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**MINUTES OF ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF THE  
TOWN OF FARMINGTON HELD APRIL 26, 2010**

The Annual Town Meeting of electors and citizens qualified to vote in town meetings of the Town of Farmington, Connecticut, was held at the Farmington High School, 10 Monteith Drive, Farmington Connecticut, on Monday April 26, 2010 at 7:00 pm.

Paula B. Ray, Town Clerk called the meeting to order and read the Warning for the meeting, which was published in the Hartford Courant on April 16, 2010, which contained all the resolutions to be considered at the Annual Town Meeting and which is recorded in these records immediately preceding these minutes. There were 268 electors and citizens qualified to vote in town meetings in attendance.

Mr. Christian R. Hoheb was chosen moderator of the meeting and Mrs. Paula B. Ray acted as clerk. Mr. Hoheb outlined the procedures for the meeting.

Item 1:

Mr. Jeffrey Hogan introduced the following resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Timothy Vibert:

Resolved, that the Town Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009 be approved.

The Moderator called for a voice vote and declared the resolution passed.

Item 2:

Mr. Charles Keniston introduced the following resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Jeffrey Hogan:

Resolved, that the budget recommended by the Town Council for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2010 be approved.

The Town Manager began the presentations with the highlights of the Town Council's Recommended Budget, which is recorded immediately following these minutes. She reviewed the General Fund Budget, which included the spending for the Town, the Board of Education, Debt Services and for Capital Improvements. The Westwoods Golf Course Fund, the Recreation Fund, and Solid Waste Disposal and Collection Fund were also included in the budget document. The Town Council's Recommended Budget contained \$84, 885,828 of expenditures, which represented an increase of \$2,705,330 or a 3.29% budget increase. The General Fund Budget contained \$23,501,331 for the Town operating budget, which represented an increase of \$608,595 or a 2.66% increase. The Town operating budget contained for General Administration an increase of 5.8%; Public Safety an increase of 1.1%; Public Works a decrease of .8%; Community and Recreation an increase of .7%; the Other Account an increase of 4.9%. The refuse collection fee for residents was going up from \$209.00 to \$214.00. The Debt Service Accounts contained \$8,943,305 or a 2.17% decrease in spending. The Capital Improvement Plan Budget contained \$950,000 plus a transfer of \$450,000 of CRRA Funds and \$40,000 in transfers from completed projects totaling a \$1,440,000 in proposed spending. The Water Pollution

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Control Authority Budget showed a 0% increase. The Westwoods Golf Course Budget contained \$785,968 an increase of \$20,267. The Board of Education Budget contained \$51,491,192, which represented an increase of \$1,980,430 or 4%.

The Town Manager introduced Mary Grace Reed, Chair of the Board of Education to review the Board of Education Budget. Mary Grace Reed told the audience she would explain what was retained and lost in the Board of Education Budget. She told the audience while the general population students had declined over recent years at the same time the number of special education students had increased. The number of teachers for the general population students had declined and the number of special education teachers had increased over the same period of time. Even with the increase in special education teachers the Town of Farmington still ranked 137 of 169 of Connecticut towns in spending on special education. Mary Grace Reed used the charts recorded with these minutes to reinforce her remarks. She told the audience the Board of Education followed the following fiscal principals: budget smartly, spend wisely, manage expenditures judiciously, and to be collaborative with the Town Council on behalf of the citizens of Farmington. She told the audience how the Board of Education was able to fund a new language laboratory at Farmington High School through collaboration with the Town Council that didn't impact the tax rate at the end of last fiscal year. Kathy Greider, Superintendent of Schools told the audience that she had built her recommended budget to support the goals of the Farmington School System and to be mindful of the difficult economic times. Her budget called for a 5.25% increase in spending. The Board of Education reviewed the Superintendent's Recommended Budget and reduced it by .05% to 5.2%. The Town Council reduced the increase in the Board of Education budget further to a 4% budget increase, which was being considered at the Annual Town Meeting. The 4% increase was divided to a 2.5% increase to cover contractual costs, a 1.85 increase in self-insurance and a .4% reduction for all other expenses. She told the audience the Farmington Administrators on average supervise, support, develop and evaluate more teachers than similar districts and compared to the State average and that Farmington has a higher ratio of pupil to administrator than similar districts and the State. The per pupil expenditures for Farmington ranked 113 out of the 169 towns in the State of Connecticut with number one spending the most, while still maintaining some of the highest test scores in the State of Connecticut, which demonstrated the efficiency and effectiveness of the Farmington school system. She told the audience the impact of last year's 1.94% budget increase touched every core subject at Farmington High School; the number of students participating in the Irving A. Robbins Middle School intramurals decreased by half as a result of the instituting a pay to play structure, the health, wellness and physical education programs were reduced, there was a Math reduction and class sizes now ranged from 17 to 22; at West Woods Upper Elementary School general music was reduced and the class sizes ranged from 22 to 26; at the elementary level there was an Art reduction. She explained the reduction of \$595,748 from the Board of Education Proposed Budget was done keeping core programming as the priority and she reviewed the budget areas reduced to reach the \$595,748. The Superintendent summarized the six major categories of the proposed Board of Education budget: Salaries which represented 67.96% of the total budget were going up by 3.74%, Benefits which represented 14.27% of the total budget were going up 12.35%, Services which represented 14.09 % of the total budget were decreasing by .32%, Supplies which represented 2.84% of the total budget were going up 1.74%, Equipment, which represented .3% of the total budget was decreasing by 25.29%, Dues and Fees, which represented .54% of the budget were decreasing by 12.29%.

