



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Board of Finance – Public Hearing Tuesday – April 5 – 7:00

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Suzanne Goldstein
TOWNSHIP CLERK

First Selectman Shilosky presented the Town Budget

BOF Chairman Goldstein introduced BOE staff and Superintendent Mathieu and staff presented the School Budget.

Citizen Schuster, provided BOF, BOS and BOE with the attached letter, which he read to the audience.

Citizens' comments were all in support of the Town Budget.

The School Budget had people speak in favor of the +.25% increase and others that the increase should be 0%.

Meeting ended at 8:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Tarlov

STATEMENT REGARDING BOE & BOS BUDGETS
BOF PUBLIC HEARINGS 4/4/2016 & 4/5/2016

Good evening folks. My name is Steven Schuster and so far I am a 71 year resident of Colchester. I will try to keep my comments as brief as possible and those that know me will not believe that's possible.

Tonight I will make reference to the BOF, BOS and the BOE. My comments do not include Renie Besaw and Andrea Migliaccio as they are just too new to their respective boards to have made a difference. Andreas Bisbikos is a fairly new member to the BOF and has based his decisions from what he's heard while campaigning for election. During the BOF meeting held on March 16, 2016 when asking the BOF the sustainability of these yearly increases most members agreed they were not, however, with the exception of Andreas Bisbikos, still voted for it. Good job Andreas. You've set the bar higher and set a good example.

I support the BOS budget but I am disappointed that the BOF originally wanted to reduce it by \$100,000. The BOF should add a additional \$100,000 into the BOS budget so they will have the money necessary to repair many of our Town roads that are in very poor shape.

Regarding the BOE budget, I do not support it. The BOF should have taken back the extra \$100,000 they gave the BOE that they didn't ask for, need or want, but took it anyway. The BOE still reduced their Capital reserve fund by \$50,000 and eliminated the Building Maintenance Supervisor's position. Mr. Mathieu said they no longer needed one as they had qualified staff on board that could absorb these duties. That entire salary, which was split between the two boards then goes back to the BOS budget. Why didn't Mr. Mathieu bring this up in prior years when the WJMS was crumbling before our eyes? In addition, prior to any public meetings the BOE realized they were going to have a surplus of somewhere between 1.3 to 1.6 million dollars going into the FY2016/2017 budget compared to the FY2015/2016 budget from savings in Health Insurance, Heating Fuel, Transportation Fuel, Electricity costs, Facilities and Grounds, Magnet Schools and some other lower cost savings. I wish I could nail down the exact number for that savings but the way they have it spread out in various line items it became to convoluted for me to figure it out. I apologize for this but I do know who I can get those exact numbers from if I'm allowed to ask. Maybe our new Town Treasurer, a former member of the BOF, can help with this. That savings has allowed the BOE to fund additional money into line items such as Special Education to the tune of at least \$500,000 dollars where it is desperately needed. That need was clearly demonstrated when a group of parents took the BOE to task last year and showed that their children with Special Needs were being ignored. In my opinion, this never would have happened if our current Superintendent of Schools, Jeffry Mathieu was properly supervising our now departed Director of Special Services.

Mr. Mathieu, in my opinion, could never fill the shoes of Bob Warren and certainly not of Karen Loiselle. Why our BOE gave him a 2% raise in pay and extended his contract with our town is still a mystery and, in my opinion, a big mistake especially after the Special Ed. issue. I predict more problems will arise with him at the helm.

Well folks, there you have it. I'm finished for tonight. Thank you for listening and have a nice evening.

Respectfully,

Steven A. Schuster