

Hi Kevin:

I voted, as always, as I feel it is my responsibility as a resident and citizen. I tend to favor the preservation of the school system integrity, including staff and programs overall, as I am a parent of two children.

I regret that we do not vote on a bifurcated budget and wish this matter to stay open. I continue to feel it would allow for the greater good to the community. I am always disappointed to hear of education cuts to a community that is no longer Blue Ribbon. One of the most significant reasons my wife and I settled in Newtown was because of its education system. I continue to wonder whether or not it is on the slow and steady decline. As we assess where we should and do spend as a community, I think a renewed and constant emphasis needs to be on sharing the burden of financial sacrifices. Therefore in my opinion, as we hold the line (as in remain flat) or cut education expenditures, **all** town-wide administration employees should do the same. If the children of Newtown must sacrifice resources, so should all town employees.

Sincerely,

Mark Forlenzo  
5 Glover Avenue  
Tuesday, May 17, 2011

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**Martin Blanco**

We vote, because we care about our town and value the privilege of participating in our own governance. Our opinion of the new budget is it depletes an already compromised school system of more money. We are unhappy that more money is cut from the school budget, particularly in light of the draconian cuts made in the school budget almost every year since we moved here in 2004.

8 Pheasant Ridge Road  
Tuesday May 17, 2011

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Members of the Legislative Council:

I just returned from voting on the budget referendum and feel that in light of recent circumstances an explanation of my vote for the purposes of clarity is warranted. I voted against the budget referendum as I feel the amount designated for the Newtown school system is too low; I support a reasonable increase in tax rates to fully fund the education of the children of Newtown. It is my hope the education budget will be increased to support the current needs of our school system.

Thank you,

David Wheeler  
10 Lakeview Terrace

*(May have another email from same person)*

Tuesday May 17, 2011

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Hi Kevin, Thanks for sending this again, It reminded me to get it done

- 1. Why did you or your family members vote or not vote?

We missed the first vote because we were out of town unexpectedly.

We voted today (no) because they made cuts that are not acceptable. Just to cut, for the sake of cutting and it will pass this time. We will not vote yes until the cuts are added back in. The kids should never be the ones to miss out, especially because of money.

- 2. What is your opinion on the latest requested budget amount?

The budget has been cut to try and get it to pass, not because it needed to be cut.

I find it incredible that people can go through the same process year after year and not get it right.

Thank You,

Gary Doski

33 Great Ring Road

Tuesday May 17, 2011

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Kevin,

I have yet to respond to the Jacobs Fetchick survey and will this evening. In the meantime, my response to your two questions will be the same as my response to theirs. I voted **yes** on the previous budget in spite of the fact that I **do not** think the budget increase was ENOUGH. I believe the school system does well, but I think we lag behind many districts (both in and out of our DRG) in terms of technology. I would be willing to pay more in taxes to improve and increase technology availability and instruction at the elementary and middle school levels.

I voted yes because I believed the previous budget amount was right for the current economic climate. I appreciated the collaboration that occurred between Pat Llodra and William Hart, and I was saddened by the low turn out of voters.

Should tonight's vote be a no vote there should **not** be any further cuts made to the budget.

Sincerely,  
Priscilla Jones  
5 Meadow Road  
Newtown

Tuesday May 17, 2011

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No apology necessary as this is the first time I've received these questions from the LC (or members thereof).

First, given that I've not seen it until the night of 'referendum day', I would question any conclusions pulled from this survey as the distribution was obviously not all inclusive – perhaps it was for District 2 (if so, it should only be represented as District 2 data – not Newtown data). Given the low percentage of voter turn-out, I would also be wary of any conclusions drawn as, although everyone has thoughts on the budget, not everyone is forthcoming with their opinions – or votes.

These caveats aside, I vote because it is important to participate in government 'of the people, for the people and by the people'. We revolted when these rights were not afforded these new colonies and have been engaged around the world in protecting the freedoms that we have created.

Further, I voted 'yes' for a budget that was formed through a great deal of fresh collaboration and transparency (to those who attended the meeting and sought answers). This budget did not pass but the margin was slight – albeit much greater than Brookfield's margin. It was a 'Status Quo' budget and, although I'm not in favor of standing still, it was an improvement over the previous budget results which have failed to move Newtown forward and allowed the town to slip further behind its peers.

The latest budget amount was established by the LC and distributed between the Town and Education portions of the budget. It was a major cut and, without advisory questions, was based upon the belief that the slight margin of difference indicated a need for large "structural" cuts. When asked if the LC had considered the possibility that the defeat indicated a need to increase the budget, Jeff said that the LC had decided this was not the way to go. I was quite surprised at the size of the cut giving the voting results.

I voted 'no' this time because I don't think Newtown deserves less than 'Status Quo'. I want the town to have Increased Services not Decreased Services but that's what the LC believes this town wants. Most of the people who have contacted me were upset about the cut and none were of the opinion that this cut was a 'good' thing for Newtown. Yes, we have people in town who have lost their job. I am one of them and have been 'self-employed' for almost two years but I still want the town to progress not regress.

