

**REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING
TOWN OF DARIEN, CONNECTICUT
FINANCE & BUDGET COMMITTEE
“DRAFT”**

Minutes of a Meeting Held on April 22, 2013

On April 22, 2013, a meeting of the RTM Finance & Budget Committee was held in room #119 at the Darien Town Hall with twelve of fifteen members present.

Present were:

Bill Ball
Mari Lu Cleary
Jack Davis
Werner Domittner
Terry Duffy
Kip Hall
Kirk Hoffman
Bruce Orr
Deb Ritchie
Anita Rycenga
Marc Thorne
Reilly Tierney

Absent: John Boulton, Rob Cardone, Jim Palen

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 p.m. by Mr. Orr.

Mr. Orr brought BOE budget books for committee members in attendance and said that BOS budget is available on line on the Town's website.

Motion was made by Reilly Tierney to approve agenda and was seconded by Werner Domittner.

Mr. Orr pointed out that our next meeting is on May 6 and suggested that we spend this meeting gathering some of our questions regarding the budgets so that he could circulate them to the appropriate people and invite members of BOF, BOS and BOE to discuss them at our next meeting.

Mr. Orr reminded committee that the RTM has three options for voting on the budget: approve, reject, or reduce. If it is rejected last year's budget goes into effect. Line item changes can be recommended with capital budget.

A recap of some questions/concerns:

- How was an almost flat Special Ed budget achieved? Can a spreadsheet be done showing beginning budget with column headings for transfers in/out, any other changes and then far right column the proposed 2013/14 budget numbers for a crystal clear understanding? Any estimate for legal defense?

- What would the BOE budget increase look like on a percentage basis if this year's teacher's contract was not at a half step? This will not be the case next year. What will mitigate this and appx. 3%+ increase in teacher's salaries next year?
- Has an inventory of student desks and chairs been done and if yes, how does it fall short if schools are at full student capacity?
- Provide analysis done regarding school safety monitors such as contracting with outside firm vs. hiring personnel. Pros and cons of both. Will efficiencies be monitored annually? How do long term costs compare?
- The administration department's contract is coming up for review. How does Darien's administration department cost compare to others in DRG? Can RTM F&B committee have a liaison attending the contract negotiations to improve our understanding of the process and end result?
- Increased enrollment anticipated and how does it impact per pupil cost?
- Regarding generators: Is it true that a flood at Hindley will destroy the gas regulator leading to lengthy shutdown due to long lead time to replace? Is there a backup system that can be dedicated to the regulator if a generator is not in the budget?
- Regarding generators: Is it true that if there is a power failure at Ox Ridge there will be a sewage overflow resulting in expensive clean-up and lengthy school closing?
- BOS budget seems to be heavily impacted by software maintenance and upgrade fees. What analysis has been done regarding this?
- What is main driver for BOS budget increases in health insurance?
- Can Liz Mao share her and BOF committee's vision as to what an appropriate level of growth is year to year in our budgets and the acceptable increase in mill rates? Preserving rating status is a consideration certainly. What is debt servicing forecast looking like over the next several years? How have we taken advantage of low rate market?

Mr. Orr will circulate questions and invitations posthaste.

Minutes of the 3/11/13 meeting were unanimously approved with Mr. Orr abstaining due to his absence.

Minutes of the 3/18/13 meeting were unanimously approved with Mr. Tierney abstaining due to his absence.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:10 p.m.

Dated: April 23, 2013

Respectfully submitted,

Anita M. Rycenga

Clerk

RTM Finance & Budget Committee