

From: Larry Richardson <el911richards@hotmail.com>
Subject: Newtown Annual Budget Feedback
Date: May 12, 2011 8:31:55 AM EDT
To: <mjacob4404@charter.net>, <kfetchick@charter.net>

Hi,

First let me say that I do very much appreciate and value people like yourselves working on behalf of the citizens of Newtown...thank you for your service.

A friend has sent me your contact information suggesting I send a quick note to inform you of why I voted no in the last budget election and will vote no for the upcoming budget proposal.

My rationale can be summed up in two words...Economic Reality.

There can be no real world justification to a budget increase this year and in fact to the assumed, built in, budget increases projected as far as a spread sheet can reach. The budget planning leadership cannot simply shrug off, or worse, deny the realities of this Great Recession. Economic reality demonstrates that costs are increasing, unemployment is going up, the value of our homes is declining, wages have peaked, costs of employee funded health care is out of control, etc., etc.

If you survey the households in Newtown, I'd bet you my next paycheck that year over year incomes have declined. Where do we get the money for additional, must have, spending for the town and schools? Unfortunately, I am not Ben Bernanke and cannot print my own.

Everywhere in the US, cities, counties and states are learning that we really don't need all the fluff built into budgets and they are cutting back. Why, because there is no more money...that is called economic reality.

How is it possible that our little town is somehow exempt from economic reality? How is it even a consideration of the Town Leadership to increase the budget? If this goes through, we tax payers should revolt and hire a lawyer to sue the town to revalue our properties to the current market worth?

Thank you for asking for my thoughts on why I voted no.

Sincerely,

Larry Richardson
28 Jeremiah Road
Sandy Hook, Ct.
06482

From: Mary Ann Jacob <mjacob4404@charter.net>
Subject: Fwd: budget questions
Date: May 12, 2011 12:07:08 PM EDT
To: Kathy and Jeff Fetchick and Family <kfetchick@charter.net>

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: [REDACTED]
Date: May 12, 2011 8:26:58 AM EDT
To: Mary Ann Jacob <mjacob4404@charter.net>
Subject: budget questions

Hi Mary Ann - Here are our thoughts and we would appreciate confidentiality.

We did vote and we voted to approve the budget.

We are pretty disgusted with the current budget and not sure if we will can vote to support it, but we are scared that a no vote will reduce it more. We think the cuts are too high for a budget that did not pass simply because too many people did not make it to the polls. I have talked to people who didn't vote because they thought it was so lean that it would pass. We are shocked that an administrative position and a teaching position at the high school were approved, while cutting the EA positions so severely. I work with two EA's in my class and my instructional time is going to be severely affected if they aren't there. I can not imagine the elementary schools functioning without the EA's there. Who is going to assist the kids with reading and math help? Our fear is that learning is going to be impacted in a big way and that this will show up in lower CMT scores. We are also quite concerned about the loss of the social worker position. That job is already shared between two schools. The justification for another administrator was to help with discipline, but a social worker can help these kids while they are still in the younger schools and address problems before they reach the high school. It does not make sense.

[REDACTED] It is a struggle to live in this town financially, but we moved here simply because of the schools. Now we live on a road that hasn't been paved since it was first put down over 40 years ago and we are very concerned about the state of our children's education.

We understand that times are tough, but this is not a sound solution to us. While an administrator will be an easier add down the road, it will be a struggle to add that many EA positions and the social worker position back into the budget.

Hope this helps.

Thanks,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: **Budget**
Date: May 12, 2011 12:16:07 PM EDT
To: "kfetchick@charter.net" <kfetchick@charter.net>

Do not know why voter turnout was so low . Any opinion would be sheer speculation.
As far a budget \$ goes I think total as well as the two individual pieces were too high and remain too high in current proposal up for vote next week. For many the state of CT budget debacle is weighing heavily on total CT tax burden.
I also believe many expect productivity improvements in the public sector similar to what has occurred over the years in the private sector with the result being same services at same or lower cost.

Sent from my iPhone

From: "SAM" <smshct@charter.net>
Subject: **BUDGET OPINION**
Date: May 12, 2011 5:03:04 PM EDT
To: <kfetchick@charter.net>, <mjacob4404@charter.net>

I have no problem stating my position once again.

Do I support services for the town, yes

Do, I support services for the students with the public schools, Yes

Where the fork in the road becomes a cull-de-sac is in the education portion of the budget. I am livid over the gross mismanagement, inefficiency, refusal to follow LC directives, dazzling footwork which amounts to smoke and mirrors, incompetence on the part of the Superintendent, failure to state cuts unless they are "non-binging", even the hint of an efficiency study (is this not what they are paid for), hiding money until the budget passes and then finding it woo-hoo, misuse of a reverse telephone system to garner votes, ...just your basic lies, misinformation and adding to the administrative manure pile while threatening cuts in services...read the Patch Comments...all are explicit, detailed and hardly in support of the BOE...throwing more money into the soup pot does not cure the rancid flavor

**Sam Mihailoff
203-426-0315
544 Lakeview Terrace
Sandy Hook
smshct@charter.net**

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: **Thoughts on Voting**
Date: May 12, 2011 5:09:00 PM EDT
To: mjacob4404@charter.net, kfetchick@charter.net

We did not vote. Main reason is because I have no information on the budget. I feel like there should be something sent to homes or e-mailed explaining the budget and what would happen if you vote no to the budget. What if you feel like there should be more in the budget for education so you vote no but then by voting no the education budget is cut. Maybe the information is out there somewhere but I never see it. I work and live in Newtown plus my son goes to a pre-school in town and I have no information. My other son goes to a daycare in Southbury and there were flyer's at his school explaining what their budget vote was about. I just can't vote when I really have no idea what I am voting for.

