

**UNAPPROVED/BOARD OF FINANCE MINUTES  
ANNUAL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING  
MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2009**

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The Annual Meeting and Public Hearing of the Board of Finance was held on Monday, March 30, 2009 in the auditorium of the East Ridge Middle School at 7:30 p.m.

Members Present: Martin Heiser, Chairman, Peter Gomez, Vice Chairman,  
Dave Ulmer, and Robert Cascella

Members Absent: Kevin Walsh

Town Officials: First Selectman, Rudy Marconi; Deborah Low, Supt. of Schools

**AGENDA**

- Proposed School Budget (Austin Drukker, Deborah Low)
- Proposed Town Budget
- Public Comments

Mr. Heiser called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Board of Education Chairman, Austin Drukker made some introductory remarks and then introduced Supt. Of School, Deborah Low who made the attached power point presentation.

**BOARD OF EDUCATION/DEBORAH LOW PRESENTING**

Please see attached presentation.

**TOWN BUDGET/FIRST SELECTMAN, RUDY MARCONI PRESENTING**

Please see attached presentation.

**Voters who spoke:**

Susan Cocco (513 Branchville Road) Wants to see public participation at BOF meetings and a "healthy" Ridgefield

Gina Pin (255 Ridgebury Road) – Give Ridgefield voters a chance to vote on the budget as presented.

Tom Castellani (237 N. Salem Road) – Spoke about cost savings that could be achieved by delaying raises six months.

Susan Pratt (174 Bob Hill Road) – Let the voters decide.

Stephen Cole (638 Danbury Road #63) – Spoke about the burden of salary increases built into union contracts, e.g. the police contract with a 10% increase over the next three years, calling it a “terrible precedent”. Wants to see the installation of a cell tower for Ridgefield’s athletic complexes to facilitate emergency calls.

Doug Silver (9 First Lane) - Spoke in favor of BOE budget.

Linda Maher (1690 Tackora Trail) - Spoke in favor of the “modest increase”. Supports both budgets.

Amy Shinohara (39 Richardson Drive) – Wants to keep the budgets the way they are.

Heidi Namiot (107 Scodon Drive) – Not in favor of taking money from the General Fund to ease the mill rate increase. Let the voters decide. Favors the small increase.

Donna Svendsen (75 Armand Rd) – No more cuts to “bare bones” budget. Let the voters decide.

Keith Miller (6 Vendra Ct) – Wants a zero percent increase. Recommends looking at reducing head count.

Ed Tyrell (17 Pond Road) – He is willing to pay for quality.

Don Romoser (214 Wilton Road) – Keep the budgets as presented.

Mary Dougherty (89 Silver Spring Lane) – Don’t cut the budgets any further.

Irene Burgess (9 Twixt Hills) – Three Starbucks purchases a month = one mill rate increase. She is willing to forego the three Starbucks purchases.

Sue Fernandez (115 Old Washington Rd) – Supports the budgets as presented.

Christine Rodriguez (44 Longview Drive) – Give voters the opportunity to vote on the budgets as presented.

Linda Fabbri (38 Aspen Mill Road) – Spoke about increase in home values at the time of last year’s reassessment, her real estate taxes increased \$1k. Household income down 60%. If the teachers have to pay part of the cost of their health insurance, life as we know it will not end. Public employees should not be immune from what’s going on in the world around them; they need to share the burden and education will not suffer.

Mr. Heiser thanked everyone for coming out to the meeting and reminded them that Board of Finance meetings are open to the public. He gave out his cell phone number and encouraged people to call him with their comments.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

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Karen Rodgers  
Recording Secretary