I appreciate your taking the time to forward this 'survey' to those who may not have been on the 'list' to receive it originally. I hope that the town will eventually decide what it values and make a concerted effort to get there instead of drifting downward with each budget cycle.

Respectfully,  
  
Richard Gaines

51 Black Bridge Road

Tuesday May 17, 2011

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Mr. Fitzgerald, my husband and I would very much like to see more money going toward education. We both feel strongly that questions should be put on the ballot to explain our voting responses. This will hopefully alleviate the need for repeated referendums every year.

Thank you for all of your time and consideration.

Pam and Michael Tassiello

11 Hedge Meadow Lane

Tuesday May 17, 2011

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Hi Kevin - My husband and I both voted both times and we feel the budget cuts are too extreme. Our roads are a mess and our schools are really going to suffer without the EAs. I am also very concerned about the loss of the social worker.

This is brief but we would be happy to expand on it if needed.

Thanks,

Jim and Lisa Sheridan

6 Honey Lane

Tuesday May 17, 2011

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Hello LC Members

Especially if today does not pass I wanted to give my input.....

**Please tell us why you or your family members voted or did not vote**

Both my husband and I voted. We are very concerned with our schools and thinking that we may need to consider private school, if school funding continues to get stripped. I have friends in town that say people like me who are "involved" will take care of voting in what the schools need. I believe there is a lot of apathy in this town and that too many people are just too busy, especially since there's been no big stink like during last years budget.

**What is your opinion on the latest requested budget amount?**

We want the budget to pass as is and do not want any additional moneys taken from our schools. I think the budget is a fair compromise between keeping taxes low and keeping services almost at par. I do feel that the elimination of the EA positions will hurt our elementary kids but I will send that concern to the BOE.

All I can say is that everywhere I go in town from carmenuccios to the nail salons to sporting events with gear on sale to other Newtown restaurants, it is packed and people are spending, spending. Let's use it for our educations.

Thank you

Judy and Chuck Dubois

7 Marlin Rd, Sandy Hook

Tuesday May 17, 2011

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Survey response and thanks for the effort to collect feedback.

Please see below.

Thanks,

Mike

1. Why did you or your family members vote or not vote?

**We voted because we feel it is a civic duty and we want our voice heard/counted when it comes to the Education budget for Newtown.**

2. What is your opinion on the latest requested budget amount?

**The first budget amount was fine at about a 2-3% annual increase if I remember the details correctly. In this economy, relatively speaking with all the pressures of providing a well rounded education**

**to Newtown kids I thought this was very reasonable therefore we voted to approve.**

**This second round which occurred today took out too much money that should not have been removed in the first place given the **reasonableness** of this first budget so we will vote "not approved" today. Anyone who thinks that the costs year over year will not increase by at least general inflation is totally abusing their privilege to vote and being disruptive and disingenuous to the budget process, the hard work put into creating the**

**budget and to the kids of Newtown. Nothing else in their daily lives (food, gas, medical care, vacations, lunch, haircut, new car, new toy, grass seed, furniture, etc.....) is not going up by at least inflation or twice inflation SO why would the cost of education be any different yet it is too easy to say NOT approved. Why? Because they can and they can't say NOT approved to all the other things in their lives listed above and all this just happens on the backs of our kids and our Town's future when the savings to individuals is really/truthfully very small when compared to the overall impact on our education process/programs.**

Mike Scarpa

24 Gelding Hill Road

Tuesday May 17, 2011



Ladies and Gentlemen of the Legislative Council:  
In response to the question regarding voting on the budget referendum:

I voted 'yes' for the first referendum not to increase taxes or support either side of the budget but as a sign of appreciation to all those who participated in the process and worked collectively to present a budget to the public that reflected the needs of Town and BOE as presented by our elected representatives.

My vote today, and possibly in upcoming referendums, reflects a deep belief that education is the critical path to a great society, especially a democratic society. My grandparents, immigrants from Europe, instilled this belief in their children and them in us. In my family, education is not an option, it is a social imperative. Should money continue to be cut from education my vote will remain steadfastly "No".

Respectfully,  
Karen C. Pierce  
10 Chestnut Hill Road  
Sandy Hook

Tuesday May 17, 2011

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Hi Kevin,

I saw an email about the questions from members of the Legislative Council regarding the budget. I wanted to send you our thoughts on the budget.

My husband and I voted yes on the first budget because we thought it was a fair budget. We were disappointed it did not pass. We hope this second referendum passes because we do not want to see more cuts to the education budget. It would be great to have questions on the ballot asking if the town and education budgets are too high or too low.

Sincerely,  
Anne & Richard Spillane  
15 Washington Ave  
Sandy Hook, CT 06482  
Tuesday May 17, 2011

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Kevin, I did not respond to the 2 ladies inquiries because neither of them represent my ideals about the budget. So I am adding my voice, because I feel you best represent my thoughts on education.

1. My husband and I did vote in the first election, it is our obligation and privilege to do so. I voted yes.

2. I am really disappointed in the arbitrary number that was picked by the legislative council (and the BOE's suggestion of cuts) , but also in the voting population of Newtown. Everyone should vote, even if it is a No, then at least we all know. I will vote yes today, but if the vote does not pass, I will vote no until the legislative council adds money back in.