Thanks,
[REDACTED] (please keep my name anonymous)

From: Joan Plouffe <jplouffe@earthlink.net>
Subject: Budget survey
Date: May 12, 2011 6:31:54 PM EDT
To: mjacob4404@charter.net, kfetchick@charter.net
Cc: bspragg9274@charter.net, Jeff@theCapecis.com, janandras@yahoo.com, gdavislcd2@aol.com, kevinkis@aol.com, george-ferguson@earthlink.net, jbeldenpootatuck@yahoo.com, amaralpoggy@aol.com, rdwoycik@sbcglobal.net, merola1c@sbcglobal.net
Reply-To: Joan Plouffe <jplouffe@earthlink.net>

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

From: "A.P. Roznicki" <aroznicki@sbcglobal.net>
Subject: **Requested Input**
Date: May 12, 2011 7:54:42 PM EDT
To: mjacob4404@charter.net, kfetchick@charter.net

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

From: Ed Schierloh <eschierloh@gmail.com>
Subject: **I voted NO**
Date: May 12, 2011 8:46:47 PM EDT
To: kfetchick@charter.net

Kathy,
I voted no on the budget as I believe it should be a zero increase. If it means cutting services so be it. I will vote no again this time.
Ed Schierloh

From: michele hankin <mhankin100@yahoo.com>
Subject: Your budget survey
Date: May 12, 2011 10:23:34 PM EDT
To: mjacob4404@charter.net, kfetchick@charter.net
Cc: bspragg9274@charter.net, Jeff@theCapecis.com, janandras@yahoo.com, gbdavis88@charter.net, kevinkis@aol.com, george-ferguson@earthlink.net, jbeldenpootatuck@yahoo.com, amaralpoggy@aol.com, rdwoycik@sbcglobal.net, merola1lc@sbcglobal.net

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

From: "Karlson, John" <JKarlson@transpo.com>
Subject: **Why my wife and I voted down the budget, and will continue to do the same.**
Date: May 13, 2011 10:26:06 AM EDT
To: "mjacob4404@charter.net" <mjacob4404@charter.net>, "kfetchick@charter.net" <kfetchick@charter.net>

Dear Ms Jacobs and Ms Fetchick:

Per your request (Newtown Bee Letterhive – 5/13/2011) I am pleased to note my reasons:

- a. have not had a pay raise in three years, working on household budget for same pay as three years ago,
- b. gasoline, fuel oil, food, Federal/State/Local taxes either going to increase or have already increased,
- c. homes in my general area (Sandy Hook) selling a below market
- d. many of my fellow homeowners are "underwater" on mortgages
- e. what are we really getting for our tax money:
 - (1) no garbage pickup
 - (2) no water (live in Sandy Hook)
 - (3) no sewer (live in Sandy Hook)
 - (4) limited police presence (constant speeding on my street {Great Quarter Rd}
 - (5) volunteer fire department (and give them \$\$\$\$ each year)
 - (6) limited recreation facilities
 - (7) snow removal is excellent, but I have to clean the storm drains myself when they clog up,
 - (8) since my children are adults – cannot comment on schools, but know they are excellent (should be for the money we have put into them),

For the record:

- a. I am 65 years old (still working since my 401 has taken serious hits) and will not be able to retire in the very near future with an uncertainty in the value of our investments, cash, and other holdings,
- b. Own two vehicles (1992 Ford F-150 pickup, 2009 Honda CRV),
- c. Lived in Sandy Hook for thirty plus years (never seen a budget that did not increase a percentage over the previous year).
- d. As noted, children are adults but both graduated from Newtown High School (one went to Penn State the other to Alfred University),

Thanking you in advance,

John Karlson
167 Great Quarter Road
Sandy Hook, CT 06482-15`2

From: George Schmidt <gw484schmidt@sbcglobal.net>
Subject: **Response to your request**
Date: May 13, 2011 3:39:49 PM EDT
To: mjacob4404@charter.net, kfetchick@charter.net

Dear Mary Ann & Kathy -

Responding to the two info inputs requested in your joint letter in *The Bee's Letter Hive*:

- 1) Both my wife & I voted - and voted no. We voted because it is a civic responsibility, and we have an opinion (as you know!) and skin in the game.
- 2) Also probably no surprise (as I've stated it publicly before the LC), I believe the latest requested amount is still too large. If we can't hold the line now, we never will. Plus, despite the impassioned rhetoric, and having worked in the private sector with budget responsibility, this Town clearly has no idea as to what a "budget reduction" actually is.

Feel free to use this input in any way you desire. Thanks for your good efforts on the LC!

Best regards,
George Schmidt

From: Mary Ann Jacob <mjacob4404@charter.net>
Subject: **Fwd: Budget Comments**
Date: May 13, 2011 4:01:10 PM EDT
To: Kathy and Jeff Fetchick and Family <kfetchick@charter.net>

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Serra, Guy (GE Capital)" <Guy.Serra@ge.com>
Date: May 13, 2011 3:25:03 PM EDT
To: <mjacob4404@charter.net>
Cc: <cfsgls@aol.com>
Subject: **Budget Comments**

Dear Ms. Jacob,

I appreciate your request to hear from constituents on the pending budget referendum. I am most interested in the political process in town and I do my best to learn as much as I can and keep informed. I will say that I voted in the April 26 referendum and voted "No". The main reason I voted that way is that I do not feel that the town uses its income in the most prudent way, especially considering the current economic environment. My wife has been unemployed for almost 2 ½ years and while I am in better financial shape than many, I have a lot less disposable income than I used to. I have had to tighten the family budget and I believe that the town should live with a zero increase program, at least until the economy improves. I also have had half the curbing in front of my house missing for quite a while, yet the ball fields in town are spectacularly manicured. I am a runner and I see many drains in town clogged and covered with dirt and leaves, etc, yet there is new grass planted by the new skate park (for which I will not disclose my true feelings.) I have donated many books to the Library Book Sale over the years, yet when I go to the library, there are very few new books. If you go to the Southbury Library, they have 3-4 times as many new books as the Booth Library does. Where does all that money go?