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She told the audience that the Board of Education budget maintained class size levels, but reflected a third year of reduced spending in the areas of equipment, services, and personnel.

The Town Manager reviewed the Grand List portion of the budget. The real estate section showed an increase of \$31,081,360 or .95%, the personal property section showed an increase of \$2,001,725 or 1.02%, and the Motor Vehicles section showed an increase of \$1,225,320 or .57%. The Grand List increased by \$34,198,405 or .93%.

The Town Manager reviewed the Revenue Section of the budget, which was projected to decrease by \$660,223 or 6.19%.

The Town Manager told the audience the Town Council Proposed budget would require for funding a .73 mill increase to 20.49 mills on the grand list or a 3.69% tax increase.

Mike Clark, Chair of the Town Council thanked everyone for coming. He told the audience even in difficult economic times the Town of Farmington over the past year was able to return \$448,541 to surplus, saw grand list growth of almost 1%, maintained an industrial vacancy rate of 2% compared to surrounding towns of 8-15%, new businesses moved to Town including the new Hampton Inn, the new Connecticut Building, Beacon Hill Insurance building, the new medical buildings on South Road, Sanford and Hawley's expansion. The Town maintained its AA bond rating and successfully refinanced \$30,000,000 of Town debt, which saved \$1,400,000 in interest payments. He reminded the meeting that despite all the successes the Town of Farmington was facing dropping revenues for next year including \$162,000 less in State of Connecticut grants, \$107,000 drop anticipated in licensing and permit fees, and less interest income. Mr. Clark used the presentation recorded with these minutes to demonstrate the Town Council Proposed Budget to be reasonable, responsive, and transparent to the public. He believed the citizens of Farmington took pride in their Town services and school system and wanted a budget that would maintain them as efficiently as possible. Mr. Clark closed by urging everyone to come out and vote yes on the budget and road referendum questions.

The Moderator opened the meeting for public comment.

Eleanor Pareless of 12 Blenheim Terrace thanked the Council and Board of Education for their work on the budget. She especially thanked Mr. Demicco and Mr. Vibert for their support of education during the budget process. She questioned why the Council chose not to give the Board of Education some of the windfall \$450,000 CRRRA settlement money. She singled out Nancy Nickerson and Patty Stoddard especially considering their history as Board of Education members for not giving the Board of Education more funding. She told the audience she was tired of hearing the drum beat for low taxes at any cost, and if you want more for education, pay it yourself. She asked the Council not to count their emails for advice, but to support the children of the Town of Farmington and adequately fund education. She believed the history of the Town of Farmington was a place that was always supportive of equal opportunity for everyone and there was nothing better than a good public education to promote equal opportunity.

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Sam Iritano of 91 Birdseye Road and President of the Farmington Taxpayers Association, Inc. had three questions for the Council and Board of Education. He stated that Avon High School spent \$1,500 dollars less per pupil representing \$2,000,000 in spending. He wanted to know what we get for our money considering Avon High School students get into the same high performing colleges and universities as our students do and have slightly higher SAT scores. He believed that the costs for Farmington High School were too high and pointed to Department Heads as a possible reason. He asked what do Department Heads do all day since they only teach two class periods a day. He asked what do Assistant Principals do all summer. He asked why Assistant Principals don't act as substitute teachers as needed. He believed the conduct of the Board of Education to be out of control regarding spending and unconscionable.

George Reider of 12 Glenmore Drive found the rhetoric and spin used to describe the Farmington schools to be disgraceful. He believed that it was okay not to agree with all that is done in the Town of Farmington, but that the facts bore out that the Farmington School system was efficient and effective. He was in support of the presented budget, but cautioned that going forward continued tight budgeting would cut into the bone of the Town services and school system and the recovery of lost services would be very difficult and expensive.

