

patricia tarnowski [katoabby13@gmail.com]

Wednesday, May 28, 2014 4:36 PM

To: financeadmin

Good evening, I had a personal issue come up and I can not make the meeting. Denise Gable will read my letter but I wanted to forward you a copy. Thank you. Trish Tarnowski

My name is Patricia Tarnowski and I am the following, a parent, a tax-payer, a PTO president, and a resident of this town for over 25 years. I cherish my time in East Haddam. I am sorry to see we are once again at this point this year. We need to set our priorities in town.

Schools cost money. A school has value beyond the education of the children of our community. If are schools are not considered to be great if not good schools our property values go down. We must support our schools but we must spend our money wisely. To demand cuts for no other reason than idea of no tax increases is short sighted. Your home value depends on the schools of our town. There is no way around that.

I am saddened that we pit one group against another. We should all want the schools to succeed so our homes retain or hopefully gain in value. Where are the cheerleaders for our town, our school, our students? This year I have seen people I never thought would want to walk away from this process throw up their hands in despair.

Why would good people say ENOUGH?

We can't expect parents to champion any town budget when they feel they are not being heard. Good people offered good ideas and they were ignored. I have raised my children to be honest and own what they do. I expect the very least from the Boards that represent our town and the taxpayers. No more brinkmanship. No more disrespect. If you expect me to vote for it than you better be able to defend it.

Where is our town leadership? We need to increase our tax base. We can open space and rural appeal ourselves out of existence. We need to take the burden of the shoulders of homeowners and expand what we have to offer. Change the zoning if that is what we need to do. One more committee will not cure this town. Please start making changes and stop making excuses. I have lived here for 25 years and the town has less to offer than when I moved here. Where is the vision?

Bottom line. To maintain if not improve our schools we need to reasonably fund them. Please keep the original funding level. BoE if you are given another reprieve this year I expect you to listen to the residents you represent. I was going to walk away from this but I decided that our children are more important than your personal beliefs and actions. You have squandered my good will and efforts. That is a true shame. You have angered and alienated wonderful educators. I am surprised that they have stayed over the last few years. We need to acknowledge that they are a valuable asset to this community and not a budget bargaining chip. Please let this be the last time we play this game. We can do better and our students deserve better. I will do whatever I need to do in order to make our educational system work

MaryBeth Mordecai [mbmordecai@mac.com]

Wednesday, May 28, 2014 3:18 PM

To: financeadmin

Hi Cindy, would you please forward this email to the BOF members?
Thanks,
Mary Beth

To Board of Finance members,
I am sending this email as I cannot be at the public hearing tonight due to the conflict with the High School Underclassman Awards Ceremony.

I am asking that you revisit the additional \$100,000 decrease to be made to the BOE budget at the next referendum and look very closely at how that decrease could effect this town for years to come. Despite the rocky road our schools have been on for the past year or so there are many very good things going on in this district. My son is a Junior and has received an excellent education here. But will the same be true for my daughter who is in 7th grade? Program, teacher and administrative cuts lead to less and less opportunities for our children. We could lose some of our best teachers with further cuts. And despite wishing it were so, education is not the same as it was years ago, much more is expected of children at all ages. No longer is a basic education enough to be successful. If East Haddam Schools cannot offer its students the tools necessary to compete at a high level with students from around the country, parents will look for those opportunities elsewhere. They have already begun doing this. And it is many of the best and brightest students leaving our schools. When they pick a magnet school to attend instead of one of ours it is a double whammy as we have to pay for them to go out of district. This begins a downward spiral of children leaving, less enrollment, more cuts because of lower enrollment, more students leave because of less offerings, and so forth. Parents of children who leave the district are also lost as active members of our town, often some of our best volunteers. It is the schools that bind so many of our citizens. It is actually scary for me to think of where this will eventually lead.

I voted yes at the last referendum, but did not do so happily. The BOE budget was too low in my opinion. A group of parents and I usually work to get the vote out but many of us were too confused and upset by the whole process to offer a strong opinion one way or the other. I can say that if the budget goes back to referendum at the original amount many of us will work to get the yes vote out this time around. We have had time to cool off and look at the big picture. I can't guess what will happen if the BOE side is cut \$100,000 while the town side remains the same, which does not seem to support the exit poll, but whether it passes or doesn't pass at that level, the kids are the ones who are hurt the most. They are our future leaders, we need to do what we can to make them the best they can be; further cuts will not give them enough support for this to happen.