I do want to end on a positive note. I think that there are many worthwhile benefits to living in Newtown and I do believe that the town leaders want to do the right thing. I hope that by obtaining and compiling feedback we can make it better for everyone.

Many thanks for reading!

Respectfully,

Guy Serra

7 Laurel Road

From: Barbara Germak <germak@sbcglobal.net>
Date: May 13, 2011 4:51:50 PM EDT
To: kfetchick@charter.net

Dear Kathy,

I for one think the taxes in this town have gotten out of site. I look at Trumbull, where I work, and they receive many services for their tax rate and their taxes are practically half what ours are. I will be voting the budget down and I have kids in school. My belief is that the schools need to cut back (just like corporations and businesses) and find ways to reduce their costs. How much did the smart boards cost us? Are they being used? How much energy are we using in the schools? Can we conserve by [using energy efficient lighting](#) etc. Why haven't we hired outside consultants to go in and find where there is waste. I know as a substitute there are many times many adults in the classroom that really don't need to be there. Schools need to reward good teachers, throw out the bad, and make serious cuts if they want Newtown families to survive.

Barbara

From: Mary Ann Jacob <mjacob4404@charter.net>
Subject: **Fwd: Newtown Budget**
Date: May 14, 2011 8:37:38 AM EDT
To: Kathy and Jeff Fetchick and Family <kfetchick@charter.net>

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Anne Brennan" <abrennan2@earthlink.net>
Date: May 14, 2011 8:17:01 AM EDT
To: <mjacob4404@charter.net>
Subject: **Newtown Budget**

My wife & I, along with our son & his wife (their family of 5), fully support AT LEAST a ZERO budget increase - we would prefer deep cuts in the educational budget portion and a cleaning house of their financial affairs (it would be great to have an independant auditor or funding board NOT comprised of educators) - they consistantly hide funds for special uses, are too top heavy in expensive management and need to start from scratch negotiating wages and benefits - thats (4) votes NO coming on the 17th - we're personally getting cuts in benefits & retirement funding consistantly - two of us have had to change jobs for employers going out of business, one is still un-employed - time for the unions to share the sacrifice !!! short & sweet ! No one in government, local, state or Obama, really get it ...

From: Gino Scarangella <notification+yjf9=st6@facebookmail.com>
Subject: Re: [Accountability in Newtown] Dear Newtown Residents, We are writing to ask...
Date: May 14, 2011 9:34:09 AM EDT
To: Kathy Fetchick <kfetchick@charter.net>
Reply-To: Reply to Comment <g+42ij0lc00000movyrk002445wvt3yq001km8ltwqq21s63p@groups.facebook.com>

Gino Scarangella [commented on your post in Accountability in Newtown.](#)



Gino Scarangella

9:34am May 14

Answer to question 1: My family did vote, and we voted as we felt it was important to get a budget done quickly.

[Redacted]



[Redacted]



[Redacted]



[Redacted]



[Redacted]



[Redacted]

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Original Post



Kathy Fetchick

5:54am May 10

Dear Newtown Residents,

We are writing to ask for your help. There has been much debate over the budget and why the voter turnout was so low this year – 21.5% of voters came to the polls. The last time turnout was this low was in 2002. We are interested in your viewpoint.

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?

We anticipate sharing your thoughts with the rest of the Legislative Council. Please let us know if you wish your thoughts to be anonymous.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Jacob, Legislative Council Member, District 2
Contact: mjacob4404@charter.net
203-426-4404

Kathy Fetchick, Legislative Council Member, District 2
Contact: kfetchick@charter.net
203-270-9941

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From: Gino Scarangella <notification+yjf9=st6@facebookmail.com>
Subject: Re: [Accountability in Newtown] Dear Newtown Residents, We are writing to ask...
Date: May 14, 2011 9:37:20 AM EDT
To: Kathy Fetchick <kfetchick@charter.net>
Reply-To: Reply to Comment <g+42ij0lc00000movyrk002445wvt3yq001km8ltwqq21s63p@groups.facebook.com>

Gino Scarangella [commented on your post in Accountability in Newtown.](#)



Gino Scarangella

9:37am May 14

Answer to question 2: I believe the budget dollars are enough to sustain a good education program, but it would have been nice to have the additional dollars per the first budget. I however have no confidence that any of the proposed cuts in personnel or services will actually take place. As our Superintendent plays politics better than any of our local politicians and knows exactly what to say to get what she ultimately needs to run the schools.

Comment History



[Redacted comment text]



[Redacted comment text]



[Redacted comment text]



[Redacted comment text]



[Redacted comment text]

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Original Post



Kathy Fetchick

5:54am May 10

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Sincerely,

Mary Ann Jacob, Legislative Council Member, District 2
Contact: mjacob4404@charter.net
203-426-4404

Kathy Fetchick, Legislative Council Member, District 2
Contact: kfetchick@charter.net
203-270-9941

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From: Carla Kron <carlagkron@gmail.com>
Subject: **Reply to solicitation**
Date: May 14, 2011 11:52:34 AM EDT
To: Mary Ann Jacob <mjacob4404@charter.net>, Kathy Fetchick <kfetchick@charter.net>

Hi guys,

My husband and I voted in the last election because we feel it is important to voice our opinion at the polls.

