

The Board of Finance held a special meeting on **September 7, 2011** in the Auditorium of Windham Town Hall, 979 Main Street, Willimantic, CT 06226

Members Attending: Barbara McGrath, Jeffrey Smith, Charles Pennewill, Anita Sebestyen, Anna Crawford, Nina Ricardez, and Leo Santucci

Chairman, Barbara McGrath called the meeting to order at 8:06 p.m.

Discussion and possible action on the 2011-2012 Board of Education Budget

Leo Santucci commented that the budget and the increase is above the minimum budget requirement. We need to live within our means. If we put this to referendum as it is there will also be a big increase next year. People will leave Town and the State. He is not against education, he is just being an advocate of the taxpayer.

Upon a motion by Leo Santucci, seconded by Jeffrey Smith for discussion purposes, to reduce the Board of Education budget by \$350,000.

Tom Pesce explained a handout with the reduction options and mill rate impact. The current budget will have a 1.39 mill increase. The history of the Board of Education budget was reviewed. To get the mill rate down to 1 mill there would need to be a reduction of \$350,000.

Charles Pennewill would like to increase the budget and not reduce it. If the budget passes, he would like the preschool program kept in the budget.

Nina Ricardez does not have an opinion on the budget because she did not know about the special master attending the last meeting.

Jeffrey Smith commented he agrees with Charles and is not in favor of the motion.

Anna Crawford commented she is not in favor of the motion. She would like the budget to go out as is and let the voters decide.

Nina Ricardez commented she is in favor of what Anna said.

Anita Sebestyen commented the Town wants to support education but they also want to keep their homes. Can we afford the increase in taxes?

Leo commented on doing the same thing again but expecting a different result

Barbara commented on the special masters recommendations and wants to leave the budget as it is.

Leo Santucci and Anita Sebestyen voted yes. Jeffrey Smith, Anna Crawford, Nina Ricardez, and Barbara McGrath voted no. The motion did not pass.

Upon a motion by Charles Pennewill, seconded by Jeffrey Smith to set the Board of Education budget at 42,757,854 for the town meeting on September 21, 2011.

The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

A Taxpayer commented on adding funds back to the Board of Education budget for the preschool program. Teachers and students are worth it.

Peter Quercia commented some teachers are overpaid and the administrators are overpaid. Eliminate longevity and step increases. We pay a higher mill rate than Farmington.

James Flores commented we are the people and we need to know how the system works. The Board of Education needs to put the preschool program back.

Henry Crane commented that no one votes. He thanked the Board of Finance for not making a reduction to the budget.

Lori Jeffers commented children are best when they stay home with their parents. Half day kindergarten has become full day kindergarten. The Special Master cut the preschool program and she does not know why. The economy is bad and getting worse. She would like to see the funds for the magnet school to be used for books. The budget is too high and will not pass.

Upon a motion by Charles Pennewill, seconded by Leo Santucci, the meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Attest: _____
Thomas Pesce