In closing I have forwarded a letter to the BOE from Denise Gable regarding the current 8th grade team at the Middle School. It is experiences like these I fear will disappear with continued cuts to the BOE budget.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mary Beth Mordecai
Dear Board of Education members,

I wanted to share an amazing experience my daughter (8th Grade at NHRMS) has been given by the 8th Grade Teaching Team.

For the past few weeks, the 8th graders have been visited by three Holocaust survivors and one World War II veteran. The stories these remarkable people have shared have been one of the most enriching learning experiences she has ever had. Before I had a chance to ask how her day was, she had gone into a lively and detailed account of their presentations. At the dinner table she relayed their stories to us, including Mrs. Fishman's experiences in the ghetto, as a political prisoner in a concentration camp, and of her infamous babysitter – Anne Frank! Last week, Ben, a World War II veteran shared his emotional stories of liberating the Jews and of his friendship with one of the holocaust survivors. I cannot begin to express how these speakers have affected my daughter. The opportunity to hear their stories firsthand has stayed with her more than any textbook or lesson could. I am so thankful to this team of teachers (Danielle Michaud, Jillian Palmer, Melissa Luke, Robert Raines, Shaleen Thody, and Lisa Plante) for working so hard to provide these speakers – I know these stories will stay with her for a lifetime...

...this got me to thinking about the budget and some of the recent discussions at the BOE and BOF meetings. The heart and soul of these schools are the people who work there. Every decision made – such as sending blanket non-renewals – affects these individuals who are working their tails off to provide our kids with the best possible educational experience possible. Please keep this in mind when making choices – it goes without saying that every decision is difficult when facing budget cuts. But please don't forget that all these positions have names and faces – they are not numbers, they are responsible for our kid's future.

Thank you,

Denise Gable

BANNON, ELISA [ELISA.BANNON@ct.gov]
Actions

Wednesday, May 28, 2014 3:15 PM

To: financeadmin

I am not sure that I am able to attend the BD of Finance meeting tonight, however I would like to voice that I would like the board of finance to reconsider taking the additional 100K off of the BOE budget and reinstate the original 100K back to the BOE as originally allocated in the original referendum. I am opposed to a low budget for the BOE but I certainly do not want additional cuts. I am a parent of two children in the school system and truly care about staffing issues compared to the ratio of children and believe that BOE is one of the most important assets in our community. Please reconsider your cuts. Thank you Elisa Bannon 5 Heritage Brook Dr. East Haddam CT

DDenettee@easthaddam.org; financeadmin

Dear Finance Board Members,

Due to parental responsibilities I will not be able to attend the finance meeting tonight. I am writing to ask you to not cut any more money from the education school budget. We need to support our children and provide a well rounded education. We need to keep teachers and support positive change.

The exit poll is not a true reflection due to the lack of participation. Unfortunately many individuals did not know about it. I only knew because of emails. Please think of the students and not political point of views. It is pertinent to fund education. Our children deserve it!!

Thank You,

Elizabeth Burns
7 Meadow Brook Drive
Moodus, Ct 06469

Laurel White [bluesky2@outlook.com]
Actions

Wednesday, May 28, 2014 12:46 PM
To: financeadmin
Cc: mclean [lmclean70@sbcglobal.net]

You forwarded this message on 5/28/2014 1:20 PM.
Sent from Windows Mail

Hi I am a parent of 2 children in the schools here in town. I feel strongly that the proposed budget cuts for the schools is a mistake we will regret. Increasing class size and decreasing teachers is not the way to stabilize our community or education system. I feel like the teachers have had enough added stress with all of the imposed changes to curriculum and policy, it is not appropriate or fair to the children to make them another of the added stresses. Our children need more involvement, attention and consideration, not less. In addition to proposed cuts are a couple of very, very good teachers-new to our system who have personally made a difference in my children's lives. I do feel that the BOE has lost track of the importance of people teaching our children versus instruments and equipment. Now is not the time to be asking for more stuff. We need books, computers and teachers. I think administrations cuts as proposed are appropriate-Mrs Havens worked 2 days a week towards the end of her time with us. The added administration responsibilities of teacher reviews and curriculum changes do make this a difficult cut to digest, but teachers are bearing the brunt of the burden and our children will be the first to suffer as a direct result of higher classroom numbers. We have more children with special services in our schools every year and this adds to the weight of work and attention in the classroom. Please consider giving the towns people an additional opportunity to vote for the budget.