I hope the budget passes and we can move forward.

It is a shame that no matter what anybody in this town does they get criticized. It drives me crazy.

Thanks for taking the time to ask.

Carla

From: Tinky <fitasc@sbcglobal.net>
Subject: **Voter turnout**
Date: May 14, 2011 1:31:32 PM EDT
To: "mjacob4404@charter.net" <mjacob4404@charter.net>, "kfetchick@charter.net" <kfetchick@charter.net>

Ladies,

Thank you for taking the time to solicit our opinions on what happened. I voted last time and I voted no. Spending in town has gone straight up since I moved here in 1997. Municipal taxes are my largest expense, and they are growing at a pace that makes me wonder if I will be here in 10 years. How about a cut for a change? Our leaders never lead us in the direction of fiscal constraint, always wanting to spend more than we let them. What is going to happen when Malloy cuts 2 million in aid from the state, has Newtown planned for that? I don't think so.

The low turn out comes from yes voters who don't turn out. These voters would never vote no, but their lack of enthusiasm for higher taxes keeps them home. The no voters are motivated, we always show up. Voting no on Tuesday. Love to see the budget split, but not holding my breath.

Thanks

Sent from my iPad

From: paul vanveen <vtech261@gmail.com>
Subject: **Viewpoint**
Date: May 14, 2011 1:27:47 PM EDT
To: mjacob440@charter.net, kfetchick@charter.net
Cc: Lorraine <lavanveen@gmail.com>

My wife and I voted the last budget request NO!
This request with an increase will also be - NO!
Why do we keep wasting town money voting for a budget the people don't want?
Many people in this town cannot afford MORE TAXES!!!
We the people....have had ENOUGH!
We moved to Newtown 17 years ago and you have increased taxes every year since! ENOUGH!!!
Thank you,
Paul vanVeen
8 Scenic View Dr.
Newtown, Ct.

From: Deborra Zukowski <deborraz@gmail.com>
Subject: **Your Budget Poll**
Date: May 14, 2011 3:52:52 PM EDT
To: mjacob4404@charter.net, kfetchick@charter.net

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

I consider voting to be a civic duty.

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

My view is that I was extremely impressed with the work that Pat Llodra and Bill Hart did re: crafting the first budget. They are the ones who truly have access to all of the information and knowledge of all of the implications related to the proposed budget. I voted for them, and continue to feel they are doing a fine job representing me.

I was very pleased when the LC moved the initial proposal forward to the voters. Given the 54/46 split of the last referendum, I think that the size of the cut was unwarranted on all but political fronts. My view is that I am torn, re: whether to support the proposed budget or to reject it. If it goes down, there will likely be a circus. If it passes, our town leaders will have quite a job on their hands to maintain services and/or reach the goals they've set for the town and its people. However, should this proposed budget fail, I will be voting NO to any and all further reductions.

3. A comment about statistics: There is a saying that you can prove anything with statistics, so it can be a dangerous tool. Designing and interpreting a proper survey is an art best informed by experts (like Paul Lundquist). You must ensure you know what your audience represents. For example, the 70/30 split noted in the Bee article suggests that your audience is heavily weighted towards the conservative edge of the population (who are often the ones more likely to vote in the earlier referendums), and is far from the 54/46 split of those who voted in the last referendum. Releasing the numbers prior to ensuring that the participation was representative of the voters was ill-advised, at best.

Deborra Zukowski

From: Mary Ann Jacob <mjacob4404@charter.net>
Subject: **Re: Town budget**
Date: May 14, 2011 6:37:29 PM EDT
To: karen banks <karenveebanks@gmail.com>
Cc: Kathy and Jeff Fetchick and Family <kfetchick@charter.net>

Karen,

Thank you for your feedback. I have some detail on the reductions Mrs. Llodra presented that may answer some of your questions. I'll forward them to you as soon as I am at my home computer.

Sincerely, Mary Ann and Kathy

Sent from my iPad

On May 14, 2011, at 3:28 PM, karen banks <karenveebanks@gmail.com> wrote:

Good afternoon Mary Ann.

I was going to call you regarding the two questions that you posted in the Bee, but since it is Saturday, I thought I wouldn't bother you at home, but just send an email. If you have any questions about what I am about to tell you, please feel free to call me @ 203-426-9957.

I always make it a point to vote whenever there is an opportunity to do so no matter what the issue. I feel it is my **obligation** as an **American** to express my opinion at the polls, afterall, that is one of our most basic rights as a free people!

My opinion on the latest budget posted in the Bee is that more work needs to be done to carve out unnecessary spending proposals. I analyzed the first budget and went to the town hall to meet with an individual from the finance commission who took the time to review all of my questions regarding why departments requested particular increases. I found the meeting to be very informative. As I look at the new proposal and compare it to the first budget request, I still see areas for potential improvement. When I see that departments are able to carve out large sums of money, I wonder how is that possible from the first submission and can they do even better? Did they "pad" the initial budget request unnecessarily? I realize that we do not get to see the YTD budget when the proposals are publicized, so maybe that is the answer, but I don't know! For example: The Tax Assessor was able to drop approx. \$24,000; Social Security (under gnrl gov) dropped \$12,000; Employee Benefits (under gnrl gov) dropped \$15,000; the Police Dept. dropped \$128,000; Land Use dropped \$19,000; Parks & Rec dropped \$20,000; Fairfield Hills Authority dropped \$86,000; and the Board of Ed. dropped \$800,000. Other depts also made cuts, but anything under \$10,000 I did not question.

