



# Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Board of Finance Minutes  
Special Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, May 12, 2016  
Colchester Town Hall @ 7PM

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Rob Tarlov, James McNair, Rob Esteve, Thomas Kane, Andreas Bisbikos, and Andrea Migliaccio

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** none

**OTHERS PRESENT:** First Selectman Art Shilosky, CFO M Cosgrove, BOE: R Goldstein, D Kennedy, R Besaw, M Voiland and B Bernier, Superintendent J Mathieu, BOS R Coyle, Town Clerk G Furman, Registrar D Mrowka, L Roberts, J Pglise, L Shoemaker, J Kelly, J Malsbenden, S Schuster, V Rose, T Peters, J Maine, J Mattos, M. Torsini, Mike Torsini, Clerk T. Dean and other citizens

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman R Tarlov called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

**2. Citizens' Comments – none**

R Tarlov stated until there is a Town Policy in place on citizens comments the attached is a working policy and procedure that will be implemented for citizens comments at the Board of Finance meetings. (attached)

**3. Budgets – Discussion and Possible Action**

The Board members expressed their position and response on the failed Board of Education budget.

J McNair: The public had a chance to speak and the budget that was put forth he felt was reasonable according to citizen feedback. Stated that if it takes more than one additional referendum then that's what needs to happen.

A Bisbikos: statement was read to the audience (attached)

T Kane: stated he felt it was reasonable to hold BOE to a mill rate equivalent to FY 2015

A Migliaccio: stated she doesn't know what the BOE would be able to cut and feels \$100,000 reduction would be fair.

R Tarlov: Stated he heard from parents, teachers and residents and he responded to what they were asking for, stated he can't listen to those who don't speak. He felt that the first referendum was a responsible budget. Need to now do what is necessary and try and guess what the voters will pass.

Board members discussed an amount for proposed cut. The consensus was \$176,000 to cut. Reasoning and calculation figures regarding the proposed cut amount in correlation to the mill rate was discussed.

R Tarlov stated that in the reduction amount the categories not to touch are insurance and capital and maintenance.

Revenue side was discussed. State funding to the town side is proposed for about \$330,000. Discussion on using none, a portion, and reduce the Town side of the mill rate was discussed.

BOE Chair R Goldstein and J Mathieu stated they hope to have the cut list ready to propose to the BOF by 5/18, which is the next BOF regular meeting. Discussion on the next town meeting and referendum potential dates was discussed.

**4. Citizen's Comments**

S Schuster – Stated the Board is putting the cart before the horse, and should let the BOE make a cut list and then discuss.

J Malsbenden – Stated he feels the town will function best if they have a budget in place in July otherwise the town will have to guess the mill rate and creates more paperwork and time.

V Rose – Stated his concern with potential cuts the BOE is facing. Also stated his objection to a Board member's comment on exploitation.

M Torsini – Expressed concern and disappointment in cuts and feels the kids are impacted. Also stated that those parents who voted no are not concerned with their kid's education.

T Peters – Stated a no vote doesn't mean one doesn't care about education. Stated that she feels the majority of the residents can't sustain another increase.

J Maine – Stated she feels a no vote does not mean someone is against education.

J Kelly – Stated he feels that because the town had an increase that was approved, and the BOE had an increase that was failed sends a message.

Mike Torsini – Asked what the town was doing to bring businesses in to ease the tax burden. First Selectman A Shilosky discussed upcoming plans in the works.

J Mattos – Asked if the potential state funding the town may receive can be used to pay the taxes for Caring Community.

L Roberts – Stated she has had kids in the school system for 35 years and speaks in favor of the school system

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regardless of the budget.

R Coyle – Stated the BOE budget reduction should not be contingent on revenue fluctuations. Stated that they should be treated as separate entities. States she feels in doing so that it puts the revenue fluctuations on the backs of the kids.

**5. Adjourn**

J McNair moved to adjourn at 8:35pm, seconded by R Esteve. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

Attachment: Citizens Comments Policy  
Statement by A Bisbikos

Respectfully submitted,

Tricia Dean, Clerk

# Board of Finance Citizens' Comments Policy

(To be used until the Town adopts a policy)

1. Each citizen will be allowed to speak once per Citizens' Comments period with a time limit of 2 minutes.
2. Citizens should state their name and Town of Residence.
3. Comments will be directed to the Board and not to other citizens.
4. Comments will be made, standing, or for those unable to do so, sitting, from where you are seated. Citizens are not to move to aisles, or to the front of the room, to speak.
5. At no time during the meeting will behavior such as, yelling, approaching other citizens or the Board, aggressive body language or other aggressive action, be tolerated. If such occurs, citizens will be given one warning and then asked to leave Town Hall property. Any comments deemed threatening will result in the citizen being asked to leave Town Hall property immediately, and if deemed necessary, police will be asked to assist. Where the Board has had issues with a citizen at prior meetings, no initial warning will be issued.
6. In addition, side conversations are distracting to the board and other citizens in the room and are not permitted at any time during the meeting. Citizens continuing in such, will be issued two cautions and then asked to leave the meeting room.

## **Andreas Bisbikos Talking Points**

As the only newly elected official on this board, I didn't have the luxury of being appointed or rolling into a new budget season without listening to the people of our town. I went door to door listening to everyone. The bottom line is that: 53% of all voters believe that our spending needs to be held to a higher level of scrutiny. It was a mandate against unnecessary increases.

The people of Colchester spoke and they spoke loudly. 1408 citizens voted against the Board of Education budget and the unwarranted 100,000 spending increase approved by this board 5-1 because of the pressure applied by an interest group. An interest group who took it far enough to develop a PAC and that thought it could spend its way into influencing a budget. Leaving promotional flyers and using kids as props; their political parlor tricks were defeated by those who are looking for sustainability and accountability.

At the end of the day, the great citizens of Colchester agreed with me on both budget votes. I've been criticized by certain elected town officials and by those representing a certain interest group. Not only does my voting record vindicate me by those who criticized me, but it validates me as an elected official who is truly in touch with the concerns and needs of the people.

Some here are not happy I wrote a letter to the Rivereast in regards to the vote I casted. Rest assured I am only one man with one vote. But my voice echoes beyond these halls to the people that are looking for changes in the order of the way business is conducted.

Based on the results Tuesday night and what I have heard from the concerned citizens, I am recommending that the 100,000 that was initially approved by the BOF is removed from the budget and that an additional 50,000 is scrapped from the educational budget. I guarantee that this move will pass come referendum time. It is time the people put their faith back into this Board of Finance.