

Minutes of the Town of Farmington
Special Town Council Meeting
March 12, 2016

Present:

Nancy W. Nickerson, Chair
Jon Landry
Peter M. Mastrobattista
Gary Palumbo
Amy Suffredini
Meredith A. Trimble
John Vibert

Kathy Eagen, Town Manager
Paula B. Ray, Clerk

A. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The Council and members of the public recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Public Comment

Beth Kittner of 24 Farmstead Lane told the Council that the reason the Board of Education didn't meet their budget target was because they had had a bad year with insurance. She didn't want cuts to impact students. She believed the over the past few years the schools had caught up in several areas and didn't want things to start sliding backwards. She thought the proposed tax increase of approximately \$20.00 per household was modest.

Stephen Kay of 57 Garden Gate thanked the Council for their work and hoped they would be unbiased in their deliberations. He admitted he was biased toward not only his children's welfare but that of all children. He told the Council our extras in the schools were taken for granted in other school systems, and we shouldn't be talking about what the minimums to get by with were. He wanted the residents to be able to vote on the proposed BOE budget without cuts.

Rafeena Lee of 3 Hamilton told the Council she had moved here for the schools. She was concerned programs such as elementary foreign language and policies such as class size would suffer if the BOE budget were cut.

Paul Kix of 53 Garden Street told the Council he was a journalist and author. He was concerned language and arts programs would get cut first if cuts were made.

Jeff Przech of 12 Lake Garda Drive told the Council he was a teacher and union member. He didn't want cuts made to the Board of Education budget. He didn't want technology cut and good enough isn't good enough for Farmington schools. He believed we owed the children of Farmington better than that.

Lisa Patel of 10 Hinchley Wood told the Council she had 3 children and had moved here for the schools. She didn't want the BOE budget cut in order to keep class sizes small.

Kristen Mok of 26 Farmstead Lane, PTO President Noah Wallace School read a letter from Michael Smith 46 High Street into the record, which is recorded with these minutes as Agenda Item C-1.

Lori Baylock Tomkiewicz of 3 Old Canal Crossing didn't want the BOE budget cut and especially supported the technology dollars in the budget.

Staci Gerace of 97 Somersby Way told the Council she had 4 children in the schools that loved school. She didn't want the BOE budget cut. She believed any cut to the Board of Education budget would result in diminished music, no more elementary foreign language and increased class sizes.

Nora Benanti of 26 Tall Timbers Drive felt the Board of Education worked very hard on their budget and were very thoughtful about how they spent money.

D. To consider and take action on the proposed FY 2016-2017 Operating Budget

Debit Service

The Manager; Erica Robertson, Assistant Town Manager and Joseph Swetcky, Director of Finance and Administration reviewed the Debit Service section of the Town Manager's Proposed Budget and answered Council questions.

Motion was made and seconded (Trimble/Mastrobattista) to tentatively approve page 67.

Adopted unanimously.

Non-Tax Revenues

The Manager; Erica Robertson, Assistant Town Manager and Joseph Swetcky, Director of Finance and Administration reviewed the Non-tax Revenues section of the Town Manager's Proposed Budget and answered Council questions.

Motion was made and seconded (Trimble/Mastrobattista) to tentatively approve the non-tax revenues in the summaries section of the budget.

Adopted unanimously.

Motion was made and seconded (Trimble/Mastrobattista) to amend the Capital Improvement Plan Budget by moving the Sprayground Water Park for \$75,000 in the Community and Recreation section from fiscal year 2018/2019 to fiscal year 2017/2018 and to add \$120,000 to the Board of Education section, for a student transportation vehicle and FHS dishwasher.

Adopted unanimously.

Motion was made and seconded (Trimble/Mastrobattista) to set the Town Operations Fiscal Year 2016/2017 Budget at \$28,229,371 and increase of \$1,110,463 or 4.09% over the current year budget.

Adopted unanimously.

Motion was made and seconded (Trimble/Mastrobattista) to set the Fiscal Year 2016/2017 Debit Service Budget at \$6,827,369 an increase of 0.13% over the current year budget.

Adopted unanimously.

Motion was made and seconded (Trimble/Mastrobattista) to set the Board of Education Fiscal Year 2016/2017 Budget at \$62,686,075 for an increase of \$2,294,866 or 3.8% over the current year budget.

Motion was made and seconded (Vibert/Suffredini) to amend the motion to set the Board of Education Fiscal Year 2016/2017 Budget at \$62,806,857 an increase of 4.0% over the current year budget.

Failed.

Voting yes Suffredini and Vibert.