Based upon the above and the fact that there is so little time for me to find out rationales for the changes, I would vote no again on Tuesday the 17th.

If you have any questions, please give me a call. I have no problem with you sharing the above information with your colleagues.

Thank you for your interest in my opinion.

Karen Banks
43 West St.
Newtown, Ct 06470
karenveebanks@gmail.com

From: Facebook <notification+yjf9=st6@facebookmail.com>
Subject: Jane Sheldon Sharpe sent you a message on Facebook...
Date: May 15, 2011 9:18:11 AM EDT
To: Kathy Fetchick <kfetchick@charter.net>
Reply-To: Message Email Reply <m+52ydd2100000movyrkeb1ar5dz0fb872pjeqba10gsi1s7@reply.facebook.com>



Jane Sheldon Sharpe

Town Vote

We both voted yes and did so because we believe the town officials spent more time figuring this out than we did.

[View Conversation on Facebook](#) · Reply to this email to message Jane Sheldon Sharpe.

From: Mary Ann Jacob <mjacob4404@charter.net>
Subject: Fwd: Newtown Budget Vote - Opinion
Date: May 15, 2011 12:14:49 PM EDT
To: Kathy and Jeff Fetchick and Family <kfetchick@charter.net>

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Mary Ann Jacob <mjacob4404@charter.net>
Date: May 15, 2011 12:12:13 PM EDT
To: "Thill, Gary (PBC)" <Gary.Thill@pepsico.com>
Cc: Angela Thill <aithill@charter.net>
Subject: Re: Newtown Budget Vote - Opinion

Hi Gary,

Thanks for your thoughts, I know this is important to you and your family and it's evident you've put a lot of thought into it. There is a tax calculator on the town website that allows every resident to figure out the implication of a tax increase for their home very similar to what you attached. We developed it a few years ago for the same reasons.

I can't disagree with your logic, but do disagree with several of your assumptions. Most residents in Newtown do not live in homes assessed at \$500,000. My home was recently assessed at about \$250,000, and while we supported the original increase, there are many families, with kids in the school system who cannot afford it. I'm not comfortable making assumptions on what other people can or are willing to pay.

People have tried before to make the "outback" comparison, most recently it was sneakers, and it made a lot of residents angry. There are 3000 adults in Newtown who cannot afford healthcare, they are not eating out or buying their kids expensive sneakers.

The council meeting is available on video at the town website, if you review that you'll see that 6 of the members supported a larger reduction. I'm thankful that did not happen.

Lastly, there is not a 1.1mm gap to fill in education. The original reduction was about \$734k and all but \$244k has been covered by shifting revenue and reduction in costs that were recently identified.

We can tell who voted, but not if they voted yes or no, that's not recorded for privacy.

We'd love more people like you in office, are you interested?

Thanks again,

Mary Ann

Sent from my iPhone

On May 15, 2011, at 11:36 AM, "Thill, Gary (PBC)" <Gary.Thill@pepsico.com> wrote:

Mary Ann,

Following up, see the attached "Changes to LC adapted Budget" analysis and let me know if you agree with it. If it's accurate then my hypothetical suggestion of an additional \$500.00 per family re investment would actually restore \$2.5MM to the budget...while I understand my hypothetical's not realistic, I'm shocked at the impact. Further, I think again if our community truly understood the math, that restoring \$1.1MM equates to a modest \$135.00 increase in taxes (on an assessed \$500,000 home), we'd see a yes vote pass by a wide margin. I spent \$120.00 on a family birthday dinner at Outback last night, and we waited one hour to sit down (my point, a lot of people including Newtown residents out spending \$100.00+ on one dinner)...I have to believe that if the budget dilemma was described in "Outback terms", we'd get to the right budget, quickly.

I'm torn on how to vote on Tuesday. Really would appreciate you, the Council, the Bee, someone to facilitate productive, fact based budget dialogue and decision making. If possible, I'd like to see included a demographic breakdown of previous votes as my sense is that it's the residents without kids in the schools that are coming out to vote and who are rejecting any suggestion of a tax increase as they have no stake in the game. These voters may not reflect the community at large opinion (and yes I agree that the at large community needs to get out and vote!)

Thanks again,

Gary

-----Original Message-----

From: Mary Ann Jacob [mailto:mjacob4404@charter.net]
Sent: Wednesday, May 11, 2011 1:29 PM
To: Thill, Gary (PBC)
Cc: Angela Thill
Subject: Re: Newtown Budget Vote - Opinion

Gary and Angela,

Thanks very much for taking the time to send me your thoughts and concerns. Don't forget to vote on the 17th! I believe the Registrar will be open on .saturday till noon if you need an absentee ballot, I'll be sending my husband over!

Thanks, Mary Ann

Sent from my iPad

On May 10, 2011, at 9:37 AM, "Thill, Gary {PBC}" <Gary.Thill@pepsico.com> wrote:

Mary Ann,

Our community leader asked that we provide you with feedback pertaining to the referendum vote turnout.

This was the first vote that I've missed - I was out of town overnight and neglected to file an absentee ballot.

I would have voted yes reluctantly, but reluctantly because the budget in my opinion is underfunded. We moved to Newtown three years ago in large part, due to the reputation of the schools. We're satisfied with the education our girls are receiving - in fact we're very pleased with many of their teachers and have told them so. But I feel that quality will be sacrificed if we keep cutting and cutting. We should be aspiring as a community to the return of Blue Ribbon status and I don't think that's possible if we're simultaneously cutting school funding.

