

1. The **Special Town Council Joint Meeting with the Board of Finance and Board of Education on Tuesday, April 20, 2010** was called to order by Mayor Vincent Festa in the Cafeteria at Terryville High School at **9:26 p.m.**

Mayor Festa, we do have a quorum present for the Town Council. Mr. Chairman, Board of Finance, do you have a quorum present. Chairman Zovich, I have a quorum for the Board of Finance Mr. Mayor.

2. Fire Exits

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Councilman Sekorski, point of order Mr. Mayor, item number 5 on our Agenda, I believe we have to move to schedule the referendum and I believe the date is incorrect and it has to be on Agenda needs to be Tuesday, May 4th.

MOTION: To amend item 5 to make the Agenda item to read "To move to schedule Tuesday, May 4, 2010 as the date for the Annual Budget Referendum for the purpose of adopting a budget" by Councilman Sekorski; second Councilwoman Schenkel. Discussion: none. Vote: unanimous.

MOTION: To add an announcement item to the Agenda, Item number 6, "Announcement" as item 6 by Councilman Sekorski; second Councilwoman Schenkel. Discussion: none. Vote: unanimous.

4. To allow the Board of Finance to present the recommended Budget and by a majority vote of its members make, if necessary, changes to the Budget to be recommended to the Town Referendum, if necessary.

Chairman Zovich Mr. Mayor on behalf of the Board of Finance I would respectfully request that you accept budget as presented this evening and send on to referendum and we do have a quorum here this evening and any motions made we can discuss. Mayor Festa, Mr. Chairman would you poll your Board. Chairman Zovich, can I have a motion to send the budget to referendum as presented recommended.

MOTION: To send the budget to referendum as presented and recommended by Vicky Carey; second Pat Budnick. Vote: Pat Budnick, yes; Dan Murray, yes; Vicky Carey, yes; Mike Drozdick, yes and the vote unanimous.

Mayor Festa, the next item on the agenda would be item 6 the Announcement. Councilman Sandshaw, on behalf of the Terryville Memorial Day Committee and the Plymouth Memorial Day Committee, this Committee would like to invite the Mayor and Council to participate in the services. The service in Plymouth is 10 am at the Church and 11 o'clock the service on the Green on May 30th; and in Terryville it is 10:30 at the Terryville fire house where the parade starts and that is on May 31st.

Mayor Festa, the next item on the agenda would be a motion to adjourn. Excuse me. The next is item 5 and we need a motion. Item 5.

5. To move to schedule Tuesday, May 4, 2010, as the date for the Annual Budget Referendum for the purpose of adopting a budget.

MOTION: To schedule Tuesday, May 4th as the date for the Annual Budget Referendum for the purpose of adopting a budget, by Councilman Sekorski; second Councilwoman Schenkel. Discussion:

Councilman Sekorski, I have a question. Is it within the power of the Town Council to amend the presented budget by the Board of Finance. Chairman Zovich, you can request a change as we have a quorum and we can discuss it. Vicky Carey, no we cannot. Before you had made a motion, you need to make a motion to send it to Town Council to send it to the public for referendum and because we did not do that and we did a roll call vote and what you should have done is made any presentations from you or the Board of Education in this meeting as a joint meeting first off before we did that. But we already voted on that motion and they can't even ask us to change it. Chairman Zovich, let me just give

