

3 PRIMROSE STREET
NEWTOWN, CT 06470
TEL. (203) 270-4201
FAX (203) 270-4205
www.newtown-ct.gov



TOWN OF NEWTOWN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

TOWN OF NEWTOWN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2015 NEWTOWN MUNICIPAL CENTER, NEWTOWN, CT

PRESENT: George Ferguson, Eva Bermudez, Joe Girgasky, Paul Lundquist, Bob Merola, Ryan Knapp, Neil Chaudhary, Mary Ann Jacob, Dan Amaral, Anthony Filiato, Phil Carroll, Dan Honan.

ALSO PRESENT: First Selectman Pat Llodra, Finance Director Bob Tait, Director of Public Works Fred Hurley, Board of Ed members Kathy Hamilton and Keith Alexander, 2 public, and 2 press.

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Jacob called the meeting to order at 7:30pm with a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

VOTER COMMENT: None

MINUTES: MR. FERGUSON MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 3, 2014. MOTION SECOND BY MR. GIRGASKY. APPROVED.

COMMUNICATIONS: Ms. Jacob received an email from Bruce Walczak regarding the minutes of the November 19 meeting. The minutes were corrected as follows: *Neil Chaudhary motioned to go into executive session to discuss the settlement of legal action pending against Katja and William Pieragostini and the purchase of Real Estate at 10:25pm. Rob Sibley, Pat Llodra and Dave Grogins were invited to attend. Ryan Knapp seconded. Session ended at 11:15pm. Following the session Mr. Chaudhary motioned to accept the agreed upon settlement of legal action against Katja and William Pieragostini. Mr. Ferguson seconded. The motion passed with 9 yes, 1 abstention and 1 no vote.*

Ms. Jacob received a letter from Dr. Erardi regarding the budget. (Attachment A)

Ms. Bermudez received a letter regarding 36 Yogananda. (Attachment B)

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT: Mrs. Llodra shared an update on winter storm expenses. (Attachment B) Mr. Hurley noted they have changed the salt/sand mix to 2 parts salt and 1 part sand. This clears the road quicker and there will be less sand to clean up in the spring. The sand is needed in the mix to cover ice until the salt has melted the ice. Mr. Hurley said the salt is treated and works down to 0 degrees. The salt also has an additive to stabilize the ph so it is not as corrosive. (Attachment C)

Mr. Knapp asked if the salt has an adverse effect on asphalt. Mr. Hurley said the state has found the salt does not affect the asphalt.

Mrs. Llodra noted salt costs more than sand but the amount of time dedicated to sand clean up should be reduced.

Mrs. Llodra shared the State of the Town-2015 information she presented to the Chamber of Commerce. (Attachment D)

Mrs. Llodra noted council members can keep updated on the progress of Sandy Hook School on the website www.sandyhook2016.com. New photos are uploaded every Tuesday. Deep dynamic compaction is currently underway. It will be completed next week. Bids are being opened for the "brick and mortar" work. The management firm was on target with the cost estimation.

The Board of Selectmen developed a recommendation for the property at 36 Yogananda. It will be on the council's next agenda.

Mr. Tait distributed the town fiscal statement for the year ending June 30, 2014. The report can be reviewed on the town website: http://newtown-ct.gov/Public_Documents/NewtownCT_Finance/Newtown%20CAFR%206-30-13.pdf

Mr. Tait noted the unassigned fund balance is \$10,242,495, which was the goal. Revenue estimates are budgeted conservatively. We are making progress in collecting delinquent taxes. Medical claims are 10% of the total budget. The current balance in the medical fund represents 18% of claims; the goal is 25% to protect against major loses. Claims this year are below last year.

Permanent funds are trusts; we can use the interest only for dedicated purposes.

There is a meeting with the rating agency regarding refunding on Monday, January 12th.

This positive performance from last year and this year will help.

NEW BUSINESS

MR. CHAUDHARY MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE 2015/2016-2019/2020 CIP. SECOND BY MR. FERGUSON.

Roads: Mr. Hurley stated 2 million dollars per year for road improvements, major reconstruction and resurfacing, has been the bench mark for 25 years, though the amount has gone up and down due to budget issues. Bridges have been fully supported and most town bridges have been replaced. The Toddy Hill Rd bridge is tied to state projects and we may receive grants and additional state money. The Walnut Tree Hill bridge is a cost share with the Federal government. The town share is 20%. The department looks at roads, reports on their condition and prioritizes roads needing repair.

