

# Town of Plymouth

80 Main Street, Terryville, CT 06786  
[www.plymouthct.us](http://www.plymouthct.us)

# Board of Finance

Telephone: 860-585-4001  
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**1. Call Meeting to Order:** Jim Kilduff, Chairman called the scheduled March 28, 2022, Board of Finance meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Members in attendance: Victoria Carey-Vice Chairman, Eugene Croce, Barbara Rockwell, Briana Brumaghim, and Jennifer Brunoli. Also, Present: Grace K. Zweig, Director of Finance, Brian Falcone, Superintendent of Plymouth Public Schools, Matthew Tencza, Business Manager-Plymouth Public Schools, Walt Seaman, Chair - Plymouth Board of Education

**2. Pledge of Allegiance:** James Kilduff led the group and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Fire Exit Notification:** James Kilduff noted the Fire Exits for the record.

Jim Kilduff welcomed members of the Board of Education, Brian Falcone, Superintendent of Plymouth Public Schools, Matthew Tencza, Business Manager – Plymouth Public Schools, Walt Seaman, Chair - Plymouth Board of Education, and the audience.

Jim Kilduff, Board of Finance -Chairman noted the Board of Education's new way of presenting the Roll-up which will be explained/questions answered, and the importance of striking a balance in the budget. Overall, spending is up in the Board of Education and town side, mostly due to well-earned raises and/or negotiated salaries, and the rest of the pie must strike a balance between the needs/wants of the various departments and briefly elaborated.

Jim Kilduff stated noted projected enrollments (slight increase), school class sizes, balance/changes, re. "Memorandum of Understanding" clearly demonstrated a built-in trust, and followed through with everything that the Board of Education said that they would do and briefly elaborated.

### **3. Acceptance of Minutes – March 10, 2022**

**Briana Brumaghim made a motion, seconded by Jennifer Brunoli to accept the minutes of March 10, 2022.**

**Motion passed unanimously with the following corrections:**

#### **Corrections:**

Briana Brumaghim stated to clarify under Board Member Comments: questioned budget format.

Briana Brumaghim questioned if the new draft of the budget would include those numbers for circuit breaker, fire department, ambulance, and veteran credits.

### **4. Board of Education Budget**

Walt Seaman, Chair - Plymouth Board of Education introduced Brian Falcone, Superintendent of Plymouth Public Schools, and Matthew Tencza, Business Manager.

*Briana Brumaghim*  
TOWN CLERK  
2022 MAR 31 PM 4:40  
PLYMOUTH-01  
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Walt Seaman stated one piece was to look at the budget – and utilize the money we already have smart. Mr. Tencza along with Mr. Falcone has done a fantastic job of that.

Walt Seaman stated each individual school submits its own budget. Both the Superintendent and the Business Manager - double checks budget for accuracy following a centralized purchasing model, by validating the necessity of various central office requests. We are presenting an honest budget! In addition, a hard stance was taken in the negotiation process, and the limitations of the town were kept in mind. What we are looking for is \$25,128,753.00 the difference of \$576,726, a 2.35% increase.

Walt Seaman, Board of Education, Chair distributed the following:

- ❖ **PLYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS BUDGET PRESENTATION 2022-2023 page 1 of 18**  
The mission of the Plymouth Public Schools is to Challenge, Inspire, and Prepare all students for success in an ever-changing and complex world.
  