Thanks you, Laurel White

Lenore McLean [lmclean70@sbcglobal.net]

Wednesday, May 28, 2014 10:15 AM

To:

financeadmin; admin; deb denette [debdenette@yahoo.com]; nancy haslam [nancy.haslam@easthaddamschools.org]; brian pear [brian.pear@easthaddamschools.org]; tracey gionta [tracey.gionta@easthaddamschools.org]; bill barney [william.barney@easthaddamschools.org]; laurie alt [laurie.alt@easthaddamschools.org]; bryan perry [bryan.perry@easthaddamschools.org]; shawn conroy [shawn.conroy@easthaddamschools.org]; marc pisciotti [marc.pisciotti@easthaddamschools.org]; michael werner [michael.werner@easthaddamschools.org]

Dear Town Officials & Board Members,

Below you will find an email that I have sent out to parents this morning. It is my hope that the BoF will find it in their hearts to hold to the original \$100,000 increase given to BoE. I know you feel you must trim from somewhere given the defeated Referendum but our education system is seeing some big changes and facing big challenges; it has been a tough year for everyone and I implore you to support the education system to the utmost extent that you can. I am certain that there are places that could be trimmed on both sides of the budget if everyone really looked at *what we need as opposed to what we want*.

Also, just an FYI to all who might doubt our efforts as parents to get people out to vote. Between Denise Gable and I, we contacted about 400 families via email. I know there was a lot of budget chatter and a lot of misunderstandings that muddied the waters for everyone. Looking at the close numbers on the referendum and the turn out itself, I think it is pretty easy to see that many of us are torn on the budget- none of us want our taxes to go up, but we don't want to lose important services either. A clear explanation on the Town Budget helped to draw support on that side, if the same had been given on the BoE side, the vote might have been different.

I can not attend the Public Hearing tonight but may you be contemplative in your decision making, and please put aside your frustrations with the process and consider the needs of the students and all citizens as you move forward.

Thanks for your efforts,

Lenore McLean

Families of East Haddam School Students,

I am emailing you all to BEG those of you who are able, to attend the Public Hearing today & speak up in favor of the BoE budget amount being held at the original \$100,000 increase. Last year, parents spoke out after the failed Referendum and convinced the BoF to allow a re-vote on the original budget. With the vote as close as it was this time around, perhaps we can do the same again and prevent even more cuts being made to our students educational experience!! As parents we do have the power to pull together and possibly do some "damage control"!! **So, please attend the Public Hearing and plea the case of our students- today, Wed, May 28, 7PM @ Town Hall.** If unable to attend, please, please send an email off explaining your point of view. The link for more details:

<http://www.easthaddam.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=content.pageDetails&id=212077&typeID=102>

As most of you are aware, the Budget Referendum held last week on Thurs, May 20 failed. Votes were cast as follows:

Yes- 434

No- 494

for a total of 928 votes. Thanks goes to all who turned out to vote!!

Exit polls were conducted as well. The results of the poll are as follows:

BoE:

acceptable - 74

too high - 112

too low - 112

General Government:

acceptable - 142

too high - 110

too low - 26

The question I was asked was this: How can BoF justify cutting another \$100K from the education budget with numbers like these?

My reply was as follows:

BoF made their decision by considering the following:

a. the budget not passing and

b. as many people stating that the BoE budget was too high as said it was too low.

The BoF made it abundantly clear prior to the Referendum that if the budget did not pass and if the exit poll did not clearly indicate that the BoE budget was too low, then they would cut from BoE. I sincerely wish more people had taken time to fill out the exit poll!

I can not vote (being Canadian), however, if I was able I would have voted YES for this budget. While I have entirely different views on what the reductions should be on the BoE side of the budget, I did not want to see further cuts be made to education. I feel that my views on *how* the education funds should be spent is a completely different issue from *how much* the education budget is. And, taking into consideration the fact that the education side of the budget has seen relatively generous increases for the past 4 years I felt that the BoF was being reasonable. My argument with BoE should be fought separately from my decision on the BoF budget.

Unfortunately, I can not attend the Public Hearing since the HS award night is also tom evening. However, I will send my thoughts to both BoE and BoF and I hope you will join me in doing the same!

Lenore

Christine Vanvalkenburg [Christine.Vanvalkenburg@quintiles.com]
Actions

Wednesday, May 28, 2014 12:26 PM
To: financeadmin
You forwarded this message on 5/28/2014 12:26 PM.
Good afternoon,

I am unable to attend the public hearing tonight due HS award ceremony but wanted to voice my opinion on the proposed budget cut for the BOE. I do want to let you know I understand the task you have at hand and how difficult these decisions are. I do not envy you.

