

Town of Plymouth

Board of Finance

80 Main Street, Terryville, CT 06786

Telephone: 860-585-4001

www.plymouthct.us

Fax: 860-585-4015

1. Call Meeting to Order: Jim Kilduff, Chairman called the Special Meeting March 15, 2018, Board of Finance Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room at Plymouth Town Hall. Members in attendance: Victoria Carey-Vice Chairman, James Zalot-excused absence, Jay Dorso, Pattie DeHuff, and Briana Brumaghim. Also present: Ann Marie Rheault - Director of Finance and Town Councilwoman Sue Murawski

2. Pledge of Allegiance: Jim Kilduff, Chairman led the group and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Notice of Fire Exits: Jim Kilduff, Chairman, noted the fire exits.

4. Board of Education Budget Presentation

Dr. Martin Semmel noted that the Board of Education's budget process had been overall a team effort and reviewed the following highlights and challenges:

- **Our Mission**
- **Board of Education Goals**
- **Recent Accomplishments**
- **Challenges Faced by the District**
- **Health Insurance Plan – Considerations**
- **Historical Enrollment**
- **Projected Enrollment**
- **Percentage of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch**
- **Attendance % of Students Missing > 18 Days of School**
- **Budgeting Process**
- **2018-2019 Budget Priorities**
- **Cuts from 2017-18 Restored in 2018-19**
- **Cuts from 2017-18 Remaining in 2018-19**
- **Projected Class Sizes**
- **Notable Reduction Items**
- **Notable New Budget Items (>\$4K)**
- **How Are Our Schools Funded?**
- **How Does Our Spending Compare?**
- **Expenditures by Area**
- **Primary Budget Drivers**
- **Historical Increases**
- **Overall Budget Change**

Ⓢ 2017-2018 Budget	\$24,212,791
Ⓢ 2018-2019 Request	\$24,235,376
Difference	\$ 22,585
% Increase	0.09%

Barbara K. Peckham
TOWN CLERK

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- **Near and Long –Term Financial Risks**
- **Summary**
- **Budget Timeline**

Note: The Plymouth Public Schools PowerPoint presentation is available in its entirety at https://plymouth.k12.ct.us/board_of_education/budget_information

Dr. Martin Semmel stated the Board of Education has shown that we are both effective and efficient with our money.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated I am extremely proud of our staff and the staff around the State.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated most important is our responsibility to educate the children.

Dr. Martin Semmel introduced Ron Melnick the new Business Manager and stated he will answer any specific questions.

Jim Kilduff stated the 2016 -17 Accountability Index – Plymouth Public Schools that was handed out at the Board of Education meeting was very interesting and positive.

Jim Kilduff stated based on the amount of the money - Congratulations on all of the work done on this budget.

Jim Kilduff stated regarding ECS what would be the plan for worst-case scenario regarding the \$1.1 M cut.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated we have been very proactive, worked to eliminate, and made some very difficult decisions. Some students are not getting the support they need. Literally, we are at the point there is no extra personnel. The sentiment of the Board is that we pushed back.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated insurance might help if we switch over to PPO if that is the right thing to do. We still need to meet our contractual obligations. Other staff cuts are not reasonable and briefly elaborated.

Jim Kilduff stated given limited choices would have to raise taxes.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated building the Fund Balance could only do so much. The Governor is way off thinking that towns like Plymouth can manage any additional cuts.

Jim Kilduff stated need to plan for the worst-case scenario, referenced the MBR, and briefly elaborated.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated Mr. Ron Melnik, Business Manager would be sending the Board of Finance the formula/numbers tomorrow.

Jim Kilduff stated regarding the medical insurance did the Board of Education receive union approval.

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Dr. Martin Semmel stated met with the union regarding medical insurance, questions were posed, waiting for information back from the insurance broker in reference to a comparable plan to the present plan.

Jim Kilduff stated this aspect seems very promising.

Jim Kilduff questioned did the government change the eligibility requirements for the lunch program.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated I do not know if they changed the threshold. I do know that a number of families that qualify do not take assistance.

Jim Kilduff stated Library Media Specialist is not a permanent cut since it is a requirement for accreditation.

Dr. Martin Semmel confirmed not permanent cut since it is necessary for accreditation.

