



## **Town of Ridgefield Board of Finance Approved Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, March 29, 2018

### **I. Call to order**

D. Ulmer called to order the regular meeting of the Board of Finance at 7:31 PM on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at Ridgefield Town Hall, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT (Large Conference Room). All Board Members (D. Ulmer, S. Connelly, J. Mancini, A. Freidenrich, and D. Moccia) were in attendance.

### **II. Comments from the Public**

D. Silver (Board of Education) requests that J. Mancini recuse herself from voting secondary to comments made on her personal Facebook page. J. Mancini explained that her comments were from a parental standpoint and in no way were influential to the Board. D. Ulmer addressed the comment by stating that this falls under the Freedom of Speech Act. After a brief recess the Board agreed to continue with the evening's scheduled meeting.

### **III. Review of Proposed BOE Budget**

After reviewing the BOE Budget Book, D. Ulmer asked that the BOE utilize the acceptable and more readable format (similar to prior years) as outlined in the Town Charter, Sec. 10-2. As presented, the BOE budget showed a deficit of \$600k, before accounting for the potential budget freeze. Currently, the BOE is funding classroom guidelines, onboarding teachers, educational support, and energy costs (which may include air conditioning, secondary to the extended school year), all of which are variable. R. Miller stated that the BOE is working closely with an Interim Business Manager to expedite the March financials for presentation to the BOF on April 16th.

### **IV. Budget Personnel, Administrative Increases & Costs**

D. Silver stated that staffing trends are driven by the needs of the students during a given school year. D. Moccia expressed concern with onboarding two new school Psychologists from a budgeting perspective. R. Miller feels that these two vacancies are crucial because of the

rising number of students at both the elementary and middle school level. A potential solution is to instead hire a consultant to monitor that the district is meeting the state mandates for students (some of which are required to meet with a Psychologist on a regular basis) with IEP accommodations. This will likely avoid fines and eliminate providing any out of district education.

#### **V. Administrative Positions & Costs**

J. Mancini asked if there would be a reduction in workforce following a lower number of students at both Scott's Ridge and East Ridge Middle Schools. Town residents would like to see a larger teacher presence in both schools. D. Ulmer stated that enrollment numbers are not used as a basis for eliminating positions. Members of the BOE (R. Miller and D. Silver) explained that each Asst. Principal is responsible for 25 certified staff members, patrolling the building, assisting with bus runs, and evaluating tenured teachers. Eliminating a role of this nature will significantly increase the workload for the remaining Principals.

#### **VI. Specific Budget Concerns**

D. Moccia questioned the costs associated with paraprofessionals. The need for paraprofessionals is based solely on the needs of the school(s) during a given year. D. Silver voiced concerns about having adequate supervision for the students at recess, lunch time, and during dismissal. Two technology paraprofessional positions were eliminated to increase supervision during both lunch and recess times. D. Moccia provided potential areas for saving within the budget, which include; building checks, professional days, substitutes, and tutoring.

#### **VII. General Discussion**

- D. Ulmer expressed concern regarding technology costs, as they are associated with various line items. R. Milled responded that a bulk of last years costs were secondary to the new phone system and increased firewall support.
- D. Ulmer asked about the costs associated with window film. J. Mortis states that the window film is essential in the event of a school shooting. The window film acts as a barrier, although not shatterproof, it keeps the glass intact until law enforcement arrives.
- D. Silver discussed class sizes and the twelve classes that are currently at capacity, which has doubled since last year. J. Mancini recommends redistricting which she feels should be done every 4-6 years.

#### **VIII. Adjournment**

**D. Moccia moved and D. Ulmer seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:07 PM.  
Motion carried 5-0.**

Respectfully Submitted by,  
Shannon Freda