I have also read the statistics on the survey that some people filled out and see how close the budget vote really was. I hope you re-consider to have the original budget back up for voting and not take any more away from our educational system. I am sure you have heard this many times that our children are our future for this town whether or not you have kids presently in the school systems. I hope those who cannot attend the public hearing send you an email as well in support of the BOE.

Good luck tonight and we shall see you at the polls.

Regards,
Chris

Chris vanValkenburg, M(ASCP)
Senior Lab Clinical Data Analyst
Global Data and Safety Monitoring

Elisa,

Thank you for your email. I have forwarded to the Chairman of the Board of Finance.

Cindy Varricchio
Finance Director
Town of East Haddam
7 Main Street, P.O. Box K
East Haddam, CT 06423
www.easthaddam.org

You replied on 5/22/2014 1:17 PM.

Hello, I would like to express my concern regarding the decision of the Board to cut the Board of Education budget by another 100K since the budget was not passed. 50 % of the population who voted believed that the Bd of Education budget was too low; so I am not sure how the board believes that another 100K from the Bd of Education budget is appropriate without reducing other cuts from other areas for the town. I understand that enrollment is down, however it is only May and you can register your children in school whenever. It may have been down last year but I am not understanding how when the classroom sizes in Kindergarten has increased to about 20 children in the classroom in the fall of 2013. With this additional cut their could be no para's for my incoming Kindergartener. This is very disheartening considering the difficulty the kindergarten teachers have had this year with the present class of children. I again am not in favor of your budget proposal, there are other areas that you could cut from beside education. You have said that you have always been a committee/town that has supported education, but this is not showing that you support education but rather that you do not understand how the effects of the common core have on the school staff and the children. I am not in agreement with this decision. Please, Please take from somewhere else. Also I would like a more simplified version of the budget posted. Thank You Elisa Bannon Heritage Brook Dr.

The message you tried to print is protected with Information Rights Management. You don't have the necessary user rights to print the message.

Monday, May 19, 2014 3:15 PM

To: Elisajane.eb@gmail.com

Cc:

slink@stfranciscare.org; nancy.haslam@easthaddamschools.org; financeadmin; Marybeth Iacobelli (marybeth.iacobelli@easthaddamschools.org); Sarah Clark (sarah.clark@easthaddamschools.org)

Elisa –

I will have your concerns forwarded to the Board of Finance and the Board of Education. I as First Selectman I am an ex-officio member of all boards and commissions including the Board of Education but have no voting rights at their meetings.

By state statute the Board of Finance can set the total amount of the Board of Education budget based on enrollment guidelines but only the Board of Education can determine the individual line items. Neither the Boards of Selectmen or Finance can dictate how cuts or increases are distributed within the Board of Education budget.

Further concerns regarding the Board of Education budget should be directed to Nancy Haslam, Chairman of the Board of Education.

Mark B. Walter
First Selectman
Town of East Haddam
7 Main Street
P.O. Box K
East Haddam, CT 06423
(860) 873-5020
(860) 873-5025 Fax
admin@easthaddam.org

From: Elisajane.eb@gmail.com [mailto:Elisajane.eb@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 15, 2014 11:35 PM
To: admin
Subject: Contact Us

Contact Us

First Name: Elisa
Last Name: Bannon
Email: Elisajane.eb@gmail.com
Phone: 860-873-9705
Address: 5 heritage Brook dr
City: east haddam

Question: I would like to share my disappointment in learning that the bd approved a motion to cut the vice principals job to 20 hours in the elementary school while two of your bd members where not present to vote. I also feel very strongly that not allowing the parents who (voted u into office) did not have a say in such a big decision and I question your motivities. I am very active in the school and know first hand how important Mrs. Friends job in supporting the teachers, Mrs. Collins and especially the relationship she has with our children and the parents. The bd of education has done a significant disservice. To the community in the elementary school. Is it even LEGAL to have this vote without all bd members present? Please reconsider this motion and someone please listen to our voices. Please pass on to the bd of finance also b/c there budget to FIX up our town buildings and to cut the bd of Ed budget is ireresponsible just like your motion to cut the vice principle in two schools without listening to your voters.

User IP: 32.217.49.175

Time Sent: 11:34 PM May 15, 2014