

**PUBLIC HEARING
BOARD OF FINANCE
MAY 17, 2010**

A public hearing was held on **Monday, May 17, 2010** in the Conference Room at the **Plymouth Town Hall**. The following members were in attendance: Chairman Ralph Zovich, Vice Chairman Vicky Carey, Pat Budnick, Dan Murray, Mike Drozdick, Peter Cook and David Bertnagel, Director of Finance. Mayor Vincent Festa, Dr. Distasio, Superintendent of Schools, members of Town Council and Board of Education.

Board of Finance Agenda
Community Room, Plymouth Town Hall
Monday, May 17, 2010 7:00 p.m.

The Board of Finance will be in attendance and participate at the Public Hearing on the Proposed FY2010-2011 Town of Plymouth Budget beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room, Plymouth Town Hall. The Public Hearing will be followed by a Joint Meeting with the Plymouth Town Council, Board of Finance and Board of Education, as per the Town Council posted agenda.

Chairman Zovich read the legal notice into record and reviewed the process for the public hearing and stated there will be public comment and questions and answers. Following will be a joint meeting of the Town Council, Board of Finance and Board of Education.

Chairman Zovich called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and introduced everyone on the Board of Finance. He then led everyone in the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence.

Chairman then went on to a slide presentation of their proposed budget. The slide presentation gave a review of the Budget Development Process, Budget Goals, Critical Factors, Revenues & Expenditures, Consolidated General Fund Summary, and Summary of Expenditures by Department, Salary Freezes and Board of Education Budget Summary. He noted there was a budget cut of \$206,000.00 from their previous budget.

Public Comment – ground rules reviewed, allowing people 5 minutes to speak. Chairman Zovich stated that there are copies of the proposed budget for the City & Board of Education with details. He told the audience they would like to know which way the public wants to see the budget go.

Amy Radki – 29 Hickory St., Terryville – She stated that she did not know about the budget vote and said that people just assumed that the budget would pass so they stayed home. She said she would like to see the budget increased for the board of education and recommended the board of finance go back to the original budget.

Marty Sandshaw – 7 Richmond Dr., Plymouth – He thanked the board of finance for their hard work and patience. He stated he supported the proposed budget. He spoke about an article in CT Magazine that ranked Plymouth low compared to other towns their size. He noted they were rating on basis of education and economic development. He stated the board of finance needs to maintain infrastructure, education and safety.

Cate Speakman – 1625 Riverside Ave. Pequabuck – She stated is a parent of a 4th grade student at Fischer elementary. She stated as she runs errands she sees kids hanging on the streets and said she tells her kids they will not be doing that. She said that if you cut the school budget hanging out is what the kids will be doing. She said it is our job to give these kids an opportunity to learn.

Alicia Garriti – 273 South Main – She stated that she is there to ask the board of finance to increase the school budget. She stated it is our responsibility to take care of our children, noting they are our future.

Pat Perugino – 82 Allen St. – He stated he is the Chairman of the board of education and is here because he does not want to see the budget cut. He noted he has gone to Hartford to speak to our legislature about the mandates and gets no where. They do not want to see the school workforce be downsized. He asked the board of finance to restore the board of education budget.

Iris McCoy – 30 Seymour Rd. – She is there to support the board of education. She would like for them to increase their budget.

Mark Berube – 218 Arnold Rd. – He stated he is a board of education member and also a teacher. He would not like to see any cuts to the board of education. He use to work as a teacher in town before budget cuts eliminated his job. He worked with these teachers and he said they are fabulous and would not like to see any of them lose their job. He wants the board of finance to bring back the \$206,000.00. As a taxpayer he said he doesn't mind paying the increase because they owe it to their children.

Gerard Boubonnaire – 6 Farimont Ave.- Stated he was a board of education member. He noted he voted no for the budget because it was not high enough. He stated he voted no when the budget went to a 2.3% increase. He stated that they are doing the town a disservice. He said they need to put money into infrastructure of the town. He stated that there was talk about closing the transfer station and noted that with no trash pickup this would cause chaos. He noted that the increase is around 10.00 dollars a month which is less than he spends at Dunkin Donuts a week. He said the board of finance needs to look at everything. He ended by saying that is the budget comes in less that it is now he will once again vote no.

Bill Heering – 13 Sherman Lane – He thanked the Board of Finance for allowing him to speak. He stated he was speaking on behalf of the golf team. He asked how much the

sports program was being cut. Chairman Zovich stated that the board of education determines which line items get cut. He noted the board of finance has no say in that. He then asked that the board of education not cut the sports line item. He noted his daughter plays golf on a boys' golf team because there is no girls' team. He asked please do not cut the golf budget. His daughter read a letter to the board asking that they do not eliminate the golf team. She noted that every member of her team is willing to pay or do fundraising to help keep the golf team. She noted that golf has opened opportunities for her and she would hate to lose them because of budget cuts. She noted her parents are taxpayers and they should have a right to keep their sports. Mr. Heering spoke backup to say he has no problem paying extra in taxes.

Diane Schenkel – 4 East Orchard St. – She stated she currently wears two hats, first as a taxpayer and second as a council member. She said to say that the board of finance is not doing their job is a disservice to the community and the kids in this town. She noted it is the state that is doing our kids a disservice with their mandates. No one wants teachers to suffer. She would love to increase the board of education budget. She thinks people didn't come out to vote because they didn't know. She noted that any cuts from the board of education is up to them. She stated that people need to address the specific line items with them. She also stated she would not like to see the economic development contractor in half. She noted he has done a great job bringing in business.