a point of clarification. That is my fault and I did not ask for discussion on the motion. But with the Mayor or with the Chairman's permission I would like to follow up there was on the record at the public hearing a request by the Chairman of the Board of Education to restore funding and even though we have already voted to send the budget to referendum and you have set a date. Just as a point of clarification I think I owe the Chairman of the Board of Education an explanation on why we did that. Members of the Board of Finance had this discussion and it is not only because we faced this impending budget hold next year that could be upwards of \$1.5 million as Gerry mentioned. The fact of the matter is that we have identified savings we that believe that the Board of Education can make. And, it is not within our authority or prevue to direct how they make their reductions but our suggestions are to reduce the \$37,000 that we had transferred out of their budget into public works for snowplowing and to bring back 3 of the private outplacements at the full reimbursement and they will get a savings of \$160,000 upward and again for those things have to happen in order to realize savings. Also, I will say for the record that the special Ed costs are just consuming a larger and larger percentage of the budget and have to be contained somehow someway. Again, you don't That is only clarification can offer because we have already voted to recommend the budget go to referendum. Mayor Festa, the question I would raise is that are you raising a point of clarification for purpose of reconsidering your vote. Chairman Zovich, that would be up to the members. I will take another poll. Are there any members. Mayor Festa, a discussion by the Board of Finance to rescind their vote. Chairman Zovich, are there any indications by the Board to rescind their vote. Hearing none, Mr. Mayor I would have to say the vote will stand. Superintendent Distasio, I would just like to make one point of clarification, special education outplacement sounds very simple bringing 3 kids back and this year brought 4 back to district and department of family services increased us by 4 students which have no say whatsoever and have no control. DCF comes in and places students out and sends you the bill. Roxanne Perugino, surprised, can ask question on what you said is we found where you can cut and you decided where to cut without knowing unfunded mandates or anything else. How can you say. Chairman Zovich, we debated this issue for two meetings and we studied your budget and we have a copy the superintendent gave us and have gone through each department and we tried looking at it from your perspective as if we were sitting in your place where we would try to focus on reductions and you already made tremendous gains in energy cost savings, reduced your fuel costs, you cut your operating costs, you reduced your maintenance budget. The only area and you can see in slide presentation is your salary structure and if you look at page 17 you have increased 1 special ed from the 08-09 year and one para professional and what I would suggest is you go back to the same level of staffing from 2007-2008 and reduce one special ed teacher and one paraprofessional. I don't know what else to tell you but it will be more painful next year. We fear same thing you fear that loss of \$1.5 million is an automatic 2 mil increase. Mayor Festa, excuse me, excuse me please, Dr. Distasio has the floor please. Dr. Distasio, superintendent of schools, again I want to respond to that person in that budget and we put that person in the budget to create an ed program in our school and that ed program allowed us to keep 3-4 students in our district rather than placing them out and if we were to cut that position, you cut that program, add another \$200,000 to the budget because of outplacement. So that is a catch twenty-two you are in and I think it is more prudent to spend \$50,000 on a staff member for program in district to house additional students rather than sending four students out at a cost of \$200,000. Gerry Bourbonniere, perception outside the box. This is the us against them mentality in this town; the left hands here and the right hands here and no happy median and does not come together. I don't want to name names here but there are certain individuals that are naysayers that come to these meetings and it is pleasant not to hear them but yet what are doing. We are playing the naysayers, we are playing the us against them mentality and no common ground. We are fighting over Special Ed and does everybody understand what special ed is in this state. We are the only state in the union. That said, this is on the board of education to tell the parents they can't send their kid to the school of deaf in West Hartford. We have to do it. We mess up once in a