Jill Bontatibus Beaudry

Tuesday May 17, 2011

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- 1- I want more \$ spent on schools
- 2- its a shame the first one didn't pass. People can be shortsighted. Investments in schools pay off in myriad ways for the town.

Kwillis

[kwillis@genre.com](mailto:kwillis@genre.com)

Kent Willis

26 Shut Road

Tuesday May 17, 2011

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Answers to the survey questions...

**1. Why did you or your family members vote or not vote?**

I voted because I want a say in how our tax dollars are spent. Also, I'm concerned about the quality of education in Newtown and the direction of the town.

**2. What is your opinion on the latest requested budget amount?**

I was disappointed that the budget didn't pass even though I wasn't looking forward to a tax increase. I did feel the budget was a fair budget and was thrilled to see the town and school working together. It felt united for the first time in a long time. The thing I am most concerned about with the most recent cuts is the reduction in EA's in the school budget. It's hard to see how without them we can serve ALL the kids in the classroom. There are MANY children who struggle but don't fall within the special education umbrella. That extra help and attention is essential. I know first hand as my daughter needed those services until we could figure out what was causing her learning issues. Without them, she wouldn't have learned the material and her self esteem would have suffered. There are so many kids just like my daughter. As it is, we don't have ENOUGH EA's.

The other line item reductions are hard to comment on because I don't know for sure what the specific daily/long-term impact is. I guess my feeling at this point is we DO have to have a lean budget but there has to be a point at which we say, "this is too much" . We can't have everything but in my mind we have to have in place all the support systems necessary to serve ALL students. And lastly, I worry about our goals as a school district. Not investing ANY/ENOUGH money in a long-term plan will catch up with us. If we're not buying equipment and materials or keep putting off repairs and upgrades, we'll fall apart. A slow and steady approach, with a plan the town is committed to seems lacking. Yes, times are tough. We all feel the impact of the



recession and floundering economy. I know people who are out of work or are dealing with pay cuts etc. My husband is working in San Diego away from his family to keep things going. We do what we have to do but we have to keep in mind that we can't keep cutting to the bone without some thought of the future. My older daughter's graduating high school this year and my impression is the high school is mediocre. The math department definitely needs help, guidance is overwhelmed, and there are not enough classes being offered (I know they're working on that) to name a few shortages. I think the elementary schools do an amazing job of working with what they have and that is a testament to the teachers and administration (We are in Hawley district).

I'm hoping voters will show up today. I think people may have read the lack of contentiousness this budget season as "everything must be fine. I don't need to show up". We'll see. By the way, do you broadcast all the budget meetings? I am not able to attend most and rely on friends who detail the meetings for us.

Thanks for your time, and my husband and I appreciate your service.

Jane & Craig Audet  
115 Alberts Hill Road  
Sandy Hook

Tuesday May 17, 2011

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Yes we voted. Money is high but costs of everything keep escalating, especially fuel. What can you expect. We may have a high education buget but if the people in town want to keep a "residential' town than we need something to bring people in to buy our homes on the market raising our tax base. It seems to me that we as a community, especially those making decisions have been looking at the smaller picture. Solutions to problems have been raised only to be looked down upon. We need to look at the greater good not at who will benefit now.

Have more to say but have to get back to my class. Thanks for all you do to help.

Mike

Michael Wight

Tuesday May 17, 2011

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1. Both adults voted in the past election because we wanted the budget to pass.
2. Our opinion is that we should move from a town wide voting system to one where the elected representatives develop and pass the budget. We believe that the education budget has been underfunded for several years.

Amy & Dan McCarthy  
9 Narragansett Trail

Tuesday May 17, 2011

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Dear Kevin,

As you know I'm a huge school advocate, but I will never support any fluff that would adversely affect our citizens. I get it. Tight budgeting and transparency is what our voters are asking for, I know. But cutting off our noses to spite our face, is not the way to go. Our home prices have declined, and that will only get worse if we continue to take this approach. Tom and I have lost \$150,000 on our home, and I know we're not alone. Taxes are not going down. (We would love to see the Leg. Council find ways to protect those of us, however, that would like to stay here and advocate for Newtown as we retire. I do think that would help those who want to save our schools, and our retirement dollars too.)

At Reed, we've been the hardest hit, with reductions to significant programs that would allow us to run a schedule that makes sense for kids while keeping them safe. I don't think people honestly understand that while the Middle School is able to keep Music Tech and Project Adventure, we have not. We've had to come up with many botched solutions to cover the 450 (per grade level) students that have to be crowded into those vacant spots. Gym classes are huge! And you can feel the drop in staff morale as a result of all these cuts. Safety is and should be a huge issue, I don't understand why that is being ignored. Equity among schools is a concern. The high school, understandably needs what it needs...but an open ticket is unfair. And believe me, I'm not trying to take a shot at Dr. Robinson here.