I would support a modest tax increase to compensate for the reduced revenue stream Newtown is realizing due to our soft economy. It would be contingent on the Town's commitment to a potential tax cut if and when the economy turns and the revenue increases. What I would like to see is an illustration of the numbers as I think most Newtown residents are too caught up in emotion and are less understanding of the math. If every resident were to pay an additional say \$500.00, and if that total amount was directed exclusively to the schools, what could that mean in terms of education enhancements. Again I believe the perceived quality of a community's school system is an extremely important qualifier to families contemplating a move to the area.

I'd also like a better understanding of how Newtown's total spending compares to competing, surrounding and best in class communities....On a per resident or per student basis, what's our tax revenue spending on the town and school side vs. those other communities.

Respectfully,

Gary Thill
50 Cobblers Mill Road
Sandy Hook, CT 06482

<tax implication.xls>

From: agdent@earthlink.net
Subject: budget voe
Date: May 15, 2011 12:19:04 PM EDT
To: kfetchick@charter.net
Reply-To: agdent@earthlink.net

Hi Kathy,

I hate to have to admit this, but neither Geoff nor me voted on the budget because I neglected to mark it on my calendar. Since there was no concerted effort to get out the vote as had always been done in the past, there was no timely reminder that the "polls were open." I'd counted on that.

I must tell you that we would have voted yes and will vote yes on the 17th, but believe that the proposed budget is too low. The earlier iteration would have been better.

Keep up the good work,
Amy Dent

From: Evelyn Evagash <evevagash@yahoo.com>
Subject: **Taxes in Newtown**
Date: May 15, 2011 5:23:50 PM EDT
To: kfetchick@charter.net

That is great of you to offer your email address to respond to the budget debate. Thank you. Unfortunately we will be in Texas and will not be here to vote at the referendum.

We are seniors and really cannot afford to live in Newtown or the state of CT for that matter. Yet, it is difficult to sell our homes in this market to move out. We've lived here over 40 years and have paid our share to support Newtown schools. They cannot keep raising taxes every year. Things have to be cut. Why do we need an addition to the high school for fewer future students. A greenhouse??? They've got to be kidding.

In towns in Georgia, seniors do not pay "school tax" when they reach a certain age. Enough!!!

From: Michael Scarpa <michaelescarpa@yahoo.com>

Subject: Re: Fwd: Budget

Date: May 15, 2011 6:07:02 PM EDT

To: "Po Murray" <pomurray@charter.net>, "Robert Merola" <merola1lc@sbcglobal.net>, "bspragg9274@charter.net" <bspragg9274@charter.net>, "george-ferguson@earthlink.net" <george-ferguson@earthlink.net>, "janandras@yahoo.com" <janandras@yahoo.com>, "rdwoycik@sbcglobal.net" <rdwoycik@sbcglobal.net>, "DAN AMARAL" <amaralpoggy@aol.com>, "Gary Davis" <gbdavis88@charter.net>, "James Belden" <jbeldenpootatuck@yahoo.com>, "JEFF CAPECI" <jeff@thecapecis.com>, "Kathy Fetchick" <kfetchick@charter.net>, "Fitzgerald, Kevin" <kevinkis@aol.com>, "mjacob4404@charter.net" <mjacob4404@charter.net>, "William Hart" <bill.hart@loneoaktech.com>, "ANDY BUZZI" <abuzzijr@snet.net>, "David Nanavaty" <nanavaty@sbcglobal.net>, "Debbie Leidlein" <ctleidlein@charter.net>, "JANET ROBINSON" <robinsonj@newtown.k12.ct.us>, "Keith Alexander" <kalexander.boe@gmail.com>, "Lillian Bittman" <ldbitt@aol.com>, "Richard Gaines" <r.gaines.boe@charter.net>, "Will Rodgers" <SugrBrk@aol.com>, "Bill Furrier" <bfurrier0161@charter.net>, "pat.llodra@newtown-ct.gov" <pat.llodra@newtown-ct.gov>

Reply-To: Michael Scarpa <michaelescarpa@yahoo.com>

To All Those Concerned on this Email Chain:

When I arrived back from break with my family on Friday, April 22nd, I then found out that the vote was the following Tuesday. There was no buzz in the community,

no signs up and really nothing that notified the community in any significant way that Tuesday was the day.

I told my wife on Saturday that the turn out will be low and budget will fail because we have all been down this road before. This exact thing happened a few years ago where a ton of folks were out of town or just arriving back and lack of "effective" communications about the vote day hurt the integrity of the voting process.

I will also vote NO as Po has articulated as I agree with her 100%.

I was so very encouraged at the initial budget work that the LC did and I was so hopeful that this would have passed the first time but I would have bet any amount of money that the timing of the vote would get in the way.

I would suggest that our entire voting process is flawed and this entire voting process should be done on the web for little old Newtown.

Those without access should get a paper vote to their

home if needed. If you don't vote then you get fined by the Town for not voting. Collect some additional money for the programs that are always cut. Hold folks accountable, embrace

technology and lets stop this insanity.

I am Voting NO and looking for some real change in the voting process and Newtown can lead CT if we all try.

If you want to start a task force to research how we can change our voting process I would be willing to help.

Again, to the LC - nice job on the original budget creation.