Ron White of 19 Wells Drive told the meeting he would like to vote no for the budget if it would mean money was restored to the budget to maintain the services he and others had come to expect. He had moved here for the schools and they were now losing programs. He believed the excellence in our schools was evaporating.

Steven Kay of 57 Garden Gate told the meeting he had moved here for the schools, but now the Town he moved from had more to offer than Farmington. He asked if there was a maximum class size policy in Farmington and how do you budget for it. He asked who's decision it would be to add an additional teacher to address class size.

Steve Caminiti of 16 Mals Way asked what it cost to run a referendum and what did leaf pick-up cost? He pointed out that Avon's high school students out performing Farmington's high school student slightly on SAT's was not a great concern because Johns Hopkins reported rejecting 63 students with perfect SAT's in favor of students with lower SAT's. He asked when low enough would be low enough and that we didn't want it to be at the cost of an excellent school system.

Arlene Kline of 43 Cope Farms Road told the meeting she had read in the Valley Press that many students were shut out of classes at Avon High School because of the lack of available classes and were forced to spend too many periods just sitting in study hall. She agreed with voting yes on the budget, but she was disappointed with the level of education funding. She was concerned about the loss of tutorials and gifted and talented programs, because that meant we were teaching to the middle.

Mark Simpson of 12 Gillette Way asked the Board of Education why they hadn't put their self-insurance administration out to bid? He believed the money the Town of Farmington received through the ECS Grant was too low. He pointed out that Simsbury, Avon, Glastonbury all get substantially more per student than Farmington. He suggested that supporters of education turn their efforts toward our State legislators for more money.

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Mark Fey of 144 Main Street reminded the audience that 8 out of 9 unions that represent the Town had given salary give backs. He felt this year the economic situation was better than last year and that the proposed 3.69% tax increase was austere but included some important equipment and infrastructure upgrades. He felt the 4% budget increase slated for the Board of Education was warranted due to the losses they had suffered last year. He urged everyone to vote yes for the budget and road question.

Elizabeth McNamara 42 Pine Drive had four children in the school system. She reminded the Board of Education that all Farmington children weren't going to doctors and lawyers. She was very concerned about the loss of culinary arts. She hoped everyone would vote yes so no more programs would be lost in the schools.

Jean Baron of 22 Basswood Road thanked everyone for his or her work on the budget. She was very sad about the cuts taken at Farmington High School last year and this year. She urged everyone to vote yes. She hoped after the budget was settled, the Town would figure out how to increase education funding.

Harry Kraiza of 18 Crosswood Road and the Farmington Taxpayers Association, Inc. asked three questions. He asked why the Board of Education showed a budget increase of 18.44% in self-insurance while the Town self-insurance account showed a 1.9% increase. He asked if the Town of Farmington unions had been asked to take no raises again this year. He asked why we have \$21,000 of overtime in the budget per patrol officer.

Bob Greger of 10 Kent Lane and the Farmington Taxpayers Association, Inc. asked the Board of Education how they planned to curb the salary increases in future contracts and what the Board of Education thought about the fact that teachers in Connecticut had the highest salaries in the United States and therefore the world.

Rob Huelin of 21 Bidwell Square asked the audience to stop engaging in magical realism and poor comparisons to evaluate the Town Council Proposed Budget. He characterized the Town Council Proposed Budget as a modest growth budget, efficient and minimalist. He believed the Town of Farmington residents get a lot for their money. He told the audience they are voting whether to cut the budget not whether you approve it or not. He asked everyone to vote yes to protect the Town of Farmington services.

Edgar King of 11 LedgeWood Road told everyone to vote yes on the budget and road question. He was impressed with thoroughness of the presentations done by the Town and Board of Education, but alarmed to hear what technology was being eliminated from the Board of Education budget. He wondered why we were at that stage. He suggested the Town needed to prioritize better in order to have the funding for more important items. He believed the money spent on things such as road calming and certain open space acquisitions were examples of things money should not have been spent on. He questioned what were we doing to plan for the loss of revenue in State funding that would be expected next year and the year after considering the budget mess the State of Connecticut was in. He asked how much money was left in the open space bonding authorization and suggested it should be withdrawn.

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Ned Statchen of 6 Bella Lane told the audience he had moved here for the schools and asked everyone to vote yes on the budget to keep the schools improving. He believed the high property values in Farmington were due to the quality of the schools.

Elizabeth Fitzsimmons of 6 Bella Lane thanked the Board of Education and Town Council for their work on the budget. She believed no one was completely happy with the budget, but that was the nature of a process that required a series of compromises. She urged everyone to vote yes to protect the Town of Farmington services and to trust our elected officials. She believed the Board of Education budget would need to be supported with more funding in the future because it was at the point that if it were squeezed anymore the school system would deteriorate greatly.