I honestly don't know how to vote. I can tell you that I have been directly affected by the cuts to EAs in special ed...with an enormous crop of sp. ed. and 504 kids clustered into fewer homerooms, because that's what the reduction in staffing required. All kids with needs get placed in fewer spots! Now they're cutting a huge number of non-sp. ed. EAs? (Non-sp. ed staff cuts affects those cuspy kids, struggling to become proficient at reading and math) AND a social worker?? At a time when we've had arrests at the MIDDLE school?! How do we vote? I don't want another penny taken from us.

*(Personal info removed from here by KF)*

But...I do think when teachers have to fight for every program for our kids, our system is truly compromised/sick. WE NEED every adult to put their own agendas aside and look at this with a clear picture and a sound mind.

I will vote today...but I don't honestly know which bubble I'll fill in. I'm really stuck this time!

Thanks for all that you do for us! Let's keep our schools strong!  
Gael Lynch  
72 Mile Hill Road South  
Tuesday May 17, 2011

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1. Why did you or your family members vote or not vote?  
We voted because we want to protect the future of our children. Education is the only way to insure that they are prepared for the future. Without proper education they will NOT be able to compete in the real world. We chose to live in NEWTOWN because the town has historically valued education but I find in the last few elections we are simply getting by. We will be left behind if we continue to merely fund education. Also we value a town where the roads are paved nicely, where there are functions around town to satisfy many, where there is a community we are proud to live.
2. What is your opinion on the latest requested budget amount? I feel that the latest budget request will harm the educational system. The 20 EA 's will definitely hurt. Although they are not hired teachers, many actually are certified and just have not been able to acquire fulltime status. They amount of help they give to students in the district is invaluable. We make our reading/writing goals because the EA's

have 20-30 mins to dedicate to specific students. The Teachers can not do it alone, especially with all this is mandated by the state and town. The EA's that will be let go are not the ones that are needed to fulfill IEP's but the ones that help the average child remain average or the bright student who perhaps has mastered the skills and the EA can further work on extra material. We will definitely see a reduction in test scores when EA's are eliminated. The extra resources will vanish with the scores.

Regards and thank you for your time;

Heliett Sanchez  
137 Currituck Road

Monday May 16, 2011

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1. Why did you or your family members vote or not vote?

We have two young children, entering K and third grade next year. We voted for their educational future.

2. What is your opinion on the latest requested budget amount?

It is too low -- the cuts to the schools should be reinstated and a small increase in the tax rate passed to pay for it. This anti-tax, no-growth fervor is nonsense. People in this town don't know how good they have it.

David Wheeler (check if dup)

Monday May 16, 2011

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My answers are:

1. We voted because we were afraid we'd end up with what we have now--more cuts (esp. the teachers & EAs) in the school system.
2. I'm sick thinking about the loss of the teachers, the EAs, the social worker and the therapists. The people are the greatest loss to our kids.

Honestly, I don't even know what to do tomorrow. If we vote No, and it doesn't pass, then what happens? Even more cuts to our kids' education??

Michele Lurie  
131 Hanover Road

Monday May 16, 2011

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Hi Guys,  
In response,

1. Why did you or your family members vote or not vote?  
I voted yes to get the budget passed and put it behind us. Of course, more money for schools would be nice.
2. What is your opinion on the latest requested budget amount?  
Just pass the budget and move on.

Love,  
Lisa Chaloux  
33 Old Green Road  
Monday May 16, 2011-05-18

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Hi Kevin,

I think the questions to answer are:  
Did we vote? (re: low voter turnout). Yes all registered voters in our household voted / will vote. One has been / will be away for both votes and did absentee ballot both times. I must say the Saturday hours to accomplish this were very helpful.

Why did we vote as we did?  
I voted yes both times. Again this year I voted out of fear of additional cuts to both the town and education budgets. My advice to others who aren't able to follow things as closely as I is to do the same. I will vote yes tomorrow out of fear of more cuts. If tomorrow fails, I will vote NO the next time (as I did last year) and will recommend to others that they do the same.

The issues we face as a town are not fully in our town's control. The federal and state governments need to also prioritize education for all and mandate programs to meet the needs of ALL children.

I have all but given up on the annual budget fight, so my guess is that others may feel the same and perhaps that has resulted in low voter turnout.

Thanks for all you do.

Christal Preszler  
14 overlook Drive  
Monday May 16, 2011

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Kevin,

Both Dan & I vote every time. We voted "yes" last time in hopes that the money allocated for the Newtown Schools would stick. It is our belief that the schools aren't given enough money any

year, so when a vote makes the town officials cut money from the education system, it is so very wrong!! It gets to where I wish we could move our kids down deeper into Fairfield County where they seem to treasure their educational system and faculty more than Newtown.

We will gladly vote "no" tomorrow in hopes that enough people will. I feel like it's the game we played last year. If the budget doesn't pass, hopefully you will carry to the town officials the reasoning that we want the schools to have more money!!

Bonnie Sailer  
118 Head of Meadow Road  
Monday May 16, 2011

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Dear LC members,

In response to your request for information regarding the referendum and the proposed budget amount below is my input:

1. Why did you or your family members vote or not vote?

In our family voting is both an obligation and a right. It is what our democracy is built on. My husband and I always vote, even when the decision is difficult like it will be tomorrow.

