

The Board of Finance held a Public Forum on April 20, 2011 in the Meeting Room of the Windham Town Hall, 979 Main Street, Willimantic, CT 06226

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

Chairman, Barbara McGrath called the public forum to order at 6:55 p.m.

Public comment

Betty MacDonald commented she is on favor of sports in the middle school and high school.

Kristen Vargas commented Windham is 13th on list for cost per student. What is the funding being spent on? If we want a future for our children we need to make the investment. Taxes should be based on population not on properties.

Henry Crane commented we need to take care of the basics in education with reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Jeffrey Viens commented State education officials have been working with school system. Only the taxpayer is paying for the increase.

Joel Yaez commented the Board is irresponsible. Taxes are being passed on to tenants and they will be leaving because rents will be too high. He asked the Board for a budget that is correct and affordable in today's society.

Peter Quercia commented 40% of social security goes to pay taxes. Board of Education members need to resign and the Board of Education budget should be reduced.

Kristen Gardner commented that teachers have a goal to educate students and they have a difficult job. Students don't want to learn. Need to work with the families of students who aren't doing well.

Lori Jeffers commented she doesn't feel the education budget will pass. She asked if anything different is being done in the school system and suggested self contained classrooms at middle school. With higher taxes and a poor education system, people will want to move out of town.

Larry Kellogg commented the Board of Finance should have asked the Board of Education what is the cost of high school daycare, the cost of health care in the schools, how many students are benefiting from athletics, the cost of substitute custodians, the cost of rental buildings, and why?

Kevin Hoxie commented public education is not free. He suggested a school tax to help take the burden off taxpayers.

Mark Phelps commented on setting a budget and not line items. He asked the Board to support the Board of Education budget and what they have asked for. School programs have been cut and the system cannot perform.

Doug Lary commented he would like the Board of Education budget to go to referendum as it is and see if the voters support it.

Adrian Mandeville commented he would like the budgets to go before the voters and see if they get voted down. Businesses won't be able to afford to come here and some people will move because they can't afford to stay.

John French commented that meetings need to start on time. The Town Council sets policy. The Board of Education educates students, and the Board of Finance should look at what is affordable to the community.

Mary Galucci commented there have been enough cuts. The jobs of two people are now being done by one. Shrinking the budget is unrealistic.

Dennis Cronan commented he supports the budgets.

Bernie Dauteuil commented on the \$100,000 reduction in dispatch and if the \$100,000 was needed, the Board would put it back. He would like the same thing done with the Board of Education. He wants kids to be educated.

Murphy Sewell commented on the distribution of funds in the budget. Most of the money is for federal and state mandates. If a large cut is made mandates won't be met.

Barbara McGrath adjourned the public forum at 7:32 p.m.

Attest: _____
Tom Pesce