Voting no Nickerson, Landry, Mastrobattista, Palumbo and Trimble.

Adopted.

Voting yes Nickerson, Landry, Mastrobattista, Palumbo and Trimble.

Voting no Suffredini and Vibert.

Motion was made and seconded (Trimble/Mastrobattista) to set the Town of Farmington Fiscal Year 2016/2017 Budget for the Board of Education at \$62,686,075 or a 3.8 % budget increase above the Fiscal Year 2015/2016; and the Town Budget at \$28,229,371 or a 4.09% increase above the Fiscal Year 2015/2016; and the Debit Service at \$6,827,369 or a 0.13% above Fiscal Year 2015/2016; and the Capital Improvement Plan Budget at \$3,356,900 or a 3.8% increase above the Fiscal Year 2015/2016 resulting in a total expenditure of \$101,099,715 or a 3.63% increase over Fiscal Year 2015/2016 Budget.

Adopted

Voting yes were Nickerson, Landry, Mastrobattista, Palumbo, Suffredini and Trimble.
Voting no Vibert.

E. To approve the Warning of the April 25, 2016 Annual Town Meeting and the May 5, 2016 Referendum.

Motion was made and seconded (Trimble/Mastrobattista) to approve the Warning of the April 25, 2016 Annual Town Meeting and the May 5, 2016 Referendum.

Adopted unanimously.

F. Adjourn to Executive Session

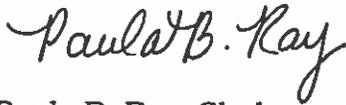
There was no Executive Session held.

G. Adjournment

Motion was made and seconded (Trimble/Mastrobattista) to adjourn the meeting at 11:28 pm.

Adopted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Paula B. Ray, Clerk

Agenda Item C-1

March 12, 2016

Dear Members of Town Council,

My wife and I are not able to attend this meeting so I have asked that my comments to you be read as part of your time for public comment.

My name is Michael Smith and I live at 46 High Street. My wife Christina and our two daughters Charlotte and Jane are new to Farmington. We moved here in April of 2015.

I am speaking today to request your full support of the \$63,033,101 Board of Education budget that has been vetted and presented to you.

In Suffield, where we moved from, I spent sixteen years as a member of their Board of Education, eight of them as Chairperson, so I am intimately familiar with the responsibilities of your work and the pressures and challenges you face. I am also DEEPLY appreciative of the service you provide to our town!

Like all BOE budgets, the one before you represents commitments Farmington has negotiated with employees of the BOE, and commitments that we as a community are required by Federal and State statute to provide.

I appreciate that as members of the Town Council, it is not your role to dictate the direction of specific spending within the BOE budget, but rather to assess its appropriateness and impact on overall town spending and taxes. That said any reductions that you make to the total BOE budget would impact non-required resources. These might include things like the early world language immersion program, technology resources, and class sizes.

Having shepherded many budgets through some of the worst recessions in Connecticut, I can appreciate that there are times when cuts to non-required, but locally supported and valued resources are part of "closing the gap" and passing budgets that assuage pressure from community to keep taxes down.

Farmington's Grand List is increasing, and from reviewing its 2015 audited financial statements, Farmington's net position increased by over 3 million dollars; its unassigned fund balance increased \$791,402 from the prior year. The Town's unemployment rate was 3.7% as of June 2015, a significant decrease of 1.2% from June 2014. The June 2015 rate remains significantly lower than the Hartford Labor Market Area and the State of Connecticut rates of 5.4%.

I am not certain that these trends would lead one to conclude that we are experiencing one of those times where pressure must be exercised from outside of the BOE to reduce its offerings to the community.

Farmington boasts an excellent reputation for the resources offered through its schools. As a past BOE chairperson, I was “in the know” about the education offerings in our 169 towns and I chose Farmington. This is a proud community that has and will continue to support the investments that you are making in education. You are the first line of that support. I urge you to take the lead in supporting a budget that will allow our community to vote for the investments that Board of Education and the community are behind.

Transparency is vital to good governance. If you have identified specific areas of the education budget that you believe require further scrutiny, please put them on the table today and provide time for dialogue with the BOE, its Superintendent and the community. This dialogue will serve to strengthen our collective understanding of our values and the challenges and issues before our town.

In the absence of specific budgetary concerns, or economic pressures, a general desire to simply reduce spending leaves the community with questions. They will look to the BOE, who if they had a collective desire to reduce their budget would have. If you create a budgetary cap on BOE spending after they have negotiated in good faith with their employees, then cuts that they make will effect areas of their budget that impact investments in education that are supported by constituents. If this results in the divestment in early world language learning and technology supports or/and increases in class size than we should pause to consider the importance of these resources.