arbitration case, just one little, and we don't dot an "I" there, guess what, we as a board of education pay for not only our attorney fees but we pay for their attorney fees and anything else that goes along with it. They want two eggs, bacon and toast that goes along with it, that is what they get. So this special ed thing that you think is we can cut this and do that. It doesn't work. The only, the parent has the right to send their child wherever they want and DCF has the right to tell us where we will send that child. They can send that child to New York City and if it is \$700,000 than that is what it costs the town. You have nothing to say, he has nothing to say and he has nothing to say and the mayor can do a song and dance and we have to watch out with special ed because in all honesty special ed, that can hurt us right now. There can be special ed parents here that can be very irritated with us and they can go to their state legislature and they have the word, they have the ear in the state legislature and that is why special ed is the way it is because they look at their reps and they call them and a person like me who has a child inside a regular program I do not go to the state capital. I don't think I should have to. Vicky Carey, alright, we gave you \$320,000 I will round it up and we are taking the snow plowing out of your budget which is \$37,000 and you are still keeping that money, you still have that money in your budget. We are just putting an extra \$37,000 into our line item for the snow plowing. That is yours. Tony has to take care of the snowplowing which increases it to up to \$357,000. If special education, the outplacements run over you can still have a one time appropriation and come to the board of finance and because it is a state mandate we are responsible to pay for it. If you run over than we will have to make up the difference in town through undesignated fund balance and that can be done. Your business manger and David are fantastic and the two of them have been working very closely together and I am sure if there are any problems with the budget with special education we will know about it. Chairman Zovich, we sympathize and we know a child can move into the district and we know we can say this in public, we know their parents know the system, we know they can shop around town to town to find the towns that will not challenge them and this has happened to use more than once where a child has moved to the district the second half of the semester and we have no choice and have to pay. We know that. We know the laws against us and that is why I mentioned that during the public hearing that we need to support our representatives and senators to change unfunded mandates. They can do that. They can change the burden of proof standards and within the power of the general assembly. Pat Perugino, I will tell you, there was four of us that went to the capital to argue this thing. And I will tell you what we got up there from both sides is bobble heads saying yes yes and you know what they did, they did absolutely nothing. July 1 this year we have to go for in school suspension and we fought that for 2-3 years, 2 or 3 years we fought that and our representatives didn't do a damn thing. Both sides. Tony Distasio, we have in school suspension monitor. Pat Perugino, four of us, two of us took time off from our job not for the board of education but for whole town because what effects the board of education affects this whole town. No matter what happens up in Hartford, when you talk to special ed, when you talk seat belts on buses, it affects the whole town. Because Tom Wollenberg and Pete Worhunsky are going to put the seat belts in their buses, they have to, they are going to charge us, we are going to come back to you. You said jump on insurance we did, jump on this, you know, we have gotten beat up and getting rid of this cafeteria is the best thing we did. We were losing 60,000 to \$70,000 a year. We support that. We as a board as whole sit there and think of work and then we get cut again and say what is the use. What is the use. We have new people on board who busted their hump and we are doing everything we can and still getting beat up. Roxanne Perugino, this is at cost of regular education. I am fighting for regular kid, there is no talented and gifted program, there is no, we cut back on AP classes. Where do we cut back next and we can't cut special ed. Pat Perugino, there is no fat, no fat in our budget. I can't find any. When I sat at your meeting there were very very few questions not like four or five years ago where we got lambasted with a lot of questions. But I sat here this year and I think Vicky had a question and Dan might have had a slight question but nobody else, and we are all looking at salary and but in our contract I forget what it is but we have a pretty good contract