Mrs. Llodra stated that bridge repair use to be part of the Capital Road account, taking money from road repair. Bridges were moved to the CIP about 5 years ago because the bridges remain in place for many years. Capital Road program is shown in the CIP, but it is funded in the annual operating budget. The fund is being increased \$250,000 a year.

Mr. Hurley said there have been issues with the asphalt; the roads are only lasting 3 to 5 years. The state and UConn has been testing to find the reason the asphalt is not performing. The state has found it is the asphalt mix of recycled asphalt and virgin stone is causing problems.

Ms. Bermudez asked about the impact of paving on runoff and its effect on waterways.

Mr. Hurley stated the adhesive used in the asphalt has been changed to be more environmentally friendly. There is no environmental impact from asphalt paving.

Mr. Hurley reminded everyone scheduled road work is listed on the town website.

Residents can call the highway department to report road damage.

Community Center: Mrs. Llodra shared a time line of the appropriation approval for the community center and Phase 1 information. Architects have begun meeting with constituent groups. There will be 10,000 square feet for seniors and 25,000 square feet for the aquatic center, which will house 2 pools. The appropriation is for \$9,550,000; \$450,000 has already been drawn for the initial phase of planning. The project is listed in the CIP but there will be no bonding as we have the GE grant. The center will be located near the NYA which will allow for the possible connection of the 2 buildings.

Mr. Ferguson asked about the operating costs of a community center. Mrs. Llodra reports they have a draft business plan and believes there will be no budget impact for about 15 years.

Mrs. Llodra stated if the community center is approved, it will be started this spring and finished in 2016. (Attachment E).

FFH Building Demolition: Mrs. Llodra explained there has been interest in accelerating the progress on the campus. Recent changes to the CIP had freed up resources. We can now make major changes and still stay within the 9% debt cap.

Mr. Knapp asked if there is a schedule for building demolition. Mrs. Llodra said they would go through the Fairfield Hills Authority. Buildings are deteriorating quickly. The large ones would cost too much to repurpose. She would like to see Stratford, which has been fully abated, developed. She is hopeful Woodbury and Newtown Halls can be repurposed, and the duplexes developed for different services; professional offices, social services. The Parent Connection will be there. The white houses have to be demolished. Building abatement is very costly. Mrs. Llodra noted many of the buildings are falling down, dangerous and blight. They are a detriment to developers investing in the campus. If we can remove the buildings and stay within our debt limit, we ought to do it.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED. 11 YES (Ms. Bermudez left the meeting approximately 8:30 before the vote).

The CIP can viewed at http://newtown-ct.gov/Public_Documents/NewtownCT_Finance/LC%20APPROVED%20CIP.pdf

MR. CHAUDHARY MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE TRANSFER \$8,500 FROM CONTINGENCY (1-101-24-570-5899-0000) TO EQUIPMENT-TECHNOLOGY (1-101-11-205-5744-0000).
SECOND BY MR. FERGUSON. UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED. (Attachment F)

VOTER COMMENT: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:18pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carey Schierloh, Clerk

These are draft minutes and as such are subject to correction by the Legislative Council at the next regular meeting. All corrections will be determined in minutes of the meeting at which they were corrected.

ATTACHMENT A: Letter from Dr. Erardi
ATTACHMENT B: Constituent Letter
ATTACHMENT B: Winter Storm Breakdown
ATTACHMENT C: State of the Town-2015
ATTACHMENT D: Community Center Timeline
ATTACHMENT E: Transfer

To: Newtown Board of Education Members
From: Dr. Joseph V. Erardi, Jr.
Date: December 23, 2014
Re: **Superintendent's Proposed Education Operational Plan 2015-2016**

The Superintendent's Proposed Operational Budget for 2015-2016 is \$72,399,186, which reflects a 1.48% increase over the 2014-2015 school year spending plan. This proposed plan maintains the core of all existing programs and also includes initiatives that will move the Newtown Public Schools toward a district of distinction.

It is important to note that this budget is built on meeting the needs of all state and federal legislation; however, this budget does not reflect support for P.A. 10-111 (high school reform) as the upcoming legislature will, once again, examine the present bill that will impact local districts with both daily cost and capital needs as early as July 2015.

