

Town of Plymouth

80 Main Street, Terryville, CT 06786
www.plymouthct.us

Board of Finance

Telephone: 860-585-4001
Fax: 860-585-4015

1. Call Meeting to Order: Jim Kilduff, Chairman called the scheduled March 11, 2021 Board of Finance special meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Zoom Meeting online- Meeting ID: 416 918 410. Members in attendance: Victoria Carey-Vice Chairman, Eugene Croce, Barbara Rockwell, Elizabeth Wollenberg, and Dave Sekorski Also present: Ann Marie Rheault - Director of Finance

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

3. Chair & Vice Chair communication to members on Budget review process

Jim Kilduff stated this is a special meeting –The Board of Education’s budget presentation.

4. Board of Education Budget Presentation

Jim Kilduff welcomed the Board of Education.

Walt Seaman, Board of Education - Chair stated our DRG (district reference group) which compares school systems shows our numbers which is a representation of all involved and is unacceptable, needs to be improved and briefly elaborated.

Walt Seaman stated to make our town attractive it is our educational system, we need to fund our Education system appropriately.

Walt Seaman stated to equate those numbers to what they actually mean - a 3.14% increase proposed by the Board of Education to the Board of Finance - noting that 2.33% of that is contractual obligations.

Walt Seaman stated the reorganization of the school district - One school will be (PCS) pre-k through grade 2 the other will be (FES) 3-5. The 3.14% increase includes a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) program is for the middle school – we need to make our school systems better.

Walt Seaman stated we understand the viewpoint of the mayor and other towns to keep things flat but this is not the year to keep things flat - our kids need special assistance and will be left behind and briefly elaborated.

Sherri Turner, Interim Superintendent of Plymouth Public Schools presented the Board of Education's budget PowerPoint presentation, which included some of the following highlights: Note: The Board of Education's budget presentation presented to the Board of Education can be viewed in its entirety on the Town of Plymouth’s website.

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PLYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION ADOPTED BUDGET PRESENTATION 2021-2022

Board of Education Adopted Budget

\$25,550,285 (3.13%)

\$774,726.00

- Aligns with and meets federal, state, and local mandates.
- Reorganizes the elementary schools (PCS PK-2 and FES 3-5) with a budget-neutral impact.
- Continued emphasis on student safety and wellbeing.
- Maintains existing levels of educational services.
- Allows for inherent variability in Special Education funding.
- Implementation of STEM at ETJMS

New Staffing Requests (Districtwide)

- 0.6 Social Worker (District-Wide)
- 1.0 STEM/Tech Ed teacher at ETJMS
- 1.0 Custodian (50% PCS / 50% THS)
- 0.5 THS Hall Monitor
 - Custodian and Hall Monitor were previously funded through CARES Act.

Budget History (2009-10 thru 2020-2021)

1 year below 0%

3 years at 0%

3 years below 1%

5 years between 1% & 2.2%

Annual average is .97%

How Does Our Spending Compare?

DRGs group local public school districts together based on the similar socio-economic status of students.

Overall BOE Budget Request Change

• 2020-2021 Budget	\$24,775,559
• 2021-2022 Request	\$25,550,285
Difference:	\$ 774,726
% Increase:	3.13%

Budget Request vs Mayor's Recommendation

• 2020-2021 Budget	\$24,775,559
• 2021-2022 Request	\$25,550,285
Difference:	\$ 774,726
% Increase:	3.13%

2021-2022 Mayor's Rec	\$24,452,027	
Difference from Requested	(\$1,098,258.00)	(4.3%)
Difference from 2020-21	(\$323,532)	(1.3%)

Walt Seaman stated the Board of Education is not coming to the Board of Finance with a capital budget request.

Walt Seaman stated the STEM \$787,000 is a one-time cost, for the classroom(s), 3-D printers, equipment, curriculum, yearly teacher's salary, and benefits afterward.

Jim Kilduff questioned/clarified the State of Connecticut - math proficiency number.

Walt Seaman confirmed 48.1% state proficiency.

Jim Kilduff clarified the slide that represented the MBR, data comparison - noting the (dip). Previously, the Board of Finance was given incorrect amount for MBR, cut, then had to give more, and briefly elaborated.

Walt Seaman stated in the 19,078 tax bills sent out - a 3.14% increase equates to a \$41.25 per tax bill.

Walt Seaman stated a 2.53 % increase would equate to \$32.86 per tax bill including big businesses in town.

Eugene Croce questioned other sources of income/revenue not included if significant increases – Title One Grants, and Special Education. Also, questioned the funding of school lunch.

Matthew Tencza, Board of Education Business Manager stated Title 1 grants and Special Education grants remained relatively flat (with no increase) or decreased slightly. Education Costing Sharing grant (ECS) roughly remained flat.

Matthew Tencza stated the cafeteria has broken even or better (last 3 years). This year, obviously, is an aberration, and there is going to be a cost to our operating budget in order to make that whole this year. Overall, the expectation is when back to "normal" the food service will break even and not draw on our operating budget (our goal).

Eugene Croce questioned the 10-year comparison and number of students in the calculation.

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Matthew Tencza stated enrollment figures (eligible students in the calculation) would be provided. (Will follow-up)

Jim Kilduff stated COVID-19 relief funds are not included in your operating budget per federal guidelines.

