

The Board of Finance held a special meeting on **September 3, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.** in the **Auditorium at Town Hall, 979 Main Street, Willimantic, CT 06226**

Members Attending: Lynne Ide, Anita Sebestyen, Paula Haney, Thomas White, Tyler Griffin, Nectalis Martinez, and Ken Folan

### **1. Call to Order**

Chairman Lynne Ide called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

### **2. Public Comment**

Doug Lary commented on adding questions to the ballot for the next Board of Education budget referendum. We should collect data from the people that vote. He presented the board with some suggested questions.

Mary Lou DeVivo commented on the public forum held last week, the administration and staff that attended the forum were not Windham voters.

Henry Crane thanked the Board for going out to the Windham Magnet School to hold the public forum. He also commented on the Charter Revision question on the budget. He commented on the Board of Education budget. He also commented on the new Path Academy.

Dennis O'Brien commented on public education and we have an achievement gap. The teachers work hard. The biggest problem is the administration is not involved with the community. The new Superintendent has been out in the community and he suggests the Board give the Superintendent a budget that she needs.

Jenna commented the Board of Education has shown only a bottom line budget instead of a line item budget.

Dennis Kronan commented on the Board of Education budget and he supports the current proposed budget.

Tom DeVivo commented to take a big step and give the Board of Education the funding they need. He would support a \$44,000,000 budget for the Board of Education. Things break and don't get fixed because funding is not available in the budget.

### **3. Board of Finance Comment**

There was no Board of Finance comment

### **4. Discussion and possible action on the Board of Education proposed 2014-2015 budget**

Dr. Garcia commented on the school district and that it is headed in the right direction. She also commented on the Board of Education budget.

Christian Johnson commented on the Board of Education and what the increases are for in the budget. The teacher's salaries increase by 3% per contract.

Thomas White questioned if there is extra money coming from the State for the teachers, then why can't the budget be reduced by the amount of extra money.

Chris Johnson replied there are strict guide lines for the use of funds and these funds are already included in the proposed budget. We cannot supplant current operating expenditures with grant funds.

Paula Haney questioned what would be the impact on the Board of Education if the budget was reduced? Chris Johnson replied some programs would be reduced because of it.

Kenneth Folan commented the previous referendum was close and would like to see any reduction in the Board of Education budget be matched by the use of fund balance.

Kenneth Folan asked if the talent management office was paid for through an Alliance Grant? The Communications Director's salary comes out of the Deputy Superintendent's budget.

Thomas White questioned if the Board of Finance makes a reduction, would an administration position be cut or would a program be reduced for students.

Dr. Garcia commented any reductions need to be made as far away from students as possible.

Chris Johnson advised the Board to not use fund balance.

Upon a motion by Thomas White, seconded by Anita Sebestyen to reduce the 2014-2015 Board of Education by \$200,000.

Kenneth Folan would like to see \$100,000 of fund balance used also.

Upon a motion by Kenneth Folan, seconded by Tyler Griffin, to reduce the 2014-2015 Board of Education by \$200,000 and to include \$100,000 of fund balance. The Town needs to send out an ad showing the impact on taxes.

The motion did not pass with 1 yes vote, 5 no votes, Thomas White abstaining.

Upon a motion by Thomas White, seconded by Anita Sebestyen to reduce the 2014-2015 Board of Education by \$200,000.

The motion passed with 4 yes votes, 2 no votes, and Nectalis Martinez abstaining.

Upon a motion by Thomas White, seconded by Tyler Griffin, to send the Board of Education budget in the amount of \$43,555,007 to referendum on September 23, 2014.

The motion passed unanimously.

## **5. Public Comment**

James Flores commented on the percentage of voters that come out to vote for the referendum. We need to get more people out to vote.

Henry Crane commented there are a number of people that are eligible to vote but are not registered. More people need to get out and vote. Positive information needs to get out about the schools.

Ernie Eldridge commented on the use of fund balance and that the Town and Willimantic Service district have brought money into fund balance the past few years.

Tracy Lambert commented the Board of Education has given back unused funds to the Town for the past three years. The Board of Education hired the new Superintendent based on the best qualified.

Jenna commented on the Board of Education budget and repairs the Board of Education needs to do.

Kathy Cogen commented on teaching in the school system and invited anyone to come into a classroom and ask the teacher, what did the school purchase for the classroom and what did the teacher purchase.

Dennis O'Brien commented the budget should not have been cut at all. The budget should not be decided by a referendum.

Doug Lary thanked the board for considering the questions he presented.

## **6. Adjournment**

Upon a motion by Thomas White, seconded by Anita Sebestyen the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas Pesce