- ❖ **PLYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS GOALS – HIGHLIGHTS:**
  - ✓ **STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**
    - SUPPORT ALL STUDENTS IN ACHIEVING THEIR BEST POSSIBLE LEARNING OUTCOMES.
  - ✓ **ENGAGEMENT**
    - ENGAGE STUDENTS IN THE LEARNING PROCESS BY PROVIDING AUTHENTIC LEARNING EXPERIENCES.
  - ✓ **WELL-BEING**
    - CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT AND OPPORTUNITIES THAT SUPPORT WELL-BEING FOR ALL STUDENTS.
  - ✓ **FISCAL OVERSIGHT**
    - ALIGN BUDGETARY SPENDING WITH DISTRICT GOALS AND STRATEGIES
  
- ❖ Eliminated Positions
  
- ❖ New Positions
  
- ❖ Repurposing of (some) Positions

Brian Falcone stated to demonstrate the shift in “thinking” - of how we do things. The High School Assistant Principal works 220 days - what we are trying to do is shift the number of days the High School Assistant Principal works through a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding). So, this is cost neutral by shifting positions going to the same number of maybe 204 days for each position. So, we can get the Assistant Principal for the Dean of Students price. Presently, now in process with Administrative Union and briefly elaborated.

❖ **PLYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2022-2023 AVERAGE CLASS SIZE**

❖ **BUDGET CATEGORY DRIVERS BY PERCENTAGE -SOME HIGHLIGHTS:**

- ✓ Noted Salaries 59% - Salary negotiations state average 9.76% over three years Plymouth Public Schools 8.5% (under average).
- ✓ Noted Utilities 3% contribute that to Marty Sandshaw (efforts) approaching 3 M in savings over 12 years in energy costs.

❖ **PLYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS SINKING FUND**

- Current Sinking Fund Balance = \$887,808

Matthew Tencza, Business Manager stated have created line items when appropriate to isolate items for transparency reasons and evaluation.

❖ **PLYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS ESSER (ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL EMERGENCY RELIEF) FUNDS**

Walt Seaman stated when the grant money runs out that does not become a part of the budget.

Eugene Croce questioned the date when funds must be spent.

Matthew Tencza stated the date is September 30, 2024 - all funds need to be expended and briefly elaborated.

Matthew Tencza stated may shift stipends in place to be more appropriate, but not ask for more money, but make shifts in our current budget.

Brian Falcone, Superintendent stated the reality is that some positions that were removed were due to some pushback - in order to get where we needed to be and briefly elaborated.

Briana Brumaghim thanked Mr. Falcone, Mr. Tencza, Mr. Seaman, and the Board of Education for the work they do.

Briana Brumaghim stated appreciate what you've done by looking at the overall school system and doing what is best for the entire school system and for making those tough decisions. Noted that the best investment our town can make is our school system, and briefly elaborated.

Brian Falcone noted all school schedules will be shifting next year - due to new graduation requirements/changes.

Briana Brumaghim stated agree it is essential for the certified career counselor position - looking forward to our children townwide benefiting from that position.

Vicky Carey stated what would be the most bottom-line figure re. budget that you would be comfortable working with if we were to cut.

Walt Seaman stated if we want to be successful and want to move forward, the money is needed – we did not come with a padded budget. I would think the Secretary position at the Middle School - which would put us in the area of 2.13%.

Vicky Carey noted 59% of your budget is salaries also noting the town-side union salary increases - stressed the importance of balance.

Jim Kilduff stated appreciate the different approaches to project this evening where the Board of Education wants to take the system, we received a lot of information that is very useful.

Barbara Rockwell stated this is one of the better presentations that I've seen over the years. Thank you for your presentation and briefly elaborated.

Eugene Croce stated we need to not only look at the salaries 59% (not a lot of control during those budget negotiations) but also look at the 19% for benefits which together is closer to 80%.

Eugene Croce stated mandatory arbitration in the State of Connecticut - if you go to arbitration, you will probably lose and pay for a lawyer.

Walt Seaman stated "I am not afraid to go to arbitration" I am not going to be held hostage from arbitration.

Briana Brumaghim stated as a Board we need to need to further discuss appropriate allocations of funds and hold those departments responsible for sticking within a certain budget and allocation of spending.

Walt Seaman stated we have some of the best teachers and briefly elaborated.

Vicky Carey stated will filter any other questions after comparing to last year's info through Jim Kilduff, Chair.