In 1994 when Suffield created its elementary school world language program, I was at best a tepid supporter. It was a program launched and nurtured by Dr. Bruce Douglas, our Superintendent at the time who left Suffield to become CREC’s Executive Director. This line item of the budget escaped cuts early on and has blossomed into a robust program. Having remained on the BOE for sixteen years I became an enthusiastic supporter of the program. This early education created a solid foundation for language learning and ultimately led to increasing our graduation requirements for world languages; an important State and Federal priority.

Technology is changing how we learn. The BOE has made and hopes to continue to make investments in learning technology such as Chromebooks. Now is not the time to reduce technology resources. Nor is it a time to increase class sizes especially with increasing pressures to differentiate learning in classrooms. If Farmington, like all other districts, cannot successfully differentiate learning in our classrooms than our district will face increased pressure to access more expensive ‘out of district’ services to address Federal law related to students with different learning abilities.

With an expanding Grand List and no extraordinary economic pressure in our community to reduce the offerings that we presently provide, if you can show no cause for concern with specific BOE budget content, then I strongly encourage you to support the investment in education that the budget before you will be making.

I enjoy living in Farmington, I look forward to our daughters learning and growing here, and my wife and I being active participants in this community. I have ENORMOUS respect for your service and your commitment to lead. Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Smith
46 High Street
Farmington, Connecticut 06032

WARNING
TOWN OF FARMINGTON
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING — APRIL 25, 2016
REFERENDUM — MAY 5, 2016

The legal voters of the Town of Farmington and those qualified to vote at town meetings of said Town are hereby warned and notified that the Annual Town Meeting of the Town of Farmington is called for Monday, April 25, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Farmington High School Auditorium, 10 Monteith Drive in Farmington, Connecticut, for the following purposes:

1. To consider and act upon the recommendation of the Town Council that the following resolution be adopted:

RESOLVED, that the Town Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015 be approved.

2. To consider and act upon the recommendation of the Town Council that the following resolution be adopted:

RESOLVED, that the budget recommended by the Town Council for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2016 be approved.

3. To consider the recommendation of the Town Council that a resolution be adopted:

(a) to appropriate \$4,000,000 for costs related to repairs to and reconstruction of such various Town roads and drainage systems as may be determined by the Town Manager and the Town Engineer from time-to-time. The appropriation may be spent for design, installation and construction costs, engineering fees, materials, legal fees, net temporary interest and other financing costs, and other expenses related to the project;

(b) to authorize the issue of bonds or notes of the Town in an amount not to exceed \$4,000,000; to authorize the issue of temporary notes of the Town in an amount not to exceed \$4,000,000 in anticipation of such bonds or notes; and to authorize the Town Manager and the Town Treasurer to determine the amounts, dates, interest rates, redemption provisions, form and other details of the bonds or notes; and to perform all other acts which are necessary or appropriate to issue the bonds or notes;

(c) to take such action to allow temporary advances of available funds which the Town reasonably expects to reimburse from the proceeds of borrowings; and to authorize the Town Manager and the Town Treasurer to bind the Town pursuant to such representations and covenants as they deem necessary or advisable in order to maintain the continued exemption from federal income taxation of interest on the bonds or notes authorized by the resolution if issued on a tax-exempt basis, including covenants to pay rebates of investment earnings to the United States in future years, and to make representations and enter into written agreements for the benefit of holders of the bonds or notes to provide secondary market disclosure information, which agreements may include such terms as they deem advisable or appropriate in order to

comply with applicable laws or rules pertaining to the sale or purchase of such bonds or notes; and

(d) to authorize the Town Council, Town Manager, the Town Engineer, the Town Treasurer and other proper officers and officials of the Town to take all other action which is necessary or desirable to complete the project and to issue bonds, notes or temporary notes to finance the aforesaid appropriation.