I find it both disappointing and appalling that we as a community have to spend time trying to figure out why people didn't come out to vote. We have close to 10,000 parents with children in the school district. Where were they at the last referendum? It is hard for me to fathom that some one actually publically said that the referendum "was scheduled too close to the vacation or they were home doing laundry". That is just sad.

This year I felt that the LC and Finance Board did right by the voters of this town and worked together with the BOE and Selectmen to come up a fair and equitable budget. But it is unfortunate that the people of this town only seem to get involved in the eleventh hour during crisis mode .Quite frankly the school supporters now get what they deserve, budget cuts, as result of not getting out in masses to support this budget.

2. What is your opinion on the latest requested budget amount?

I will vote yes on Tuesday because the Chairman of the BOE and the first Selectman asked us to support this budget but in my opinion the latest budget is too low for the needs of our schools. If this round gets voted down I ask that you consider putting back some additional funding to support the cost of the EA's salaries.

Thank you,

Lisa Berger  
13 Monitor Hill Road  
Monday May 16, 2011-05-18

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I did vote yes because while no one wants a tax increase I felt confident that both the town and schools presented a fair budget and at that time had the impression all parties worked collaboratively to present the budget.

I felt the cuts proposed and seconded by K. Fetchick and M.A. Jacob went too deep for the first round on the education side. I did feel that some cuts to the full budget needed to be made because the majority of those who voted indicated a cut was necessary and those are the ones who spoke loudly.

**Sherrri Davis**  
23 Charter Ridge Drive  
Sandy Hook.

Monday May 16, 2011

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Interesting first question. I understand they were trying to find out why the non-voters didn't vote but it sounds like it is also asking which way we voted the last time and what the reason was for it.

1. Why did we vote? It is our civic duty to vote and I like to be involved in the decision making.
2. Opinion about the latest budget amount? I believe the amount is insufficient to keep the same services in town and that the town would be better served with more money spent on education and essential services.

That being said, I have voted for and will continue to vote for the budget as proposed because the system does not allow for a clear way to request an increase in spending and the majority of current council has shown that reducing the budget is the only remedy they have for a failed budget referendum.

--Keith Alexander (as a taxpayer)

8 Fawnwood Road

Monday May 16, 2011

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To the members of the Legislative Council and the Board of Education:

I voted "yes" on the proposed budget on April 26, 2011, but I plan to vote "no" on May 17, 2011 and to continue to vote "no" until the Legislative Council amends their present course of action.

I voted "yes" in the budget referendum on April 26, 2011 because I was very impressed with the way the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education worked diligently together to come up with a budget which seemed "fair" to both the town, the schools and to the taxpayers of Newtown. Unfortunately, not of enough of the citizens of Newtown saw fit to exercise their right to vote. I believe

this was why the budget was not approved on April 26; not because the majority of citizens felt the budget was too high, but because there was simply too much apathy. Perhaps because the town and BOE were working together, because there was not the usual acrimony, because there was not the political back-biting which usually accompanies a budget vote in Newtown, the populace became complacent and assumed the budget would surely pass this year because of the cooperation noticeably present. I know that many of the people I've spoken with who did not vote tell me that they just assumed it would pass the first time around. They were in favor of the budget put forward, but, for one reason or another, did not vote that day.

It is very unfortunate that we could not have had a question on that referendum which asked if one voted against that budget, was it because it was too high or too low. That would have given some guidance to the Legislative Council as to their next course of action. And that would give the LC some insight into why many of the voters will vote "no" on May 17, myself among them. But my "no" vote will be because the budget is too low.

I believe the Legislative Council has chosen the wrong course of action in response to the budget's defeat, especially since the voter turnout was so low. If there had been a large voter turnout which voted down the proposed budget, then the LC's course of action could possibly be justified. I don't understand why it was decided that the BOE should face 70% of the reduction and the town face only 30% of the reduction. I, for one, feel that the town should be the one to face the bigger percentage of the reduction; I think the percentages should be reversed, giving the BOE 30% of the cut and the town 70% of the cut. If that is not palatable to the LC, then the cut should be equitable and the BOE and town should share the cut 50 - 50, with each shouldering 50% of the cuts. But, before we even get to the specifics of who gets cut more, I feel that the figure that the LC came up with is way too much of a cut. I believe that the majority of the citizens of Newtown do not really want that much of a cut, in my

opinion. I don't think the majority wants any cut. I think the "silent majority" that was too lazy to get to the polls on April 26 will see fit to get there on May 17 to vote down this reduction. I think a little acrimony will motivate.

It certainly seems to me the Legislative Council acted arbitrarily when it came up with the figure slated for reduction and the way the reduction would be implemented. I am very unhappy with the proposed cut to the education budget.

I am concerned with the steady deterioration of our school system. I see the towns around us voting to approve budgets which enhance their schools, while Newtown can only see one way to get a budget approved and that is to slash funds for the education of our children. I think it is ludicrous that the LC is telling the school system it has to choose between a much needed assistant principal and the much needed educational assistants. We need both!

I implore you to restore funds to the school system before you put the budget up for another vote following the defeat of this proposed budget on May 17.

