

BOARD OF FINANCE
March 12th, 2014
Town Hall Meeting Room 7:30 PM

Board of Finance reviews Board of Education Budget

*This meeting was videotaped and is available upon request
Comments and discussions are not direct quotes of the speakers*

Present: Board of Finance members Chmn Steve Ezzes, V Chmn. Jerry Sargent, members Michael Carter, Melissa Koller, Dick Bochinski, David Finkel and Allan Grauberd. Secretary Donna M. Anastasia.

Also present: Board of Education Chairman Philip Schaefer, Vice Chairman Ellen Uzenoff, board members Nina Daniel, Denise Harvey, Elise Major and Sara Spaulding; School Finance Director Dr. Jo-Ann Keating, Superintendent Dr. Colleen Palmer, Asst. Superintendent Kenneth Crow; Director of Technology Erik Haakonsen; Director of Pupil Personnel Services Lois Pernice, Intermediate School Principal Patricia Falber, Principal Lisa Diorio, Dan Clarke Facilities Manager, and approximately 10 others in attendance.

The meeting was called to order by V Chmn Sargent at 7:37 PM.

Introduction

Mr. Schaefer stated how the BOE has proved to have the best administration. It's more than a job but a commitment to deliver the best education to the town of Weston along with excellence in overseeing the financing where millions of dollars have been saved. Drivers are contractual costs, insurance costs and special education costs. In general our budget increases over the last 5 years have been the lowest in our DRG.¹

Superintendent's Overview

Dr. Palmer

Dr. Palmer went over the drivers (96%) responsible for increasing this budget. Wages, health care costs and special education. The teachers' contract is a driving force, our largest bargaining unit. 65% of the teachers are not at the top step. Many received modest increases, others lost a step. So for this group to now move up a step will be costly. Step increases result in a greater expense than GWI. The overall impact of the WTA will be 2.76% for 2015.

Last August we were forced to hire 3 teachers with an unanticipated increase in the enrollment.

¹ See page 4 for Board of Education requested budget

We would like you to allow us to bring more up to date information to the board before you set a final number. This would include better numbers for OPEB, insurance costs and Special Education and its related costs.

Dr. Palmer commented on the struggling costs of Special Education with other towns experiencing the same problem. Beyond the monetary problem the process causes severe disruption by taking teachers out of the classroom to attend hearings for example. It is a systemic problem being addressed in Hartford because towns will not be able to sustain this trend.

We strive to work out issues early on and look for a common pathway but oftentimes it does not happen that way. One of the primary problems is that in Connecticut the burden of proof is on school district.

Erik Haakonsen (IT Director) went over the aging of some of the equipment. The estimated life of computers currently in use and associated equipment. Equipment being replaced in working condition will get moved to other areas in need.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the enrollment and its effect on the budget. Dr. Palmer commented on the overstock of real estate in town thus increasing the influx of students. And we do promote heavily to encourage teachers and homebuyers to choose Weston. Currently we have four high school students paying full tuition to attend Weston and next year we have five confirmed. We have a unique niche here different from other towns.

There was some discussion on blended learning and utilizing residents in town that are experts in this field however to initiate such a program would still incur costs despite a staffing decrease.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the enrollment. Families are moving into town with small children and there is always an influx in the 5th grade. The housing market plays the biggest role.²

Discussion regarding the OPEB funding, specifically the leveling of the cost over a five year term. There was concern over draining the ISF.

Overall healthcare costs are escalating at a higher rate than any other part of the budget. This is being felt by all districts. Claims and pharmacy costs have risen drastically.

Buy-outs for health insurance as practiced by the town are not cost effective for the school personnel. This has been researched.

² Enrollment details page 5

Discussion regarding insurance for substitute teachers and the process by which they qualify for insurance.

There was discussion regarding paid supervision particularly for drama.

Dr. Palmer- We understand the pressures the BOE puts on the town. We are looking into extended care in the elementary school and what other things can we do to bring in some revenue. We are giving the board the best information we have and the current numbers for the operating budget could very well come down once numbers are finalized. If there is money left over it can be rolled over as opposed to coming back for a supplemental.³

Discussion regarding the alcohol and drug program which trains teachers to look for possible drug/alcohol problems with students; it is an intervention program.

Mr. Sargent wanted to publicly thank Erik Haakonsen for all of his help with the school and working with Sharon Shattuck at town hall. Mr. Sargent added that security has become a very important issue and we should look into a security IT Officer to protect our data bases.

Some discussion regarding the various grants that the district receives.

Discussion regarding the hiring, growth and process once a teacher is hired.

Some discussion regarding new testing methods. Smart balance which has been adopted by the state will replace the traditional CMTs.

Mr. Craw discussed the AIM Program which is a partnership with Columbia University and has been in place for a few years.