Thanks,

Mike Scarpa

24 Gelding Hill Rd.

Sandy Hook

From: "Scarpa, Michael" <michael.scarpa@harman.com>
To: "michaelescarpa@yahoo.com" <michaelescarpa@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 15, 2011 5:15 PM
Subject: Fw: Fwd: Budget

From: amscarpa@yahoo.com [mailto:amscarpa@yahoo.com]
Sent: Sunday, May 15, 2011 04:13 PM
To: Scarpa, Michael
Subject: Fwd: Budget

Anne Scarpa

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Po Murray" <pomurray@charter.net>

To: "Po Murray" <pomurray@charter.net>, "Robert Merola" <merola1lc@sbcglobal.net>, "bspragg9274@charter.net" <bspragg9274@charter.net>, "george-ferguson@earthlink.net" <george-ferguson@earthlink.net>, "janandras@yahoo.com" <janandras@yahoo.com>, "rdwoycik@sbcglobal.net" <rdwoycik@sbcglobal.net>, "DAN AMARAL" <amaralpoggy@aol.com>, "Gary Davis" <gbdavis88@charter.net>, "James Belden" <jbeldenpootatuck@yahoo.com>, "JEFF CAPECI" <jeff@thecapecis.com>, "Kathy Fetchick" <kfetchick@charter.net>, "Fitzgerald, Kevin" <kevinkis@aol.com>, "mjacob4404@charter.net" <mjacob4404@charter.net>, "William Hart" <bill.hart@loneoaktech.com>, "ANDY BUZZI" <abuzzijr@snet.net>, "David Nanavaty" <nanavaty@sbcglobal.net>, "Debbie Leidlein" <ctleidlein@charter.net>, "JANET ROBINSON" <robinsonj@newtown.k12.ct.us>, "Keith Alexander" <kalexander.boe@gmail.com>, "Lillian Bittman" <ldbitt@aol.com>, "Richard Gaines" <r.gaines.boe@charter.net>, "Will Rodgers" <SugrBrk@aol.com>, "Bill Furrier" <bfurrier0161@charter.net>

<bfurrier0161@charter.net>, <pat.llodra@newtown-ct.gov>

Subject: Budget

Date: Sun, May 15, 2011 9:00 am

Dear Legislative Council Members,

BUDGET: In 2003, the voters rejected the budget by a margin of 740 votes and the Council reduced the school budget by \$775,000. Those cuts were very painful for the school system.

Board of Finance Minutes 3/07/05:

"Dr. Evan Pitkoff, Schools Superintendent – 03/04 was a tough budget season, with significant reductions being made to the requested budget. Difficult decisions were made by the Board of Education. Last year, we had 198 additional students and as a result, cuts were made including changes to the gifted/talented, changes to the bus schedule, staffing was eliminated, projects were deferred, the fourth grade orchestra was eliminated and fees were raised for sports and activities."

The Council made a decision to reduce the school budget by \$743,000 when the voters rejected the budget by a margin of 266 votes last month---\$41,000 less than in 2003. This cut is one of the largest cuts after a failed referendum and I do not believe that this cut was warranted. I believe the budget vote on a Tuesday after April Break and Easter influenced voter turnout. I am not convinced the budget was defeated because the budget was too high. I have made a decision to vote NO to ask you to restore the amount of funds necessary to save all Educational Assistant positions and to add the Assistant Principal position at the high school. I would also like to see you restore \$20,000 to keep all town swimming facilities to stay open until 8pm and for these swimming facilities to open on Memorial Day instead of June 27th and please restore \$8,000 for the Cyrenius Booth Library since they have provided significant resource to the community during the economic downturn.

The \$1.1MM that you cut results in \$135 savings for a home assessed at \$500,000. I am willing to forego one hibachi dinner or two manicure/pedicure sessions so that the schools will have the necessary funding. If you restore \$300,000 from the \$1.1MM cut, the tax impact is *only \$39 more per year* for a home assessed at \$500,000. Please see the attached tax implication document.

SURVEY: By now you may have read this article in the Newtown Bee regarding Mary Ann and Kathy's efforts to poll the constituents about the budget.

http://newtownbee.com/News/News/2011-05-12__13-57-52/Council+Reps+Launch+Budget+Outreach

While I applaud their efforts to seek voter input, I have a few concerns.

1. This survey is not a scientific survey.
2. The survey should be conducted by the Legislative Council on the whole since every member of the Legislative Council will make a decision on the budget.
3. The survey was originally posted on the "Accountability in Newtown" Facebook page which has many members who appear to be NO, BUDGET IS TOO HIGH voters skewing the results therefore Mary Ann and Kathy were able to make this statement to the Bee: "The feedback the pair has received so far is ranging from about 30 percent who say they generally want to see more money for local schools, to about 70 percent who express they want a flat budget or overall budget cut; that the town and school district should work to be more efficient; or those who say they do not feel their tax dollars are being spent wisely."

This type of survey will not reach everyone. The best survey that you could conduct would be on the ballot. It would have been most ideal if the Charter was to poll every voter who attends the referendum. The budget should have been split with the corresponding advisory questions to accurately assess voter sentiment. I urge the Council to commission a new Charter Revision group to reassess bifurcated budgets and advisory questions as soon as possible. I also believe we need to figure out a way to get more voters out. Perhaps we should explore a different day for the referendum. The Tuesday after the April Break is not ideal (some towns are voting on Saturdays).

Thank you for your consideration.

Po Murray
38 Charter Ridge Drive

From: bob nco <bobnco6@yahoo.com>
Subject: Survey
Date: May 15, 2011 8:01:00 PM EDT
To: Mary Ann Jacob <mjacob4404@charter.net>, Kathy Fetchick <kfetchick@charter.net>

Dear Council Members:

Thank you for volunteering your time to survey the town regarding the latest budget proposal.

1. Why did you vote or not vote?

I voted in the (1st and) current referendum because I believe it is my civic duty.

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

I believe the latest budget request is fair. I also believe that if this budget does not pass, the council should prepare a 0% increase budget. Although I support education spending, I am also unemployed and do not have the ability to pay large increases this year. Also, those whom I know in the private sector have not had a pay increase in over 3 years. The town workers and education administrators should have a 0% increase or the same amount given to police the past few years (which ever is greater). There is no reason for any discrepancy between the two.