Sarah Ashton of 8 Morgan Place told the audience she had moved to Farmington for the schools and that she worked in real estate. She believed that if we didn't improve education funding, we would have to continue to cut programs yearly. Eventually, the schools would not be considered excellent anymore and the property values would decrease. She asked when some of the programs could be restored.

Zalman Nakhimovsky of 53 Walnut Street urged the voters to turn out and vote yes. He told the audience that the slightly higher SAT scores in Avon wasn't an accurate measure of the comparative quality of the two schools. He felt the Advanced Placement offerings offered at Farmington High School spoke to its superior quality over Avon. He agreed with an earlier speaker that we should put a halt on open space purchasing until we can better fund the Town basic services better.

Andrea Ficks of 34 Basswood Road told the audience her 7-year-old daughter had told her to come to the meeting and fight for the schools. She was a resident, parent and employee of the Board of Education. She told the audience that the parents supported the day-to-day functions of the schools already. She gave several examples of the expenses the PTO were covering at Union School. She believed nothing else could be squeezed from the Board of Education budget.

Mike Andreas of 29 Crosswood Road told the audience that the Town Council had done a good job crafting the budget considering the tough economic times. He told reminded everyone the value of the services that they receive from the Town and the Board of Education.

Ron Harrison of 49 Worthington Drive asked why didn't the Town privatize some of the services offered and why don't the Town and Board of Education combine some of the duplicated services offered by both for cost savings.

Patty Lathrop of 39 Field Stone Run complimented the students at Farmington High School on their passion to save school equipment and programming. She told the audience that her son was in the first class at West Woods Upper Elementary School and now he was a freshman in college. She hoped the students there today were getting the same opportunities he had had. She cautioned everyone about dwelling on the negative things and to remember Farmington was a great Town. She asked everyone to support the budget.

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Dana Miller of 219 Main Street was disappointed in the low percentage turnouts for referendum votes. He told the audience his taxes have gone up 51% over the past ten years. He suggested some of the school costs should be passed on directly to the parents.

Joan Morin of 27 Berkshire Drive told the Board of Education and the Town Council she appreciated their work on the budget. She asked the Board of Education why after the outpouring of supporters for the Culinary Program at the High School hadn't the Board of Education adjusted their budget to re-instate it.

Jean Pecora of 4 Morgan Place was very disappointed over the loss of Latin at West Woods Middle School. She asked if there was anything that could be done to restore the program.

Bea Stockwell of 26 Waterville Road believed it was time to get this budget behind us by passing it. She wanted the Town to begin to think about ways to re-build the Town infrastructure and increase Board of Education budgets.

### Item 3

The Moderator called for a resolution to move the third item contained in the Warning that the Town of Farmington appropriate \$2,000,000 for repairs to and reconstruction of various Town roads and drainage systems and authorize the issuance of bonds and notes in the same amount to finance said appropriation.

The resolution noticed under item 3 of the Warning of the meeting, which was read into the record by the Clerk of the meeting and is recorded following these minutes, was moved and seconded.

The Town Manager reviewed the presentation on the proposal recorded following these minutes.

The Moderator opened the meeting for public comment.

Dana Miller of 219 Main Street asked for an explanation of the full/partial terminology used in the presentation.

### Item 4

The Moderator asked if there was any other business to come before the meeting.

Hearing none the Moderator asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting to referendum vote on the resolutions considered pursuant to the items in the Annual Town Meeting noticed to be held on Thursday May 6, 2010 between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. at the polling places indicated in the notice.

It was moved and seconded.

The resolutions presented under item 2 and item 3 of the Warning of the Annual Town Meeting shall be placed upon the voting machines under the following headings:

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1. "SHALL THE BUDGET FOR THE TOWN OF FARMINGTON PRESENTED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL AND RECOMMENDED BY THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010-2011 BE APPROVED?"

YES

NO"

2. "SHALL THE TOWN OF FARMINGTON APPROPRIATE \$2,000,000 FOR REPAIRS TO AND RECONSTRUCTION OF VARIOUS TOWN ROADS AND DRAINAGE SYSTEMS, AND AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS AND NOTES IN THE SAME AMOUNT TO FINANCE SAID APPROPRIATION?"

YES

NO"

Those in favor of the resolutions shall vote "yes" and those opposed shall vote "no".

The Moderator called for a voice vote on the motion and declared the meeting adjourned to referendum at 11:15 p.m.

Paula B. Ray, Clerk