

**PUBLIC HEARING
FY 2012-2013 BUDGET
Town of Newtown Legislative Council
Wednesday, March 28, 2012
3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT**

PRESENT: Jeff Capeci, Mary Ann Jacob, George Ferguson, Paul Lundquist, Daniel Honan, Kathy Fetchick, Bob Merola, Joseph Girgasky, Dan Wiedemann, Dan Amaral, Mitch Bolinsky, Phillip Carroll

ALSO PRESENT: First Selectman Pat Llodra, Schools Superintendent Janet Robinson, Schools Finance Director Ron Bienkowski, BOE Chairman Debbie Leidlein, BOE member John Vouros, four members of public

Chairman Jeff Capeci called the hearing to order at 7:05 p.m. and opened the floor to public comments.

Mr. Rich Oparowski, 4 Pheasant Ridge Road (Board of Finance member) – advised that he voted in favor of the budget but had significant reservations. He feels that the Town portion was prepared with “transparency” but he is very “frustrated” with the Schools budget. It seems to be prepared in a piecemeal way and it is hard to get a clear picture. In addition, enrollment is declining yet operating costs are increasing and he feels that \$4.4 million represents overstaffing. He believes there is a disconnect between the taxpayers and the schools administration. If Council members feel as he does, he hopes they can find a way to communicate to the BOE that costs need to be better managed.

Mr. Robert Hall, 5 Nettleton Road – is a lifelong resident of Newtown. He requests that the BOE budget be significantly reduced. The BOE budget starts \$400,000 lower than it was last year because of supposed savings in the new bus contract. The student population is down by 6.4% between 2006 and 2011, yet the budget has increased by 23.7%. He suggests a \$1 million reduction to the Schools budget.

Ms. Michelle Assante, 16 Wendover Road – understands why the budget is where it is. It may seem “piecemeal” because we are looking at starting to “individualize” education to meet students’ needs. The full day kindergarten allows teachers to identify students with special needs. The reductions made by the Board of Finance included \$700,000 for bids that came in lower than estimated, not for things that the BOE was trying to “slip in”.

Chairman Capeci received two e-mails with comments regarding the proposed budget (attached).

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Jan Andras
Clerk

dqw0315@yahoo.com, george-ferguson@earthlink.net, ignewtownct@yahoo.com, lundquist.paul@gmail.com, merola1lc@sbcglobal.net, kfetchick@charter.net, danielthonan@gmail.com, mjacob4404@charter.net, amaralpoggy@aol.com, mitchfornewtown@earthlink.net, Jeff@theCapecis.com, ppcarroll@charter.net

Dear Newtown Legislative Council Members,

I would like to write you today in regards to my support of a Full-Day Kindergarten program being implemented in Newtown. I believe that this program is not only beneficial to our town's youngest members of the community, but for the community in its entirety. We can no longer delay offering a Full-Day Kindergarten program in Newtown.

Our children aren't currently receiving what they need.

- **Lessons are being left out-** Newtown offers only 33-38% of the instructional hours needed to meet Common core State Standard requirements in language arts & math.
- **Basics are limited-** The fine motor skill practice and recess are only offered when time is available, not every day.
- **Students are rushed-** Kindergarteners do not develop stamina for reading, writing or independent work.
- **Social skills not developed-** Not enough time is focused on social skills or 'educational play', important factors for children's development in Kindergarten.
- **Full-day adjustments in First Grade-** **There are** far greater academic expectations for children in First Grade that they are not prepared for, leading to stress for children.

The Newtown community is losing its 'Great School System' reputation.

- **Newtown is falling behind other districts-** 85% of Fairfield County districts offer MORE Kindergarten than Newtown, with even more districts proposing Full-Day K this year
- **There is a massive gap in Newtown's wealth vs. school expenditure-** Newtown is ranked #34 in wealth and only ranked #149 in school expenditure per student, out of 169 CT towns)
- **Implications may be dire to our community's financial viability-** By ignoring the importance of Full-Day K to parents, many families may seek housing outside our community and housing values and the town's tax base could continue to decline

For these reasons and more, I am supportive of implementing a Full-Day Kindergarten program in Newtown this year and will vote accordingly. Please recommend that the program remain in the budget so that the Newtown community can decide on April 24th if now is the time for Full-Day K.

Sincerely,

Kristen Marshall

Address:

23 Rose Lane

Sandy Hook, CT 06482

Fw: Full Day Kindergarten

FROM: Jeffrey Capecci

TO: Jan Andras

Hide Details

Wednesday, March 28, 2012 8:38 PM



Jan,

For the hearing record...

Jeff

— Forwarded Message —

From: "O'Neill, Shannon" <shannon.oneill@cartus.com>**To:** "Jeff@theCapeccis.com" <Jeff@theCapeccis.com>**Sent:** Wednesday, March 28, 2012 1:42 PM**Subject:** Full Day Kindergarten

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Sincerely,

Shannon and John O'Neill

Address:

8 Alder Lane
Sandy Hook, CT 06482

Shannon O'Neill Senior Supplier Specialist | Cartus

40 Apple Ridge Rd. Danbury, CT 06810 USA

Tel: 1.203.295.8334 Fax: 1.203.249.8440

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