions**

New Position - Special Education - BCBA with benefits 97,077  
Special Education - Contracted Services - 2 Days with LEARN BCBA Services (60,060)

School Readiness - reduced hours 9,000  
BA Principal - New hire 1,896

New Stipend - Department Representative with Benefits 2,492

Reduce Contribution from BOE to Capital Reserve 43,695

Life and AD&D re-newed rates 33,000

Electricity 8,000

Instruction/General Supplies (BA) 2,500  
Projector (CES) 700  
Science supplies (WJMS) 330

Math Curriculum Textbooks (WJMS) 6,160

FCS Repair (WJMS) 1,060

FCS Dues and Fees 150

Software License non-renewal 2,500

Professional Development (IT) 1,500

**Total Reductions** 150,000

**Proposed Budget - Referendum 5/28/2015** 39,845,370 0.46%



6/3/15

Colchester Board of Education  
 Superintendent's Proposed Reductions - 6/2/2015

<u>Item</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Adjustment Amount</u>	<u>Impact on Education</u>
Certified Teacher - 1.0 FTE (BA English)	BA	49,833	- Cancellling Journalism - Jeopardizing our involvement in the UCONN ECE program because of their requirements of 20 students per class
Certified Teacher - 1.0 FTE (WJIMS 8th English)	WJIMS	49,833	- Less instructional hours, higher teaching load
Certified Teacher - 0.5 FTE (WJIMS 8th English)	WJIMS	24,862	- Less instructional hours, higher teaching load
Certified Teacher - 0.2 FTE (BA Math)	BA	9,945	- Larger Class sizes
Classified Staff - 1.0 (SRBI Para JIS)	JJIS	23,503	- Larger support groups for reading and math
Classified Staff - 3.25 hour (SRBI Para WJIMS)	WJIMS	11,436	- No SRBI reading support
Middle School sports	WJIMS	26,310	- 114 Students participating
Freshmen Sports - Basketball	BA	7,494	- 25 Students participating
Freshmen Sports - Soccer	BA	7,121	- 15 Students participating
Indoor Track	BA	8,641	- 44 Students participating
Lacrosse	BA	25,483	- 93 Students participating
Thin Clients	DW	29,289	- Reduction of I pads & Chromebooks and server
Establish Student Parking Fees at BA	BA	6,250	
<b>Total</b>		<b>280,000</b>	

A budget reduction of \$280,000 is a decrease of 0.24% from the current FY 2014-2015 budget.