for teachers compared to districts of our size. The contract with administrators they gave up a lot; and we are throwing our hands up in the air and my board worked as hard as your board if not harder. Chairman Zovich, I will reiterate exactly what I said in public session, \$526,000 your increase is a modest increase and in a normal year would pass and these aren't normal times especially with massive budget deficits and I need to prep you folks, next year if pull \$1.5 million and fails and charter cap is 3% you will have layoffs. DiAnna Schenkel, as your liaison to the board of finance I want you to know I stuck with your decisions through thick and thin and will back up your decisions now if that is what you want but I would really like you to reconsider as \$200,000 is a drop in the bucket when looking at the grand scheme of things and it really only buys us one year to help them figure out ways to be creative when earthquake this. This is your decision and if want to stay firm in your decision then I will support that but I just want to give them an opportunity to reconsider. If a .2 mil vs. 1 million dollars, it is a drop; however I also want to say and make statement that you don't come here just for the sake of the board of ed but for all other departments and they have begged you for money and you said no to them to and I know you are in a really difficult situation. Chairman Zovich, to my board members and poll and make sure we understand the budget proposal is. What we asked you to accept and to send to referendum is \$367,000 gross increase that is a 1% increase to the consolidated general fund. Of that \$367,000 amount of \$320,000 is going to the Board of Ed which means we are basically starving the entire municipal side of the budget. At some point we cannot continue to do that. Now, Mr. Lorenzetti could easily use another half million dollars worth of machinery and material to pave our crumbling roads, at best to patch and drive over the potholes. So I don't know what else to tell you. \$320,000 of the \$367,000 increase is going to education and virtually nothing to the town side. Pat Budnick, my understanding is we should have discussed and thought is we are talking 206,000 and of that we know there are oil at 2.31 and \$20,000-25,000 savings there and \$37,000 in snowplowing and minus that off we are talking \$144,000 additional monies to bring them up to what they need and saving on oil costs and snowplowing. Which is really .15 mil somewhere around there. Chairman Zovich, 140 would be approximately .16 or .17. Gerry Bourbonniere, this is still the us against them mentality. Mayor Festa, Gerry, please speak up. Gerry, excuse me, please speak up for the tape. Pat excuse me Gerry has the floor. Could you please speak up so we can get it on the tape. Gerry Bourbonniere, 6 Fairmount Avenue, Terryville, CT, I agree wholeheartedly, no pitting board of ed against the town and I understand that as we cut the town and we cut the board of ed. You guys have made a decision and have to live by your decision. The town has to live by their decision and so does the board of ed. I do not want to play the us against them mentality, I am sick of playing the us against them mentality in this town. All right. And where I feel we made the mistake in this town and we are paying for that mistake right now, we made the mistake of 3 years of status quo. 3 years of \$4.23, alright. We have to pay for it. I have to swallow my pride, the town has to swallow their pride, that's the way it is. I understand that I as a board of ed member has a very bad decision to make and where that decision is going to be I don't know. So instead of just arguing amongst ourselves and trying to rescind this and rescind that we are going to be in litigation because someone in town will find out about this and they will turn around and try to make this a fiasco and not only is it not going to cost the board of ed \$200,000 that you don't want to give us or \$400,000 you want to , but someone will go find a lawyer pro bono and cost us \$1 million. I am not, I have no idea how you need to rescind this or how you voted, there was a mistake made and I do not know where it is but before we make any more mistakes and we find ourselves in litigation, like we did with the high school and then four years from now you guys are going for 27% increase when we can only go for what 3%, let's not go there, let's stop bickering. I hate them against us mentality in this town. You know what, you always have to jump in. If someone wants to join me fine and if you don't I am in by myself and if anyone wants to blame me, anyone in this town wants to blame me I don't care. Chairman Zovich, you are looking at 2 mil increase next year and we will need your support, and it will be hard sell. Gerry Bourbonniere, I am sick and tired of the us against them mentality. We are fighting