Thank you again for asking for my opinions.

Best regards,

Bob Sabin
203-240-8679 (cell phone)
203-270-9798 (home)

From: Jane <djanep@charter.net>
Subject: **My vote on the budget**
Date: May 16, 2011 9:26:15 AM EDT
To: bspragg9274@charter.net, Jeff@theCapecis.com, janandras@yahoo.com, gdaviscd2@aol.com, Kevin Fitzgerald <kevinkis@aol.com>, george-ferguson@earthlink.net, jbeldenpootatuck@yahoo.com, amaralpoggy@aol.com, rdwoycik@sbcglobal.net, mjacob4404@charter.net, merola1lc@sbcglobal.net, Kathy Fetchick <kfetchick@charter.net>, gbdavis88@charter.net

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

From: Dawn <dawn303030@yahoo.com>
Subject: **Re: My feedback on the Newtown budget**
Date: May 16, 2011 12:17:13 PM EDT
To: Kathy Fetchick <kfetchick@charter.net>

I meant to add that in Shelton, they had 0% increases for the past 3 years and this year, they were actually able to decrease the milrate from 18.61 last year to 18.57 this year.

From: Mary Ann Jacob <mjacob4404@charter.net>
Subject: **Fwd: Budgets**
Date: May 16, 2011 1:51:49 PM EDT
To: Kathy and Jeff Fetchick and Family <kfetchick@charter.net>

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Richard Kessler" <bevhank@att.net>
Date: May 16, 2011 1:41:33 PM EDT
To: <mjacob4404@charter.net>
Subject: **Budgets**

Ms. Jacobs, I appreciate your interest in the reaction of those who have paid attention to the currently proposed budgets. Our input is as follows;

- a) Including the cost of borrowing for education; e. g., for the new high school, under the town budget is very misleading. At the very least this amount should be disclosed. Our impression is that the town budget is unfairly presented and that excluding this expense the town budget reflects a very small increase year to year, an increase we could support.
- b) Not providing year-to-year per student cost, say for ten years, leaves the voter with a very limited frame of reference as to the need for constant and significant increases in the education budget. Our impression is that we and the students are not getting our monies worth. We would like this data made available.
- c) With the economy and many Newtowners in difficult financial circumstances increases in spending; e.g., a new assistant principal seems inappropriate. The trade off for teaching assistants seems even worse. For profit organizations are reducing management, not increasing their number.

There are other areas of concern but the foregoing are the most important to us at this time.

Bev & Hank Kessler
Sandy Hook

From: robert nielsen <dogguy2@sbcglobal.net>
Subject: budget survey
Date: May 16, 2011 4:10:38 PM EDT
To: mjacob4404@charter.net
Cc: kfetchick@charter.net

First I want to thank both of you for taking this survey.

1. Some people I spoke to said they did not vote because last year they were disenfranchised. Last year the legislative council took the absurd position that voting NO meant that you wanted to raise your taxes. The council corrupted the democratic process and now many feel that it is a waste of time to vote because the council is just going to do whatever THEY want. I explained this to Jeff Capeci,

2. I am voting NO because in this economic climate it is the wrong thing to do to raise taxes. Many people in our community are struggling financially and cannot afford higher taxes. Please be sure to understand that I am voting NO because I want to have my taxes reduced. Also please explain this to Jeff Capeci.

Bob Nielsen

From: bergemon@aol.com

Subject: Referendum survey

Date: May 16, 2011 5:35:59 PM EDT

To: bspragg9274@charter.net, Jeff@theCapecis.com, janandras@yahoo.com, gdavislcd2@aol.com, kevinkis@aol.com, george-ferguson@earthlink.net, jbeldenpootatuck@yahoo.com, amaralpoggy@aol.com, rdwoycik@sbcglobal.net, mjacob4404@charter.net, merola1lc@sbcglobal.net, kfetchick@charter.net

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

[REDACTED]
Subject: Budget Vote

Date: May 16, 2011 8:27:38 PM EDT

To: <mjacob4404@charter.net>, <kfetchick@charter.net>

Thank you for giving us your email address to give a confidential comment on the Newtown budget.

First, I will tell you that I will not be coming to a town meeting on the budget so that I can have my comments recorded in the Bee the next week. Many of my neighbors feel the same way.

Second, as a [REDACTED], I feel it is a conflict to publically comment on the budget.

If I ran my [REDACTED] the way the school district runs its operations, we would have been out of business long ago. I have a picture of my Board when I told them I have a surplus of greater than \$300,000. This year soon after they pass the budget for the next year. And so I would tell them, I want to use the money for something they did not approve in the my current year.

And I can just see their faces as I tell them expenses are high because people coming for H1N1 Flu shots used a lot of toilet paper. That hit home because I gave those shots and trust me people were not using the bathroom.

So is the new budget proposal which I vote for tomorrow Status Quo on last year's budget less the surplus? Have all departments been asked to cut expenses? Do we really need 1, 2 or 12 new faculty in declining enrollment? What has been done about decreasing the number of schools with low K-3 population? Didn't we do the survey of school population very soon after last year's budget passed and after we added to the high school? It is also possible that when all the districts get together they discuss administrator/pupil, dollars per pupil, etc. Just keep driving the number up and the school district will get what they want without ever cutting expenses year after year, after year.

This is just the beginning of the story why I will be voting NO tomorrow. BTW I do believe the Town Adm is making some good decisions especially trying to reduce bonding. You ought to be able to save for what you want not bond it.

Thanks for listening.
[REDACTED]