Respectfully yours,

D. Jane Porter  
Sandy Hook, CT

Monday May 16, 2011

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my answers to the questions:

1. yes
2. The budget amount should be approved; both the schools and the town need money to operate. I have seen where both entities have had to make cuts, and I see the negative results. We need to adequately fund both the town budget and the school budget.

Sarah Hoffert  
16 Marlin Road  
Sunday May 15, 2011

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Dear Kevin,



Both my husband and I voted to support the budget. Actually, we would have liked the school portion to be even higher. I am not looking forward to the upcoming vote because I don't agree with the amount being taken away from the school system. I believe the other members of the Legislative Council have no idea what kind of an impact this will have on our school system. I am an administrator in another district and every dollar taken away ends up hurting the students. I think people are going to be torn in the vote on the 17th because last year they voted no so the amount would be increased. I am getting the impression that people may be voting no for that reason. Please share my feelings that to cut \$800,000 of the top is terrible. I think we should be adding funding, not taking funding away.

Thank you for supporting education for the students in Newtown!

Cheryl Mammen  
7 Old Bridge Road  
Sunday May 15, 2011

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- 1. We did vote to pass the budget.
  - 2. Having said that, we are concerned about the school side. If our school system isn't rated highly, we won't have families moving here.
- At the same time, we believe the school's expenses should be double-checked. For one, do we have too much management there at the cost of fewer teachers?

Richard Cole  
72 Main Street  
Sunday May 15, 2011

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Hi Kevin,

I would LOVE the opportunity to answer these questions.

- 1. My husband and I (the only two eligible voters in our household) voted for two reasons, which go hand-in-hand. The first is because we feel it is our duty and a privilege to do so. I will admit we don't get to the polls 100% of the time, but we do unless illness gets in the way. The second is because we feel the budget is an important topic on which to vote.

- 2. Though I feel the current budget amount is lower than I would like, I also believe the likelihood of money being added back in should it fail this Tuesday is nil. For this reason we will be voting

"YES".

I'm adding another question which I feel should have been included in their survey:

**3. What was your opinion of the initial requested budget amount and how did you vote?** I voted yes because I felt the initial proposed budget was the correct amount during these economic times. To see the collaborative efforts of the BOE, BOS, BOF, and LC result in what I view as a slap in the face is awful and an embarrassment.

Additional thoughts: I agree the LC made the right decision to decrease the overall town budget based on the failed referendum, however, I do believe the cut implemented is excessive and should not have been a 70/30 split. Yes, I realize the split was *recommended*, but the likelihood that the town would offer to absorb more than the 30% suggested was never realistic, in my opinion. If I were in their shoes I certainly wouldn't have been willing to concede more than that.

While I realize the LC does not have the authority to recommend line item binding changes to the BOE budget, I feel it's worth sharing that I also do NOT agree with the suggestions the BOE has put forth regarding how they may apply a decrease. I feel certain there are areas within the proposed budget that can be cut before affecting staff. Perhaps not the entire reduction, but more than has been proposed thus far. I intend to scrutinize the BOE proposed budget between a passed referendum and any meeting where they vote on any binding changes in hopes that I can help in finding areas less hurtful to our kids.

Hopefully all of this makes sense. Thanks for reaching out!

Marabeth Pereira  
33 Pocono Rd  
Newtown, CT  
DISTRICT 1 Registered Voter

Sunday May 15, 2011

XX

Hi Kevin, I did not vote because my opinion could not be represented accurately (...and as a consequence, I felt my vote was being "steered") without a bifurcated format. I would like a flat overall budget that would increase the education budget and decrease the selectman's budget. I feel that the town's officials "steered" the Charter Revision committee ("committee") by violating a practice of separation of duty and responsibility in keeping the final decision whether to accept the Charter Revision committee's recommendation with them. And, in my opinion, it is this violation that renders one's opinion (vote) pointless. I can not get the image of how similar speaking at a town meeting is to Dorothy asking the Wizard of OZ to return to Kansas...I guess the only way to have our voices heard is to expose the "Wizard".

Tony  
(Could not confirm by Wed PM which Tony)

Sunday May 15, 2011

XX

1. i was out of town, and didn't know about the vote until after it had happened.

2. my opinion is that the schools are being held hostage to the municipal budget, or vice versa. either way, the will of the public is being summarily ignored. anybody wondering why you can't get residents interested in this? the school are being eviscerated, financially, and either they have to remove personnel or increase the spending - because the level of services offered now is not an attraction to anyone of school-age looking to move to newtown. as usual, the arts get slashed, and sports get lavished with new fields. same old, same old.

the current system seems designed to continue the vesting of power with those already seated, to the possible detriment of the community, and certainly in disregard for what's best for the community.

best,  
Richard Hilton  
2 Sealand Drive

Sunday May 15, 2011

XX

I voted yes in the last election

As for the current budget I am concerned that the cuts will erode services and the quality of education this town provides. I plan to vote yes on Tuesday because I do not want to see more cuts made.