Mr. Craw also spoke on the digital learning progress. It is used as a reading tool at home at the elementary level with emphasis on Google drive. Allows for greater collaboration and a suite of tools for teachers to utilize.

We have a partnership with Tufts University at the high school specifically for Physics.

With no further business to come before the meeting Mr. Sargent made a motion to adjourn, motion seconded and meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

³ Budget summary detail page 6

2015 is presented to the Board of Education by the Weston Public Schools' administrative team within this budget document.

Every decision to allocate funds is made by both the Board of Education and the administrative team after carefully analyzing the request and determining, "Is every allocation of funds within the proposed budget essential for the district to continue to serve its students and families in a manner aligned with standards of excellence endorsed by the Weston community?" With that framework of thinking, the budget proposal of the administrative team presented to the Weston Board of Education for its review preserves the quality of education which has been established as a hallmark of the Weston community.

The Board of Education Requested Budget Numbers

The FY 2015 budget request is \$47,494,856, a difference of \$1,919,438 from the adopted FY 2014 budget, representing a 4.21% increase over the adopted FY 2014 budget.

It is informative to review the past five years of budget history for the district as background information of the trends of the adopted education budgets. The five-year history of adopted budgets for education in Weston portray a sustained period of time over which significant savings were realized primarily through systemic work in the operations of the district to find efficiencies, and secondarily, due to the overall reduction of the workforce to address declining enrollments. The district has continuously increased its efficiencies and effectiveness, budgeting only for the essential needs to realize its educational goals and maintaining an appropriate workforce necessary for the educational program of those students enrolled each year.

Fiscal Year	Total Dollars	Dollar Differential From Previous Year	Percent Change from Previous Year
2010	43,975,602	0	0%
2011	44,697,024	721,422	1.64%
2012	45,166,336	469,312	1.05%
2013	45,587,102	420,766	.93%
2014	45,575,418	-11,684	-0.03%
2015	47,698,813*	2,123,395	4.66%
2015	47,494,856**	1,919,438	4.21%

*Administrators' requested budget, not adopted budget, as of January 14, 2014

** Board of Education's requested budget, not adopted budget, as of January, 27 2014

It is also helpful to compare the adopted budgets of those other districts in our same District Reference Group (DRG), districts that are most like Weston in terms of income, education levels of the community, etc. This classification has been created by the CT State Department of Education in its effort to group together similar districts for purposes of comparison. Weston and seven other towns are classified within the DRG A group, of the total range of 169 districts in Connecticut that are clustered into categories from A to I, where the large urban cities comprise DRG I.

All DRG A districts are located in Fairfield County. DRG A includes: Darien, New Canaan, Ridgefield, Easton, Redding, Westport, ER9 (Joel Barlow High School serving Easton and Redding students), Wilton, and Weston. Knowing that these communities have similar staff

year. The minor shifts of cohort sizes from grade to grade are taken into account in the staffing of the district, but do not significantly impact the overall staffing levels or corresponding costs.

Staffing for each school and department is outlined in detail in the respective section of the budget document, but as a district, there is a request for an increase in the total teaching staff of .16 FTE (equal to approximately one teacher less than one day per week) and a decrease of 2.19 FTE non-certified positions for a net reduction of district staff of 2.03 FTE fewer employees.

The district has no control over the housing market and the possibility of a second wave of robust housing sales this spring/summer that could impact enrollment for the FY 2015. All data is monitored to better inform the district for planning purposes.

Enrollment Comparison of Current Year to Projected Numbers FY 2015

Grade	Actual Enrollment October 1, 2013	Projected Enrollment 2014-2015	Change
K	136	138	+2
1	135	142	+7
2	175	146	-29
Hurlbutt Elementary School Total	446	426	-20
3	176	182	+6
4	183	179	-4
5	194	188	-6
Intermediate School Total	553	549	-4
6	190	200	+10
7	214	187	-27
8	216	215	-1
Middle School Total	620	602	-18
9	214	214	-
10	209	215	+6
11	169	204	+35
12	180	167	-13
High School Total	772	800	+28
In-District Total (K-12)	2,391	2,377	-14
Out-of-District (K-12)	21	21	-
Total (K-12)	2,412	2,398	-14
Pre-School	36	38	+2
Total Enrollment	2,448	2,436	-12