right now because of the us against them mentality. We might as well have 40 Melanie Church's here right now. I don't need, I don't want to chastise her or anything or make her the brunt of this conversation but that is what we are doing right now. Chairman Zovich, she represents a certain percentage. Gerry Bourbonniere, well, whatever, but that is where we are right now. We just turned ourselves into Melanie Church, Patty DeHuff, Mr. Whitney. Vicky Carey, just to let the Town Council know, usually when you open up these meetings and I know unfortunately most of you are new, when you open it up and call the meeting to order and take attendance than we take attendance. Usually the Town Council then asks the question and asks if the board of ed has any questions and if you guys have any problems with our budget you can ask us then. But I hate to say it, shame shame on most of you for not attending board of finance meetings when we did the budget and probably not looking through this and maybe not going through any of the board of education budgets either. But what you do is you ask us the questions, you do not ask us I think the Memorial Day thing is out of line. This is suppose to be a special meeting between all three groups and given with the board, with the budget and that is it. What you do is you ask us if we want to increase it or decrease it, and you ask them if they have any questions and they can then ask us to increase or decrease; we take a vote and we do a roll call vote and that is the end of it. And you guys unfortunately have to accept what we say and put it forward to a public referendum. Councilwoman Schenkel, that is the reason why I asked for the opportunity to change because we did not follow typical protocol and we all should know that in administrative hearings they are flexible and I was talking to offer as a peacemaking opportunity to see because when you look at the grand scheme of things, in my opinion, this is causing more bad blood and we have to stick together for next year than to be better not and to keep perfect record of percent increase. You guys have done a phenominal job and I am not trying to discount that. It is your decision and if you want to keep it the way it is I am supporting you on it. I am just giving an opportunity to give you an opportunity to discuss it more if that is what is needed. Vicky Carey, I don't think we can rescind our motion. As far as I know we never have. So. Councilwoman Schenkel, we rescind motions all the time. Chairman Zovich, Mr. Mayor if I can interject. I have polled the members and there is no movement to rescind and our motion and action stands and we had four in favor and none against presenting the budget and accepting as it stands. So, unless someone wants to make another motion now and I have asked twice and hearing none. Mr. Berube, I am a new board of education member and it seems to me we did not have to be here tonight and not at this meeting. Mayor Festa, you did not have to be here tonight. Chairman Zovich, this is a requirement of Charter. Mr. Berube, I understand that. But from what I seen happen and progress whether it was a mistake or whatever I cannot make judgment on that, we did not have to be here. Mayor Festa, the purpose of this meeting was to get a final vote from the board of finance relative to the budget. Councilman Sekorski, just, Mr. Berube, I have been to, I think this is my 9th meeting that I have done here and take great exception to your comment Vicky Carey, that you know, basically telling me we made, personally that I do not know what I am doing. With that being said there have been many times where the amount of money has been readjusted during this discussion, many times. So although you may feel as though it was useless for your board to be here tonight that is not the case and I want to clarify because this is your first time and many times adjusted and this has been a particularly difficult year in that regard and I can understand both sides of the coin. And procedurally, we may have, I am sure there is no technical error made on how the vote was taken and there is no technical reason why there could be another motion, another motion could be brought forward to rescind it, that happens all the time. So, technically it was uncomfortable, absolutely. But it was not done improperly and I wish it had turned out differently. Mr. Berube, I am not saying it was not done properly, I am saying that from my personal perspective the motion was made, it was voted on and accepted. Okay, It is my understanding that the both people, the board of ed in particular would have some input into requesting a change in the amount of money given or decrease and we were not given that opportunity or am I wrong. Councilman Sekorski, there could have been an opportunity for

