**Approved Minutes**

**Present**: Allison Tokarz, Alannah Coshow, Marc Lambert, Steve Ritchie, Alan Hurst and Dean Markham

**Not Present:** Janine Jiantonio

**Other attendee(s):** Michael Maniscalco, Town Manager

**1-2. Chairwoman Tokarz called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.**

**3. Approval of Minutes:**

1. **Budget Workshop 3-15-2016**
2. **Budget Workshop 3-17-2016**
3. **Budget Workshop 3-18-2016**
4. **Budget Workshop 3-19-2016**

Mr. Hurst made a motion to approve the minutes as presented for the above listed meetings. The motion was seconded by Mr. Markham. **Vote: 6-0. Motion passed.**

**4. 2016-2017 Budget Presentation:**

In lieu of presentations, materials previously presented, on multiple occasions, by both the Town Manager and the Superintendent were provided for distribution to those audience members that chose to receive.

**5.**  **Public Remarks on the 2016-2017 Budget:**

45 citizens (parents, students, faculty and residents with no direct ties to the school system) spoke in favor of reinstating the Superintendents proposed BoE Budget of a 1.9% increase over last fiscal year. Common sentiments included “Allow me/us to have the opportunities necessary to achieve everything I/we can (i.e. be competitive) [including: sports, music, technology, languages social studies and extra-curricula options]”, “Being ‘fiscally conservative’ means including the 1.9% BoE Budget increase” and “With larger classes, the kids just don’t have a chance to achieve”. While many citizens spoke from their heart, some came prepared quoting contracts, charters, state statutes and other documentation that appeared to point out contradictions in the current situation at hand (a 0% BoE Budget increase being proposed).

Along with the list of speakers below, Town Council Member, Kevin Reich, spoke to the Board and to the audience acknowledging the “tough process” ahead, the impact of the debt the town is facing from the High School project and historical mill rate and referendum facts and urged the Board to reconsider the budget as presented, look at different means of purchasing big ticket items (financing and leasing rather than cash) and recommend a budget that includes the 1.9% to the Council bringing it full circle so the discussion can occur where it started.

1. Bill Marshall – 6 Fairlawn Ave.
2. Gem Marshall – 6 Fairlawn Ave. (yielded her 3 minutes to Mr. Marshall)
3. Erika Bonaccorso – 24 N. Maple St.
4. Tania Sones – 17 Curry Ln.
5. Jennifer Johnson – 31 Old Young St.
6. Kevin Reich – 9 Arch Dr.
7. Ted Turner – 223 Hog Hill Rd. (yielded his 3 minutes to Mr. Reich)
8. Stephanie Klewicki – 48 Saffron Ln.
9. Bob Hein – 19 Birchwood Rd.
10. Christie Guerette – 57 Daniel St.
11. Sarah Massie – 53 Depot Hill Rd.
12. Taylor Engel – 210 Tartia Rd.
13. Gabriel Fields – 4 Raymond Rd.
14. Dan Pellegrino – 6 Nutmeg Ln.
15. Caroline Nocera – 9 Sherry Dr.
16. Blake Griffin – 132 Wopowog Rd.
17. Josefina Weatherwax – 195 White Birch Rd.
18. John Fidler – 4 Brookside Ct.
19. Jessica Stewart – 37 Blue Heron Dr.
20. J. Russell – 12 Arden Dr.
21. Joanne Barmasse – 6 Tiffany Ct.
22. Robert Bosco – 91 Tarragon Dr.
23. Cristin Flannery – 8 Flannery Row
24. Linzie Debrito – 11 Sherry Dr.
25. Candy Miller – 27 Tarragon Dr.
26. Jordan Zimmitti – 136 Hog Hill Rd.
27. Caroline Jedziniak – 13 Tammie Ann Dr.
28. Kim Fentress – 4 Curry Ln.
29. Mike Fazzino – 10 Birchwood Rd.
30. Nik Marsh – 65. S. Main St.
31. Ms. Fuller – 2 Bellwood Ct.
32. Al Herlihy – 41 Ridgeview Dr.
33. Ines Venetianer – 17 Berkshire Dr.
34. Mark Vicery – 8 Viola Dr.
35. Dashel Glynn – 9 Berkshire Dr.
36. Joanna Mercaldi – 1 Aldens Crossing Rd.
37. Reese Wall – 39 Barton Hill Rd.
38. Melissa Balada – 18 Anderson Way
39. Monique Sherer – 14 Berkshire Dr.
40. Nancy Ninesling – 4 Tiffany Ct.
41. Sarah Vickery – 8 Viola Drive (yielded her 3 minutes to Ted Turner)
42. Kyra Woods – 64 N. Maple St.
43. London Brazal – 8 Colchester Ave.
44. Rebecca White – 2 Crescent St.
45. Ellen Nosal – 152 Main St.

Chairwoman Tokarz also acknowledged 7 emails received in support of reinstating the 1.9% BoE Budget. Submitters included:

1. Anna Fagan – 57 Jacobson Farm Rd.
2. *Andrea Zgorski – no address provided*
3. Jon Herron – 11 Lakeview St.
4. Madeline Martinez – 9 Old Middletown Ave.
5. Jason & Kimberly Gay – 66 Saffron Ln.
6. Amanda Mihaly – 89 Tarragon Dr.
7. Nancy Kohler – 31 Daniel Street

**6. Discuss, Deliberate and take possible action on the 2015-2016 Budget**

The Board followed the public remark portion acknowledging and thanking the audience for their passion, but also acknowledged that, unfortunately, this passion does not translate to the referendum votes. Historically, the budget is decided by 12% of the population given that only 22% on average vote (compared to presidential elections of 85% turnout when CT has only 7 electoral votes). They went on to acknowledge that while they agree that a 0% BoE Budget is not reasonable and there are “small shavings” that can be looked at in other areas, the mill rate increase is going to inevitably be significantly higher than any budget that has passed in years passed (starting at 1.44 just from high school project debt). Chairwoman Tokarz also acknowledged the clear lines of communication the Board of Education has with the student population and their families but, expressed concern with the lack of transparency the other areas of the town seem to have with the population. She wished, for that reason, that there was more public attendance at the departmental budget workshops, so that the public would have a complete understanding of the budget landscape they are looking at.

Chairwoman Tokarz also informed the audience that the next BoF meeting, scheduled for March 30th, will be rescheduled to either March 31st or April 4th and will be posted accordingly once the new date, time and location are confirmed.

1. **Public Remarks:**

Requesting that the audience limit their remarks to new and/or unique comments, the second public remarks portion of the meeting was opened:

1. Sandra Adams – 31 Peach Farm Rd.: Respectfully asked why education always seems to be the first to be cut if a budget doesn’t pass.
2. **Adjournment:**

Mr. Ritchie made a motion to adjourn at 8:31 p.m. that was seconded by Mr. Hurst. **Vote was unanimous in favor. Motion Passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Bafumi

Recording Secretary