BUDGET SUMMARY BY OBJECT DETAIL

Weston Public Schools, Weston, CT

Board of Education's Requested Budget for 2014-2015

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2014	2015	\$ Differ.	% Differ.
	Expended	Expended	Expended	Budget	Expected	Requested	to	to
							Expected	Expected
Administrators	2,230,329	2,255,117	2,267,733	2,404,336	2,416,756	2,474,275	57,519	2.38%
Teachers/Support Staff	17,843,371	18,792,797	18,292,359	18,539,372	18,436,169	19,191,034	754,865	4.09%
Substitute Teachers	426,498	477,182	382,558	408,247	414,343	426,629	12,286	2.97%
Stipends & Summer Work	815,558	841,136	959,641	924,858	918,567	946,173	27,606	3.01%
TOTAL CERTIFIED	21,315,756	22,366,232	21,902,291	22,276,813	22,185,835	23,038,111	852,276	3.84%
Supervision & Classified Staff	964,535	1,094,889	1,240,344	1,273,647	1,286,737	1,343,135	56,398	4.38%
Para Professionals	1,783,965	1,864,214	1,919,242	1,831,893	1,874,575	1,866,944	-7,631	-0.41%
Clerical	1,254,665	1,249,917	1,285,663	1,245,376	1,219,330	1,186,005	-33,325	-2.73%
Facilities Staff	1,184,429	1,235,003	1,364,306	1,358,836	1,398,586	1,445,156	46,570	3.33%
Stipends/Summer Work/Other	171,446	196,659	229,659	211,854	215,623	219,038	3,415	1.58%
TOTAL NON-CERTIFIED	5,359,040	5,640,682	6,039,214	5,921,606	5,994,851	6,060,278	65,427	1.09%
TOTAL SALARIES	26,674,796	28,006,914	27,941,505	28,198,419	28,180,686	29,098,389	917,703	3.26%
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	8,460,519	8,464,912	8,824,088	8,727,730	8,722,463	9,474,354	751,891	8.62%
TOTAL SALARIES & BENEFITS	35,135,315	36,471,826	36,765,593	36,926,149	36,903,149	38,572,743	1,669,594	4.52%
Non-Salary Accounts:								
Professional Educational Services	761,629	749,539	903,079	763,000	836,524	832,000	-4,524	-0.54%
Professional Technical Services	724,929	764,216	997,182	660,585	842,838	721,405	-121,433	-14.41%
Utility Services	102,112	112,626	119,656	119,078	119,078	119,078	0	0.00%
Equipment Rental & Repairs	564,508	595,908	619,224	635,116	653,605	700,774	47,169	7.22%
Contracted Services	1,401,718	1,273,259	1,192,792	1,225,291	1,196,131	1,216,396	20,265	1.69%
Maintenance Projects	257,272	109,061	59,875	57,329	57,277	0	-57,277	-100.00%
Transportation Services	1,365,790	1,344,506	1,250,393	1,256,940	1,269,731	1,310,084	40,353	3.18%
Insurance - Property & Liability	177,230	185,863	186,299	188,086	227,126	204,558	-22,568	-9.94%
Postage	27,991	23,351	22,547	27,310	25,736	25,736	0	0.00%
Communications	134,054	98,509	142,466	113,037	117,437	117,837	400	0.34%
Advertising	6,822	7,348	9,332	7,500	7,500	8,500	1,000	13.33%
Printing Services	26,687	22,712	17,970	28,189	26,017	24,767	-1,250	-4.80%
Reimbursable Expenses	25,266	23,878	27,707	31,540	30,640	30,640	0	0.00%
Training	39,945	43,475	43,941	56,070	56,070	52,670	-3,400	-6.06%
Out Placements	1,567,725	1,290,835	1,279,746	1,422,389	1,928,135	1,767,043	-161,092	-8.35%
Materials	735,936	699,341	614,214	834,467	817,513	814,571	-2,942	-0.36%
Facilities Materials	269,455	278,368	264,971	262,696	262,696	264,668	1,972	0.75%
Diesel Fuel	142,187	173,985	151,381	168,135	149,000	151,980	2,980	2.00%
Energy	1,227,808	1,146,704	1,226,358	1,094,052	1,109,253	1,109,253	0	0.00%
Books	198,120	167,456	107,771	200,525	188,713	190,011	1,298	0.69%
Equipment	358,309	189,580	147,400	67,443	39,093	53,874	14,781	37.81%
Dues & Fees	65,884	68,253	76,568	85,293	88,628	94,490	5,862	6.61%
Miscellaneous	20,574	12,629	30,984	18,500	24,450	20,500	-3,950	-16.16%
Total Non-Salary Expenses	10,201,951	9,381,402	9,491,856	9,322,571	10,073,191	9,830,835	-242,356	-2.41%
Direct Revenue Sources	672,239	690,867	676,964	673,302	884,098	908,722	24,624	2.79%
TOTAL BUDGET REQUEST	44,665,027	45,162,361	45,580,485	45,575,418	46,092,242	47,494,856	1,402,614	3.04%

FY 2015 Budget v FY 2014 Budget **4.21%**

Respectfully submitted

Donna M Anastasia