discussion during the board of finance motion. There could have been an opportunity for that but that is why I brought it up and under this motion I asked the question about what our options or are there any options. That is why I brought up the question during number five. Thank you. Dan Murray, I have one question because we have gone in a variety of different directions. I thought there was a vote going to be taken by you guys but it was an error on my part. If the budget as laid out tonight, my understanding was the board of education would have an opportunity after the fact to go and find what the recommended dollar amount impact was going to have on the budget and have you done that. I am talking about the budget as you see it here tonight vs. the budget that was presented by the board of education. Have you gone back and said if this stands in place, this is what we have to do. Dr. Distasio, we have not met as a board of education to make adjustments. We just found out last week. The time did not permit for this board to meet and to make \$200,000 worth of reductions. In the event that this may go to referendum and pass, and if for some reason it goes to referendum and does not pass we will have to revisit the budget again. So we, this board has chosen to wait until after there is an approved budget from referendum and what changes to make. Dan Murray, I am trying to be if the referendum passes you; if this goes to referendum and voted on and passed you are locked in; whereas if you did a bit of work now or moved to different times and said \$200,000 is impossible or we can do it and we don't need 200 but need 100 or and doable number. Pat Perugino, what I said at the public hearing is that all we want to do is maintain what we have and nothing added to that budget. Mayor Festa, point of order please. Pat Perugino, as far as the board is concerned, everything is on the table right now. Once we get the bottom line from the town or referendum we will then go in when we have a full board and battle it out, find out what we have to cut. If you said we screwed ourselves out of 200,000 then we have to cut 200,000 really. Roxanne Perugino, we have a list of possibilities. Dan Murray, I am uncomfortable when presented with I need this vs. I need this for and point pay now pay later. The best we are getting 4000 times out of oil change vs. 3000. Where I am at is give back versus we need to maintain status quo and can look at more certainly. In personal lives and business lives have to say need 200 as leaves us where we are. There are so many variables and not the right answer; saying we looked at it and had meeting and what we really really need is x. Understand hands are tied with special ed and everybody goes after big nut and a lot of little nuts to go after and we can do this or streamline that. When we hear we won't have sports or programs I will not buy that. I care about the kids as much as everybody and money is the object but do not lose sight of goal which is kids. Every year I have been on the board it has always been tougher the next year and it has and next year is potential tsunami for state. For me, I am ready to hunker down now so next year is not as bad. But you need to do something, look at numbers in the timeframe to keep everything in sync and open to that. Roxanne Perugino, to Dan, I sit on finance subcommittee and we look at the numbers monthly and you are saying to scrutinize it, whatever, we do and I am one of biggest ones who asks questions and I have a degree in accounting. Don't you think by the things we cut and the money we saved that showed you we scrutinized it. So how much and the thing is that that was the cuts that we gave you, that tells you right there we saved all of that. That is the list of items we are trying to save, we are trying to save music, sports, everything on that list. So that stays as status quo and not trying to add new. We are not. You can coach for zero but we cannot pay for transportation, membership to dues for league, you cannot pay that. That leaves a lot to pay even if coach is for free. We have scrutinized and tried to do all and continue to try. Dan Murray, it is not one sided and we look at it as well. Roxanne Perugino, we would like certain percent increase in library books. Dan Murray, I tried to put olive branch out here and I understand. If the opportunity and trying to open door and let the light through. Chairman Zovich, point, all of the superintendent's reductions are painful because you already made the easy ones. We know that and when we look at what you gave us on March 18th, these are not easy and I do not envy you when you discuss it. You talk about eliminating contract and reducing medical reserve, reducing the extra physicals, reducing school to career field trips, music equipment, eliminating the golf program at

the high school, cuts in the library budget and change high school custodian to part time and not replacing as many windows at Fisher, eliminating extra guidance days, you suffer with that, eliminating extra day for the librarian. Again, but as you go through and I think the Superintendent identified even more through something called preschool, ESOL, and IT supplies and other supply accounts and these are things that are painful and cut into your operating budget but not as painful as laying people off. We did that same analysis on the town side to avoid laying people off, nobody wants to add to the 10% unemployment rate we have in this town and to hold the line this year it will make the pain and suffering that much easier next year. I fear next year and have never feared a budget in my life. The Stimulus money will be gone and all the candidates running for governor have no clue on how to plug that hole, none. Dr Distasio, I have the utmost respect for the board of finance and a very very difficult decision and I think they do a great job for our town. But for that very reason that you articulate is the reason we need to keep that money in and next year we do have a tsunami coming to our state. If you want to take that low hanging fruit from our budget this year, when it comes to next year when we get hit with that tsunami we have nothing in the budget. So for all those important things on that list they will go. If you leave that in the budget for this year at least we have that for next year as low hanging fruit. Chairman Zovich, I am not hearing any suggestions or decisions from any of the board members and all the comments made here tonight have been productive and legitimate and we are all in this together one unified municipality with one consolidated general fund budget. At this point the consensus I am getting from the Board members is that we are standing by our vote and send the budget forward as presented.

MOTION: To move the question by Councilwoman Schenkel; second Councilman Sekorski and the vote unanimous.

Vote on the Motion to schedule Tuesday May 4th as the date for the budget referendum. Vote: unanimous.

7. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn by Councilwoman Schenkel; second Councilman Sekorski and the vote unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Gudczauskas, Clerk of the Council