



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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BOARD OF FINANCE

JOHN P. RACHEK
Chairman

PEGGY BUSSE
DOUGLAS B. HARDING
DAVID J. OLENDER
BARRY C. PINTO
MICHAEL D. VARNEY

BUDGET HEARING MARCH 19, 2019 MINUTES

Members Present: J. Rachek-Chairman, P. Busse, D. Harding, D. Olender, B. Pinto

Members Absent: M. Varney

Others Present: Dr. Nicol-Superintendent of Schools, B. Greenleaf-Director Finance & Operations BOE, T. Kiff-Judson-Chairman BOE, L. Spielman-First Selectman, School Administrators and staff, Members of the Board of Education, J. Nappo-JI Reporter.

Call to Order

Chairman John Rachek called the hearing to order at 7:34 pm.

Board of Education Budget Presentation – FY 2019-20

Dr. Nicol presented the budget. The vision for Ellington Public Schools is limitless and progress is being made toward this vision in small increments. The budget is 89% maintenance of effort for existing services accounting for 3.37% of the increase. In 2018-19 they added a School Resource Officer, School Security Officer, a special education position and supervisor. These positions were funded through a grant. These positions will have to be funded this year.

Currently there are 2,733 students, 23.8% diversity, 13.5% special education and 16.2% qualify for free services. Ellington's school population grew 4.42% over the last 10 years, 2007-2017. The medium income is \$82,507; Ellington spends \$13,732/student. The Town of Ellington gets the most for their money.

The school budget increase was originally 3.87%, however last week the Board of Education trimmed it back further and it is currently 3.39% increase. The State numbers for ECS and TRB are a net increase of \$10,405. Ellington is in a better position as compared to other towns. The budget total is \$39,601,224.

Savings of \$149,095 are being seen through restructuring and health care. The CMERS Pension contribution is \$110,000 and there is \$50,000 for new financial software in this budget.

The current financial software will be obsolete in 2020. Brian Greenleaf stated that over the next 5 years Ellington will be responsible for \$110,000 for pension contribution which is for employees other than teachers. He is going tomorrow to testify against this at the State Legislature tomorrow.

Major drivers for this budget are salary and benefits at 3.01% increase (75% of the total increase), retirements are at a low, transportation is a 9.17% increase and outside tuition is an unknown. There are some things the Board cannot plan for such as enrollment increases in the elementary schools. Last year an unassigned elementary school teacher was brought on board through a grant to handle an influx of second grade students.

The Board of Education revenues generated last year were \$1,918,300, most of which come from Special Education and Open Choice. The district is restricted by the facilities available to them to implement more programs that would either save money or be revenue sources.

Some long term solutions are the possibility of self-insuring for Health Insurance, which would require a medical reserve account, the dental insurance is already self-insured, and an alternative FICA plan.

Dr. Nicol concluded by stating that he feels good about this budget, and values the partnership and cooperation that exists between the Board of Education, Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance.

Questions

Ms. Busse asked about the 13.5% of students with disabilities. Ms. LaPorte stated that there are currently 15 categories of disabilities, they include learning as well as emotional disturbances. This is a relatively average percentage compared to other school districts.

Ms. Busse asked the Superintendent if there is too much emphasis on looking for revenue and becoming a for profit school system? Dr. Nicol stated that they capitalize on the market plan with the children's benefit in mind, it is always done for the betterment of everyone. Ms. Tiff-Judson stated that she commends the school administration for always looking at ways to improve the learning experience for the children. They are looking for and thinking of finding ways to pay for these things or shift forces around to do it. They think creatively using their talents and skills.

Adjournment

MOVED (HARDING) SECONDED (OLENDER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN AT 8:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted:



Lori Smith, Recording Secretary