More specifically:

Restoration of Lost Staffing and Programming:

- An additional 1.0 FTE has been proposed at an expense of \$56,594 to support the return of an enrichment teacher for K-4 learning;

Proposed New Support Staff for Teaching, Learning, Activities and Athletics, Operations, and Safety:

- An additional 1.0 FTE special education supervisor to replace the vacant 1.0 FTE special education department chair position at Newtown High School at a cost of \$21,770
- An additional .4 FTE Academic Officer at Newtown High School to assist with the increasing demands being placed on administration from both state and federal legislation at a cost of \$22,638
- An additional .5 FTE to support the acquisition of world language at the primary grade level costing \$28,297
- The movement of a 1.0 FTE operations and maintenance staff member to the role of Assistant Facilities Director at a net cost of \$37,840
- An additional .2 FTE in the Newtown High School Performing Arts department to continue the grant funded Unified Theater class at a cost of \$11,319
- An additional \$14,370 to move the following coaching stipends into the operational plan: indoor track, gymnastics, and girls' golf
- An increase of .16 staffing for the special education clerk pertaining to summer programming at a cost of \$4,421
- An additional five stipends totaling \$10,000 to support global awareness and international travel (N.I.C.E)
- A Special Education Supervisor to cover the summer programming at a cost of \$18,501

The enhancements mentioned above represent \$225,750 of new staff spending which is reflected in the proposed operational plan.

Reduction of Workforce Proposed for the 2015-2016 Operational Plan

A detailed analysis of all programming and staffing was completed by administration and the following reductions are proposed within the new school year spending plan:

- The elimination of 8.3 FTE certified staff members at a savings of \$473,092
- The elimination of 9.13 non-certified staff members at a savings of \$160,492

Thus, the proposed operational plan with requested new staff and with the reduction in workforce nets a cost savings of \$407,834.

The historical budget request over the past 10 years.

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Approved Board of Ed Budget</u>	<u>Budget Increase</u>
2006-2007	\$60,387,154	6.06%
2007-2008	\$62,885,158	4.14%
2008-2009	\$66,031,044	5.00%
2009-2010	\$66,314,928	0.43%
2010-2011	\$67,194,734	1.33%
2011-2012	\$67,971,427	1.16%
2012-2013	\$68,555,794	0.57%
2013-2014	\$71,045,304	3.63%
2014-2015	\$71,345,304	0.42%
2015-2016	\$72,399,186	1.48% (Present Proposed Superintendent's Operational Plan)

Health insurance costs, which were funded at a 7.1% increase during the 2014-2015 school year, are proposed to increase 0.8% in 2015-2016 representing an increased cost of \$67,120 over the present funding level. In addition to the percentage increase for insurance the operational plan includes \$100,963 reflecting the demands put on local districts with the Affordable Health Care Act.

Finally, this proposal includes the following assumptions and projections:

1. Bargaining unit contracted salary increases for the Newtown Administrators Association (union administrators), and Newtown Federation of Teachers (teachers union) are 2% and 1.5% respectively.
2. Transportation will increase with contractual obligations to All-Star Transportation, Inc. This will result in a \$76,128 increase in the 2015-2016 regular education budget and \$156,801 in special education transportation (in and out-of-district).
3. Out of District school tuition was budgeted based on the current year enrollment and cost which has increased \$224,691.
4. Technology equipment has been increased by \$169,033 to keep pace with critical current requirements.

It is also important to understand that the starting point for my office was a requested \$75,028,183 which represented a 5.16% increase over current spending. After meeting with all stakeholders \$2,628,997 net of requests were reduced; thus, the superintendent's plan moving forward for your review.

District administrators, cabinet members, and, in particular, Mr. Ron Bienkowski and his staff worked diligently to prepare this plan. Mr. Bienkowski, Director of Business, along with my office, would be happy to answer any and all questions that you may have during the budget review examination period.

Finally, it is my belief that this proposed budget represents the program priorities and the long term vision set forth by this Board of Education and also represents a plan that continues to maintain and enhance the needed resources for all children.

Attachment B:

Eva:

I'm delighted that the Legislative Counsel has authorized the purchase of the Lanza house. I understand that feedback is being sought for what the town should do with the property. Living just down the street from the Lanzas, I would favor of tearing down the house, removing the driveway, and allowing the property to return to its original wild, pre-construction state. This return to open space will erase any evidence of the Lanzas having lived here and avoid a magnet that any kind of memorial would create for the media to gather on future anniversaries.

Thanks for your consideration.

Rich Stein
14 Yogananda St.