Vicky Carey stated after reviewing the State of Connecticut's Education Department – questioned the procedure/steps of the formula regarding the minimum expenditure requirement formula, minimum budget requirement, and the net current expenditure per student, ECS Grant, subtractions in formula and final numbers.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated not straightforward for any person who wants to understand and/or follow the formula and briefly elaborated.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated our new Business Manager Ron Melnik would send the actual MBR tomorrow.

Vicky Carey questioned if on page 25 the "NCEP" is that what we spent on each individual child.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated they do not publish that in your current year it is behind a year or two.

Vicky Carey questioned is the MBR the same.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated No, based on what the current spending is that is the minimum of what you can give the next year, gave example/scenario and briefly elaborated.

Jay Dorso questioned if the Board of Education was able to shop multiple brokers.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated current broker received bids from five carriers on our behalf to get the best insurance cost possible. The State Plan might possibly save us 3%, since the self-insured option- high claim experience, and briefly elaborated.

Jay Dorso questioned if brokers pay a flat fee and are you under contract.

Mr. Ron Melnik, Business Manager stated presently flat fee broker.

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Dr. Martin Semmel stated our broker has done excellent work.

Jim Kilduff welcomed, Mr. Melnik.

Mr. Melnik stated thank you, very happy to be here.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated Mr. Melnik has worked in a number of districts and has a full understanding of the budget and account structures.

Briana Brumaghim stated thank you and your team for creating this budget faced with the challenges that you have without any more substantial increases over last year. It is very important for the community to have a strong educational system and very much an advocate for that.

Briana Brumaghim stated our town budget presently is proposed to decrease to 0.03%, which translates - no new taxes. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Concerned regarding the substantial increase in the mill rate and briefly elaborated.

Briana Brumaghim stated do not want to be in a position where we have to send out supplemental tax bill next year. Need to balance those needs and still adequately support our school system.

Pattie DeHuff stated major problem is mandates and the cost of those mandates on the schools.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated the mandates are not causing the increases. The State is not funding the towns adequately.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated the State makes cuts but then adds additional responsibility.

Jim Kilduff stated the Grand List is up; this might result in a slight increase. Resulting in Infrastructure improvements overall remain optimistic about community and education is leading the way and briefly elaborated.

Ann Marie Rheault questioned is there more towns participating presently in an insurance plan, are you locked in for a specific time (3 years), and is there any recourse if the plan starts increasing rapidly or is it beneficial to stay self-insured.

Dr. Martin Semmel locked in for three years, average increase 5%, joining a group of 200,000 the risks are spread out, lower volatility in cost, penalized if leave, more districts are joining presently.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated the Board of Education has not made a decision for those reasons mentioned above.

Ann Marie Rheault stated in the past those participating in the plan were mostly state employees

Dr. Martin Semmel stated the big change is the SEBAC agreement, extended contracts, decrease the insurance richness of the plan for the state employees and has reduced the cost, which is reflected in the State 2.0 plan, which makes it more reasonable for a town like Plymouth.

Ann Marie Rheault questioned carrier - Dr. Martin Semmel confirmed UnitedHealthcare.

5. Public Comment

John Murphy, 385 Greystone Road, Plymouth – questioned if the Board of Finance has done any budget comparison to other towns, Director of Curriculum’s job description for K-12 could Superintendent perform those duties, cuts, fiduciary responsibility, and consolidation.

Maria Cesare, 11 Sylvan Ave, Terryville stated concerns of SRO not being restored, SRO gives a sense of security and overall a safer environment.

Barbara Rockwell, Town Clerk - stated full-time position in the Town Clerk’s office has been cut to part-time, two part-time presently – cost for indexing \$4.00 per document and staffing needs.

6. Correspondence

None

7. Board Member’s Comments

Pattie DeHuff - Applaud Dr. Martin Semmel on the work he has done.

James Zalot - Excused Absence

Vicky Carey - thanked Dr. Martin Semmel, the Board of Education, Teachers, Principals and the curriculum coordinators

Jim Kilduff - None

Jay Dorso - None

Briana Brumaghim - Advocate for strong school system - As a board of finance member we need to balance this with the entire community and ensuring that we do not overtax our community. Possible grants for SRO and appreciate your team.

Jim Kilduff thanked the public for coming out and stressed the importance of the Budget Comment/ Suggestion section on the Plymouth Website.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business of the Board of Finance, a motion was made by Vicky Carey, seconded by Briana Brumaghim to adjourn at 8:20 p.m. This motion was approved unanimously.

Our next meeting is currently scheduled for March 19, 2018.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Yokubinas

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Recording Secretary