

**APPROVED BOARD OF FINANCE MINUTES
PUBLIC HEARING
MONDAY, MARCH 28, 2016**

The Public Hearing of the Board of Finance was held on Monday, March 28, 2016 in the auditorium of the East Ridge Middle School at 7:30 p.m.

Members Present: Dave Ulmer, Chairman, Paul Sutherland, Vice Chairman, Marty Heiser; Jessica Mancini; and Mike Raduazzo

Town Officials: First Selectman, Rudy Marconi; Dr. Karen Baldwin, Supt. of Schools
Paul Hendrickson, BOE Business Manager;

Power Point Presentations Attached to These Minutes and made a part thereof.

A G E N D A

- Proposed Town Budget (First Selectman, Rudy Marconi)
- Proposed School Budget (Dr. Baldwin)
- Board of Finance (David Ulmer)
- Public Comments

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

TOWN BUDGET/FIRST SELECTMAN, RUDY MARCONI PRESENTING

Please see attached presentation.

Three individuals who did not provide name or address spoke:

1. Prospect Ridge parking grant
2. The 2.75% salary increase
3. Complimented the level of pension fund contributions

BOARD OF EDUCATION/DR. KAREN BALDWIN PRESENTING

Please see attached presentation.

Four individuals who did not provide name or address spoke:

1. 8% reduction in population and 34% increase in cost
2. What % of school population receives special education services
3. Mac Reed – Ridgefield Press Please provide your name.
4. Caroline: Wellness is not being followed. Discrepancies among schools.

BOARD OF FINANCE/DAVID ULMER PRESENTING

Please see attached presentation.

Voters/Taxpayers who spoke:

Peter Furfaro. – 255 West Lane: Supports budget – let the voters decide

Michelle Brewster – 182 Bennetts Farm Road: No increase in the senior tax credit since 2008. Burden on seniors who contribute a lot to the Town.

Susan Pratt – 174 Bob Hill Road - Supports budget

Suzanne Sherter – 174 Haviland Road: Supports budget

Linda Lavelle – 38 Aspen Mill Road: Noted decrease in Ridgefield household median income and a “profound disconnect” between the decreasing enrollment and increasing BOE budget. Suggested merit increases for teachers.

John Devine – 86 Governor Street: Has a hard time accepting the BOE’s budget. 40% of Ridgefield’s residents are senior citizens.

Steve Cole – 638 Danbury Road: Redding is cutting fourteen (14) teachers. New Milford has just closed a school. Opposed to BOE’s proposed budget.

Amelia Fox – 25 Acorn Place: Supports BOE and BOF budgets.

John McNicholas – 16 Old Washington: People do not move to Ridgefield just for the schools. Pare the BOE down, it’s far too much.

Melene Rose – 9 Hawthorne Hill Road:

Steve Jameison – West Mountain Road BOE defies common sense. Underhanded way they are selling this budget. It is virtuous to live within your means. Create offsets to pay for what you want. Cynical contract negotiation tactics. Urges the BOF not to consider a 3% hike. “Don’t get trumped, hold the line.”

Ed Tyrell – 17 Pond Road – Fully supports the Town’s operating budget. A 2.1% increase over last year. Does not support the BOE’s 5.72% increase which translates into a one year increase of \$5MM and is larger than the combined increases of the previous three years, and \$1MM more than the entire Fire Department’s budget for next year. “They are telling you that this budget is all about making sure our Special Needs Students get the services they deserve. But what it is really about is making sure the unions get what they want.

Elizabeth Mauer – Nod Hill Road: Has experience with union negotiations. Ridgefield did not get “give backs” that is should have gotten. “Nonsense” that is affects real estate values. Noted several large corporations that have moved out of Connecticut and how that affects real estate values.

Stephanie Anderson – Barrack Hill Road: Supports budget.

Sandra Mahoney –Kendra Court: Regarding teachers’ salaries: “You get what you pay for.”

Radya Krell – Worcester Heights Drive: Supports budget

Mark Suet – 20 Round Lake Road: Reconsider the proposal.

Karie Hanlon – Ledges Road: Supports the BOE as is. Give Dr. Baldwin the resources she needs.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:08 p.m.

E-Mails Received as of March 30, 2016		
SUPPORT BOE BUDGET		OPPOSE BOE BUDGET
Partha Bose		Rich Fashnelli
Monica Agrawal Bose		Dick & Dee Aarons
Nicole Barnett		
Katie Brendan		
Caitlin Lunn		
Sandra Mahoney		
Andrew Crist		
Angie Breiten Bach		
Kevin Kuntz		
Amanda Mason		
Angela Reiner		
Rayda Krell		
Tricia Soltese		
Melissa Axen		
Mark Mischenko, Jr.		
Kristen Rosengren		
Beth Frasco Trotter		
Anne Blood		
Kaitlyn Hayes		
Avery Costigan		
Amy Janzon		
Rose & Mike Christ		