Matthew Tencza stated the two grants that made up COVID-19 relief funds in this particular school year. First Corona Relief grant \$178,000 and ESSER1 (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) fund grant \$158,000.

Matthew Tencza stated neither of those grants is in our operating budget nor with exception of the hall monitor and custodian - people included in our moving forward budget. Funded our PPE, labor, and additional cleaning and briefly elaborated.

Matthew Tencza stated the CFR grant is done/overspent by December 31.

Matthew Tencza stated the ESSER1 grant goes until 9/2022 - funds already committed

Matthew Tencza stated the ESSER2 based relief package passed in December 2020 - \$709,000 –a very narrow lane for what those funds can be spent on and not allowed to offset our operating budget - only for student support –over the next two years - expiring in 2023. (Not awarded as of yet)

Matthew Tencza stated the District Needs Assessment application is still being filled out. (Not awarded yet)

Jim Kilduff confirmed restricted not included in operating budget per law, hiring tutors and counselors in relief –questioned stipulation - are they permanent after 2023.

Sherri Turner stated temporary qualified individuals – priority is to get kids caught up with summer program, and before and after school academic programs. Those particular funds, which include restrictions are for as long as the grant lasts and briefly elaborated.

Jim Kilduff confirmed the Smart Start grant's timeframe.

Sherri Turner stated the Smart Start Grant is for a few more years before expiration - ideally would become part of the Board of Education operating budget – the recommendation is would not want to cut.

Ann Marie Rheault wanted to clarify there are no programs that are budgeted for in your upcoming 2022 budget, which would be for mitigation programs due to COVID and learning loss. Is that correct - that you would potentially use the ESSER2 funds for 2022.

Sherri Turner stated we do not have anything in our operating budget that we are planning to use for learning loss or any kind of COVID-19 impact that is all going to be ESSER's money.

Ann Marie Rheault confirmed there are no programs that are budgeted for in next year.

Dave Sekorski stated the one that you are applying for has nothing to do with the package that had just passed by the United States Congress.

Dave Sekorski questioned the timeframe on that one you are currently processing - that is for those programs mentioned.

Sherri Turner confirmed they are filling out our needs assessment, the grant application and those funds are good for two years.

Dave Sekorski questioned the potential/possibility of positions introduced covered by the upcoming recovery plan.

Sherri Turner stated “no”, we need those positions in our operating budget. Our intent is to keep them there because we were short-staffed - custodians and the hall monitor position is really something that is necessary moving forward and the amount, the total amount of the two is about \$63,000.

Matthew Tencza confirmed amount of roughly \$63-65,000.

David Sekorski questioned the settling of the contract for one year – teacher’s contracts or administrators?

Matthew Tencza stated the teachers. Both teachers and administrators will be negotiated in the same year coming up.

Matthew Tencza - Plymouth Public Schools stated the numbers that are in this budget or the contract that was negotiated and the administrators are in their final year so. Negotiating 2022-2023 and out for both.

David Sekorski stated beneficial to view enrollment numbers and variance between the current redesign of the current districts.

David Sekorski noted the program with the elementary schools versus the new one, re. Classroom perspective, number of students - impacted by STEM.

Walt Seaman stated speaking with the superintendent and the curriculum coordinator – STEM - if in the middle school, reaches and assists every student in the middle school – 6th, 7th, and 8th grades.

David Sekorski questioned how many magnets are we able to participate in right now.

Matthew Tencza - Plymouth Public Schools stated I believe four.

David Sekorski stated thank you very much look forward to seeing those numbers, class enrollment, and class size, thank you.

Matthew Tencza will follow up with information forwarded via email.

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Walt Seaman stated if we have a cut we will lose staff and programs and briefly elaborated.

Jim Kilduff thanked the Board of Education for their presentation.

Ann Marie Rheault stated the Board of Education's presentation it appears that the recommendation from the mayor is to reduce the Board of Education's budget by \$323,000 or 1.31 percentage.

Ann Marie Rheault confirmed 2021 - the \$24,775,559 is on a gross basis - the 2022 requested budget of \$25,550,285 is net of excess costs so that it is on a net basis -that is why it is separated into two line items.

Ann Marie Rheault stated the mayor's recommendation is to increase the gross number to the Board of Education by \$250,000.

Ann Marie Rheault stated on a gross to gross basis the mayor's recommendation is to increase the Board of Education budget by \$250,000 not decrease.

Ann Marie Rheault reiterated it is because of the move of the revenue. From revenue on the town side to netting against special education costs on the Board of Education side. Noted - the mayor is not recommending a decrease to the Board of Education, he is recommending a \$250,000 increase to the Board of Education budget.

Walt Seaman stated a difference of opinion - will figure this out together.

Ann Marie Rheault stated this is an accounting procedure - so everyone is on the same page and briefly elaborated.

5. Public Comment

None

6. Correspondence

None

7. Board Member's Comments

Vicky Carey - None

Eugene Croce - None

Barbara Rockwell - None

Elizabeth Wollenberg - None

Dave Sekorski - None

The next Board of Finance meeting will be on March 15, 2021.

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8. Adjournment

There being no further business of the Board of Finance, a motion was made by Dave Sekorski, seconded by Vicky Carey to adjourn at 8:07 p.m. This motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Yokubinas

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Recording Secretary