Matthew Tencza stated this year's change - Excess Cost Grant calculation (will see credit) in there. Grant will come through town and then passed back for transparency.

Briana Brumaghim re. Grant Funding questioned if it is possible, to incorporate into the budget what grants they receive and what they pay for - recorded in the same document - so we don't lose sight of the fact that these positions were covered by a grant.

Matthew Tencza stated happy to put a schedule together.

Eugene Croce questioned do you have the ability in your union contracts to have durational positions.

Brian Falcone stated that is how we handled ESSRs - individuals were informed of that situation and briefly elaborated.

Jim Kilduff stated March 31, 2022, is Capitals, noting a tight schedule.

**OTHER HANDOUTS INCLUDED:**

❖ **PLYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2022-2023 BUDGET YEAR – SALARY  
BREAKDOWN BY CATEGORY**

❖ **PLYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2022-2023 BUDGET REQUEST ROLL-UP**

Walt Seaman, Board of Education Chair reviewed/discussed the FY 2022-2023 Board of Education budget in detail.

**The Board of Education’s detailed section is found in the Town of Plymouth Fiscal Year July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023 – Mayor’s Proposed Draft Budget #3 dated March 15, 2022 / used for discussion purposes.**

**DRAFT/WORKING COPY\* can be viewed in its entirety at the Plymouth, CT -Town Hall and on the Town of Plymouth’s website ([www.plymouthct.us](http://www.plymouthct.us))**

**NOTE: MILL RATE CALCULATION IS FOR REFERENCE ONLY. THE FINAL MILL RATE HAS NOT BEEN DETERMINED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE AND WILL NOT BE FINAL UNTIL AFTER APPROVAL BY THE TOWN COUNCIL.**

**5. Public Comment**

Melanie Church, 328 Main Street, Terryville, CT questioned the curriculum.

John Murphy, 385 Greystone Road, Terryville, CT - Website - Town Charter - Chapter 6 missing, questioned if ARPA funds are exempt from our town charter (spending) commitments.

**6. Correspondence**

None

**7. Board Member’s Comments**

Briana Brumaghim - I don’t believe it is fair to say that our school system is cutting back in areas of Math, Reading, and Language Arts at all. Briana Brumaghim requested for the Board of Education to \*clarify the Math Coach position (cut).

Board of Education response

\*Walt Seaman stated we hire teachers with master's degrees or must later earn a master's degree. The Math Coaches are there to aid and teach the teachers how to present their curriculum. Importantly, they do not work with students they work with teachers -when the board discussed this – decided that we may need this when the curriculum or the State of Connecticut changes something which is another part of that and briefly elaborated.

Briana Brumaghim stated researched (local) taxpayer contribution going back six years (average contribution) compared to the general fund total expenditures is 35.64% of our overall general fund expenditures that the taxpayers are actually paying towards the Board of Education, and if we were to fund the budget request completely at the proposed spending for fiscal 2023 budget that would be 35.47% under the average that we taxpayer contribution to the Board of Education for the past six years – think that is something to consider and stay consistent.

Jim Kilduff questioned percentage since when you take out the money that comes from the state – usually shows/calculates differently and briefly elaborated.

Jennifer Brunoli - Thank you for your presentation we have a lot to read through and will discuss it on Thursday.

Barbara Rockwell – Company controls charter online - suggested contacting town clerk.

Eugene Croce - Clarified when you say taxpayer share you must include ECS (Education Cost Sharing). Everyone in the Town of Plymouth pays State of Connecticut taxes - noting the importance of “local” and “state” distinction.

Victoria Carey – None

Jim Kilduff, Chairman thanked everyone in attendance.

Our next meeting will be on March 31, 2022.

**8. Adjournment**

**There being no further business of the Board of Finance, a motion was made by Vicky Carey seconded by Barbara Rockwell to adjourn at 8:28 p.m. This motion was approved unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Michele Yokubinas*

Michele Yokubinas  
Recording Secretary