Jody Lyons – 293 Todd Hollow Rd. – She stated she came because she received a phone call to come fight for the budget. She stated she is really nervous because she has never done this before. She noted she loves Plymouth Center School. She stated that in looking thru the budget she has a serious problem with the salaries. She noted some of the board of education administrators make 2 ½ times the salary of the Mayor. She questioned how this happens. She stated she doesn't understand. She asked why the administrators are not cutting their salary. She felt that if they made sacrifices to reduce their salary they would show they want to help. She stated this is just her opinion. She noted she hopes the town moves forward.

Allison Pelletier – 187 South St. – She stated she has four children in the school system and is here because she would like to the board of education budget restored

Tim Roberts – 85 Watchtower Rd. – He stated that all has been said. He noted he would like to see \$206,000.00 restored back to the board of education budget. He asked how they came up with the cut. Chairman Zovich explained the cuts noting that it is lower gas costs that were negotiated, proposed position cut for special education administrator and saving on school snowplowing since that went to public works. Chairman Zovich stated that we need to work on getting students back. Mr. Roberts then asked what would the percentage of tax increase be adding the \$206,000.00. Chairman Zovich stated it would be around 3 percent.

Christine Pilbin – 2 Ames Ave. – She stated that she has children involved in the school system. She stated she volunteers in the booster club which does fundraising to assist the schools. She stated she is learning how to write grants so they could start applying for more funding. She stated people were unaware of the budget vote. She asked that the original budget be restored to the board of education. She stated we cannot continue to live on a zero increase.

Ann Tenisha – 383 Allentown Rd. – She stated when the budget fails you are unaware of whether you would like the budget to go up or down. She is here on behalf of the municipality. She would not like to see any cuts in that budget. She stated our roads need to be repaired. She stated as a previous board of finance commissioner she knows how hard it is to get a budget and she stated the current board of finance has done a great job.

Pat Daigle – 27 Matthews St. – She stated she is begging to restore the \$206,000.00 to the board of education budget. She stated she is a parent of a sophomore at a technical school. She thanked everyone who came out to support the board of education. She noted she is involved in the PTA and noted they assist the schools with enrichment programs and other activities.

Pat Perugino – 82 Allen St. – He stated he spoke before but wanted to speak again. He noted he went to Hartford to speak to our legislatures and noted they were all like bobble heads, shaking their heads up and down agreeing with us that there is a problem but have done nothing. He stated the Superintendent of schools had not taken a raise and noted the administrators have taken 2% increase. He noted that the Director of Curriculum gets us grants that the public doesn't even know about. He noted yes he makes a decent salary but stated that he earns it.

Lizette Pelletier – 31 Mathews St. – She spoke in favor of at least restoring the original budget. She noted she has a daughter that is learning to drive and stated the streets are terrible and need to be fixed. She noted there has been no increase in 2 years and that is great but she stated we now need to go up.

Jean Arden – 8 Sherman Lane – She stated that 2 years of no tax increase was great but noted we cannot go on like this. She stated we now need to increase the budget. She asked about the town's debt and noted she had a concern. Chairman Zovich explained how the debt process works.

Jackie Lindis – 48 Ridge Rd. – She stated she would like to see more funding for the board of education. She noted that we don't need to cut the education of our children. She noted that some of the schools are run down and she said she would like to see them maintained. She stated she is willing to take a tax increase for our children.

Heidi Coppola – 17 Chestnut St. – She stated that she did not know about the vote. She stated she is the parent of a special needs student at Fischer Elementary. She noted her son loves school. She would like to see the school budget increased. She thanked the superintendent of schools because if she didn't get a call she would not have known about the public hearing. She said to cut the budget would be a big mistake and would be detrimental to all children. She also gave the history of why she chose to live in this town, noting the people were wonderful and she loves the schools.

Lisa Jaworski – 437 Harwinton Ave. – She stated she has five children and noted they are in every school. She stated she just found out her well was contaminated with arsenic. She stated even with a contaminated well, she is willing to take a tax increase for her children's education.

Dan Santorso – 12 Chestnut – He stated that he is a board of education member and noted that the referendum was voted down by 46 votes. He stated a lot of those votes were no because people wanted more money in the budget. He stated that this should not be the reason to decrease the budget. He stated that the board of finance should not cut the special education department. He noted he does not want to see the budget cut noting you don't truly know why it didn't pass.

Chairman Zovich asked the board of finance members if they would like to add final comments. Vicki Carey stated that people need to go out and vote for this budget. Peter Cook stated that the information is there to have this pass. He noted there is a hard funding going forward and said there is not too much from the Board of Education. Dan Murray stated that he was glad there were new faces in the audience and thanked the people for coming out. He noted they need to get their neighbors to come out and vote. Pat Budnick stated that they are doing a pavement analysis program to see which roads need the most repair. She noted that the board of education people showed up. Mike Drozdick stated he would just like to reiterate what the previous board members stated noting that he was pleased to see people come to the hearing. He stated it was his first year and noted that the board of finance works well together. Ralph Zovich thanked all the board of finance members for all their hard work.

With no further business to come before the hearing, a motion was made by Commissioner Carey seconded by Commissioner Murray to:

“adjourn the public hearing at 9:25 p.m.”

Following a voice vote in which there was no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

Attest:

Mayra I. Sampson
Acting Recording Secretary