Sandy Schill  
23 Gelding Hill Road  
Sunday may 15, 2011

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1. I voted (and always vote) because I care very much about Newtown and know that sometimes just a few votes really make a difference.
2. My opinion on the latest requested budget amount is that we should have passed the referendum the first time. I read letters to the editor in the Newtown Bee where people complain that prices are going up for heating, gasoline, food, electricity, and "budgets are sorely stretched." The town of Newtown also has to deal with those same rising costs, and its budget is also sorely stretched. We must support our town, and provide quality education. As the saying goes, *fail to plan, plan to fail*.

--Elizabeth Alexander

8 Fawnwood Road

Sunday May 15, 2011

XX

Thanks for this Kevin. I'd heard about their "survey" but hadn't participated.

1. Yes, we both voted in the last referendum to avoid further cuts in the education budget.
2. We feel the current proposed education budget is too low.

Please feel free to share with your fellow LC members.

Thanks for all you do for us Kevin.

Carolyn and Joel Faxon

38 Old Farm Hill Road

Sunday May 15, 2011

XX

Hi Kevin,

1) We did not not vote in the last referendum, we were both away that Tuesday. Can I suggest that the budget be moved to earlier in the month of April, like many other towns. I have noticed in the previous budgets that they are always around the school vacation week. Usually after. I know, like this year after vacation everyone plays "catch up" with regard to their work/school schedule and it seems to me that the last thing on peoples mind is go out and vote. So my suggestion would be to try to move the ref, earlier in the month of April, say 1st week, while everyone is still in school/work mode. This also allows more time to come up with ideas if the ref fails.

2) I believe the budget is fair. The message that I got, just sounds like the voters want the council to take a second look and see if their are areas that need to be cut. In this bad economy, the voters are always going to ask for the annual budget to get a second or third look. However, I do believe it is a good budget.

Thanks for your work on the council,

Best regards,

Pat Calabrese  
9 Indian Hill In  
Sandy Hook Ct 06482  
Sunday May 15, 2011

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[We always vote for education.](#)

Fran Maturo  
5 ironwood Drive  
Sunday May 15, 2011

XX

Hi Kevin,  
Robbin Chaber Allen commented on your note "DEAR FRIENDS IN NEWTOWN - PLEASE COMMENT OR EMAIL ME ON THIS".  
Robbin wrote: "Kevin: my husband and I voted yes last time because the budget was fair. Although we are unhappy with the school cuts this time, we will vote yes again. We do not want any more cuts."

[See the comment thread](#)

Reply to this email to comment on this note.  
Thanks,  
The Facebook Team  
Robbin Chaber Allen

45 Mile Hill Road South  
2034263742  
Sunday May 15, 2011

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Hi Kevin  
I voted yes to support the budget as it was presented  
I will vote yes on Tuesday to prevent more cuts.  
Jean Walter  
19 fairchild drive  
270-9904  
Saturday May 14, 2011

XX

Thank you for keeping us informed, Kevin.

I am quite concerned that there is a "survey" out there being administered by two Legislative Council members. They have presumably taken it upon themselves to conduct this "survey"? On principle, I'm not sure that you should conduct your own "survey". The data will not be any more useful than their data.

But, if you want my opinion, I will happily share my views with you. I, and the other adults in my family, voted to pass the budget. While I believe that the latest budget amount is too low, and I particularly don't like what it does to the schools, I will vote to pass it because I am afraid that if the budget doesn't pass, the cuts will go even deeper.

Thank you for your dedication,

Michelle Ku  
**(did not find in dated voter listing)**  
Saturday May 14, 2011

XX

below are my answers

Here are the two questions in the survey:

1. Why did you or your family members vote or not vote? **I voted because I wanted the budget to pass. can't afford to cut education.**
2. What is your opinion on the latest requested budget amount? **anything that literally takes away any child's opportunity to discover, is a crime. I believe the "no child left behind" act (e.g. focusing on standardized testing) combined with annual budget**

cuts has begun to have negative affects on Newtown's above average learners.

Again, my opinion is that a vote to take \$ from education implies that our above average CMT scores permit us to become complacent. Face it, this is Newtown, and (for now) we are lucky to have a good number of above average learners. These children deserve to be stimulated, motivated, challenged, helped, rewarded, inspired, and left feeling their future is as bright and as important as the child who used to be "left behind." I don't believe our teachers have ample resource, any longer, to do what they are asked/expected to do. So, my opinion is that we should do whatever it takes to keep our teachers, aides, principals, assistant principals, etc... because our COUNTRY'S future depends on each and every one of them!!!!

.Alisa Farley  
6 Pond View Drive  
Saturday May 14, 2011

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Here are the two questions in the survey:

1. Why did you or your family members vote or not vote? We both voted, in fact I went through the trouble to obtain and turn in his absentee vote, as I will be doing this time.
2. What is your opinion on the latest requested budget amount? That I want it to pass. I wish the last one did. I would have liked the great process that created the last budget to have been rewarded. More money for schools, always.

Sally Lynn MacDonald

5 Beagle Trail

Saturday May 14, 2011

XX

Hi Kathy and Mary Ann,  
I am responding to your survey questions:

1. Please tell us why you or your family members voted or did not vote.
2. What is your opinion on the latest requested budget amount?