4. To consider the recommendation of the Town Council that a resolution be adopted:

(a) to appropriate \$600,000 for costs related to acquisition of a pumper fire engine to replace Engine #3 at the Southwest Fire Station, and related equipment. The appropriation may be spent for acquisition and commissioning costs, equipment, legal fees, net temporary interest and other financing costs, and other expenses related to the project;

(b) to authorize the issue of bonds or notes of the Town in an amount not to exceed \$600,000; to authorize the issue of temporary notes of the Town in an amount not to exceed \$600,000 in anticipation of such bonds or notes; and to authorize the Town Manager and the Town Treasurer to determine the amounts, dates, interest rates, redemption provisions, form and other details of the bonds or notes; and to perform all other acts which are necessary or appropriate to issue the bonds or notes;

(c) to take such action to allow temporary advances of available funds which the Town reasonably expects to reimburse from the proceeds of borrowings; and to authorize the Town Manager and the Town Treasurer to bind the Town pursuant to such representations and covenants as they deem necessary or advisable in order to maintain the continued exemption from federal income taxation of interest on the bonds or notes authorized by the resolution if issued on a tax-exempt basis, including covenants to pay rebates of investment earnings to the United States in future years, and to make representations and enter into written agreements for the benefit of holders of the bonds or notes to provide secondary market disclosure information, which agreements may include such terms as they deem advisable or appropriate in order to comply with applicable laws or rules pertaining to the sale or purchase of such bonds or notes; and

(d) to authorize the Town Council, the Town Manager, Town Treasurer and other proper officers and officials of the Town to take all other action which is necessary or desirable to complete the project and to issue bonds, notes or temporary notes to finance the aforesaid appropriation.

5. To consider and act upon any other business which may properly come before said meeting.

6. The moderator shall adjourn this meeting and the resolution presented under item 2 of this Warning, as submitted to the Annual Town Meeting or as modified thereby, shall become effective unless rejected, and the resolutions presented under items 3 and 4 of this Warning shall become effective only after having been submitted and approved, by a vote on

voting machines of persons qualified to vote in town meetings on Thursday, May 5, 2016 between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Electors shall vote at their regularly assigned polling places, as follows: Electors residing in the First Voting District and assigned to polling places 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, and 1-4 shall vote at Irving A. Robbins Middle School, 20 Wolf Pit Road, Farmington, Connecticut; and those assigned to polling place 1-5 shall vote at West Woods Upper Elementary School, 50 Judson Lane, Farmington, Connecticut. Electors residing in the Second Voting District and assigned to polling place 2-6 shall vote at the Community & Senior Center, 321 New Britain Avenue, Unionville, Connecticut; and those assigned to polling place 2-7 shall vote at the Municipal Complex, Monteith Drive, Farmington, Connecticut. Voters qualified to vote at town meeting who are not electors shall vote at their respective polling place at Irving A. Robbins Middle School, West Woods Upper Elementary School, the Community & Senior Center or the Municipal Complex. Absentee ballots will be available from the Town Clerk's office.

Said resolutions shall be placed upon the ballots under the following headings:

1. "SHALL THE BUDGET FOR THE TOWN OF FARMINGTON PRESENTED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL AND RECOMMENDED BY THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016-2017 BE APPROVED?"

YES

NO"

2. SHALL THE TOWN OF FARMINGTON APPROPRIATE \$4,000,000 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"

3. "SHALL THE TOWN OF FARMINGTON APPROPRIATE \$600,000 FOR ACQUISITION OF A PUMPER FIRE ENGINE TO BE STATIONED AT THE SOUTHWEST FIRE STATION AND AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS AND NOTES IN THE SAME AMOUNT TO FINANCE SAID APPROPRIATION?"

YES

NO"

Voters approving a resolution shall vote "Yes" and voters opposing a resolution shall vote "No".

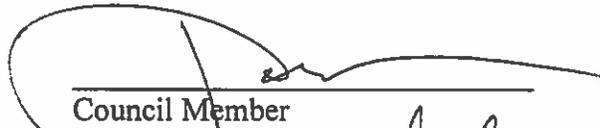
Dated at Farmington, Connecticut this

day of March, 2016.

PER ORDER OF THE FARMINGTON TOWN COUNCIL



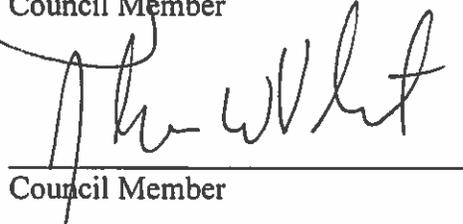
Council Chair



Council Member



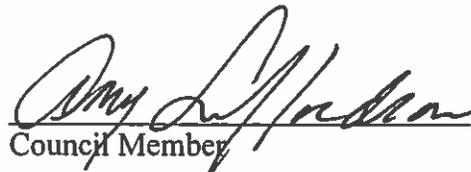
Council Member



Council Member



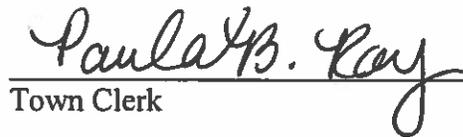
Council Member



Council Member



Council Member



Town Clerk