

Public Hearing

March 13th, 2012 8:00 PM
Weston Middle School Cafeteria

*This Public Hearing was not videotaped
Comments and discussions are direct quotes of the speakers*

Present: Board of Finance Chairman Jerry Sargent, Vice Chairman Mike O'Brien, board members Michael Carter, Steve Ezzes, Patty Kopas, David Finkel, Melissa Koller. Also present: First Selectman Gayle Weinstein, Selectman Dennis Tracey, Finance Director Rick Darling, Town Administrator Tom Landry, Donna M. Anastasia Town Clerk, Colleen Palmer Superintendent of schools; approximately 10 Town Hall employees and Department Heads; members of the Board of Education; several school Administrators and personnel. There were approximately 18 residents and Patty Gay from the Weston Forum.

Chairman Sargent called the Public Hearing to order at 8:03 PM.

First Selectman Weinstein welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated that the budget was prepared with the town's values in mind and was built up line by line; all items carefully looked at with each department. The 2.5% increase is mainly due to health care costs, FICA and the OPEB obligation. The Fire Department is getting an increase and the Registrar of Voters budget has been increased due to the Referendum, Primary and Presidential elections. The Capital budget increased for work to the middle school and improvements to our infrastructure. The net change results in a 0.71% mill rate increase. With varying interests in health care costs, OPEB contributions and escalating pension costs the budget came under careful scrutiny. A zero based approach was used to prepare this budget. Thank you for your attendance this evening.

Call of the Meeting

Legal notice is hereby given of the Public Hearings of the Board of Finance of the Town of Weston on Tuesday March 13, 2012 and Wednesday March 14, 2012 (if necessary), at 8:00 p.m. at the Weston Middle School Cafeteria, 135 School Road, Weston, CT for the following purpose:

To discuss the proposed budgets for the Board of Selectmen, the Board of Education, Capital Improvements and Debt Service as submitted to the Board of Finance for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2012. Said budgets are as follows:

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S BUDGET

General Government	\$5,945,998
Public Safety	2,415,182
Public Works	1,774,723

Sanitation, Health & Environment	303,528
Human Services	570,894
Parks & Recreation	<u>414,227</u>
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S BUDGET	11,424,552
BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET	45,587,192
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET	1,416,783
DEBT SERVICE BUDGET	6,649,705
GROSS TOWN BUDGET	65,078,232
Less Estimated Revenues	2,668,566
NET TOWN BUDGET	62,409,666

Dated at Weston, Connecticut
This 1st day of March, 2012

Gerald T. Sargent III
Chairman
Board of Finance

A copy of the detailed budget is available for public inspection in the office of the Town Clerk. Summaries of the budget will be available in the Town Clerk's office (after March 8th) and at the Public Hearing.

Harvey Bellin, Maple Street – Mr. Bellin addressed the school budget saying how fortunate the town is to have our new Superintendent. Weston currently has the lowest percentage increase in our DRG, however taking into account a declining enrollment would effectively represent a 3% increase. Mr. Bellin compared the salaries of the Town Administrator with the school Athletic Director which includes a secretary and less time worked during the year. Mr. Bellin wanted to emphasize combined staff, shorter calendar year and benefits results in a greater increase. In closing Mr. Bellin said it would serve the town to reduce school buildings to three and lease the remaining building thus generating revenue for the town.

Dana Lintell, Hurlbutt PTO Pres.

Ms. Lintell stated she was quite pleased with the budget submitted by the school board and wanted to mention that the school administration assists in many other functions such as lock downs and children who are ill needing immediate attention.

Frank Billone, Curiosity Lane – Mr. Billone has attended the Board of Education meetings and is very concerned with regard to increasing taxes having a negative impact on home sales and enrollment. He noted two outplacements and an additional teacher and asked if these could be excluded until they are needed.

Susan Baron, Old Hyde- Ms. Baron expressed concern regarding empty classrooms and asked what the cost will be to go forward with a search to replace Mr. Scarice Asst Superintendent who will be leaving.

Superintendent Colleen Palmer – There has been a decrease in the population overall and currently we are making plans to give more Hurlbutt space to the Senior Center. We do not have empty classrooms. There is a team in place to look at all town facilities and resources. The approximate cost, should a consultant be retained with regard to the vacancy of the Assistant Superintendent is about \$8,000. The budget was prepared prior to our knowledge of Mr. Scarice taking another position, we will have to modify accordingly.

Lois Guberman, Catbrier Rd- The Aim Project has been a major project for Mr. Scarice and my concern is who is going to continue with this program. I am concerned about the future implementation and who will make this commitment.

Superintendent Palmer - We have plans in place with the team and curricular people who have been working on with this program along with Mr. Scarice. What we do not know for sure is what teachers we have that would be an asset to this program. We will honor what we have begun and we are not relying on one person, we have had many leaders working on this without any external support.

Chairman Sargent opened the floor to further questions or comments.

There were no further questions or comments.

Chairman Sargent asked again for any further discussion and hearing none the meeting adjourned at 8:26 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Donna M. Anastasia, Town Clerk