My husband and I always vote, as we love this town and it is our responsibility as citizens. As part of voting, I always read the budget book and stay informed. We do not make our decisions blindly.

We still want to believe that our vote means something.

However, others have not voted for many reasons... I have been asking a wide range of people-- adults without kids to parents, long-time citizens to newcomers, those of meager means to those that are more comfortable.

Here are the top reasons people did not vote, from people I spoke with.

- "Things were so quiet this year, I thought things were fine" or something like this
- "I did not have enough information to make a decision." or similar
- "The officials in town do not listen, so why bother voting" or similar. I believe this comes from the large crowds that once voiced their support for the school budget at meetings, then significant cuts would be made anyway.
- Some people were actually oblivious about a vote, until after the vote... can you believe this?
- Some people who said they voted 'no' assume there is waste in government, but when asked where they were unsure or did not have supportive information.

So, my overall impression is that people needed to be educated as to why they should have supported your original budget. I felt it was fair when considering the needs of the community (including the town and schools), with consideration of the economy. Some people do not realize that keeping status quo services actually requires an increase.. due to the rising costs of energy/insurance/healthcare, etc..

People do not think that the Board of Finance or Council listens to them. This opinion has been years in the making. Also, the fall-off in attendance at meetings supports this.

I strongly believe that our community supports quality services, whether on the town or school side of the budget. However, people have told me that they need information and need to know that those in town government are listening and can be trusted.

I personally believe that the current budget is too low to support the needs of our town and maintain services. There was no justifiable reason for such a steep cut after the first referendum.

Thanks for asking.

Regards,

Michele Hankin

16 Greenleaf Farm Road

Thursday May 12, 2011

XX

Mary Ann and Kathy,

Thank you for seeking input from the voters on the budget.

I voted in the first 2011 referendum; I voted because I care about our community and appreciate the right to have my voice heard. I voted YES because I thought it was a fair budget. I will be voting in the second referendum and am contemplating a NO vote. It is my opinion that the cumulative negative effects to the school system due to continual underfunding are damaging the quality of the education our children are receiving. A declining school system is detrimental to our entire community.

Joan Plouffe  
9 Sturges Rd.  
Newtown

Thursday May 12, 2011

XX

Dear Ms. Jacob and Ms. Fetchick:

This email is in response to your request for information. First let me say that governing is a thankless task. While I am very interested in participating in volunteer activities for Newtown, I have little desire to run for an elected position. I think you both can relate to that and as a result I appreciate your work and contributions.

Your questions to the public are going in the right direction, however, it is puzzling to me to understand why you would be seeking such information when the opportunity to gain significantly more information was wasted on a Charter Revision Commission that addressed only bifurcation and subsequently rejected it. There is much that needs revision in our charter, which should be our first concern. I would be happy to discuss all of those items that I believe need revising in our charter at your convenience.

In many of my communications with other public officials I have referred to lessons learned while spending well over 40 years in executive positions for several prominent companies. Those very simple lessons are: "they support that which they help to create and there is more than one right way to accomplish a task." It is your responsibility to search out which ones best serve Newtown.

Now getting to your questions; I vote because it is my civic duty to do so. I vote yes on budget referenda when I see a process of cooperation within our government agencies to present the most effective and efficient budget possible. As a corporate controller I have reviewed many budgets in my career and can tell you that it is not difficult to separate the fair and positive from the outrageously over extended. This year, both Pat and Bill worked very hard to accomplish what I thought was an historic event for Newtown. However, that does not answer the question of why others did not vote. I can only guess why others did not vote, but I can tell you that, that does not relieve you of the responsibility of designing regulations which allow you to better govern or to implement charter revisions that will better serve Newtown and allow more information for you to



do so. On the contrary, that is when you are most needed and when you must search for ways to gather as much information as possible to serve the majority of the public. The current budget, being proposed and voted on May 17th will produce, once again, information that will be difficult to interpret. If the majority of people vote NO will it mean that they want additional budget cuts or will it mean that they want funds restored to either the municipal or education budgets, or will it mean that it simply doesn't matter whether they vote any more? If it passes does it mean that the public is afraid that a no vote will cause additional cuts or does it mean that they are satisfied with the Council's requested cuts? I think you can see that much is still left to interpretation.

My personal feeling is that the Council should vote for what the majority in town want. If the majority wants additional education cuts, then that is what should be done. If the majority wants municipal cuts then that is what should be done and vice versa, should the town desire increasing funds to either. Your questions appear to be designed to support your positions rather than gather information with which you can intelligently act upon.

While I have no children in the school system nor did I have any in the system since I moved here in 1997 I would be loath to shortchange education because the winter has caused several additional pot holes. An exaggeration , of course, however, I can think of no more important investment than a quality education for our children. They are the future. If we intend to continue to enjoy our life styles then we must prepare those who will carry that banner into the future. Having said that, I fall back on previous statements that if the majority of the town wants cuts or increases in either of the budgets then I will support those who have taken the time to tell me that is what they want.

Respectfully submitted,  
A.P. Roznicki  
169 Hanover Road  
Thursday May 12, 2011