

# Town of Plymouth

80 Main Street, Terryville, CT 06786

[www.plymouthct.us](http://www.plymouthct.us)

# Board of Finance

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**1. Call Hearing to Order:** Ralph Zovich, Chairman called the scheduled April 20, 2017, 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, Jay Dorso, Pattie DeHuff and Jim Kilduff Also present: Mayor David Merchant, Joe Kilduff, Tax Collector, Ann Marie Rheault, Director of Finance; Town Councilwoman Ana LaGassey, Town Councilman John Pajeski, Town Councilwoman Sue Murawski, Town Councilman Tom Zagurski and Michele Yokubinas - Recording Secretary.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance:** Ralph Zovich, Chairman led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ralph Zovich stated, please remain standing for one moment of silence in memory of all the men and women in the military who have died in service to our country.

**3. Legal & Fire Exit Notice:** Ralph Zovich, Chairman noted the fire exits.

Ralph Zovich welcomed all to the Public Hearing and read aloud the legal notice.

## **4. Presentation of Proposed FY2017-18 General Fund Budget**

Ralph Zovich informed the public that there were copies of the budget available for perusal.

### Hearing Agenda

- Presentation of the General Fund Budget
- Public Comment /Questions and Answers
- Adjourn to Joint Meeting of Town Council, Boards of Finance & Education

Ralph Zovich introduced all Board of Finance Members and Ann Marie Rheault-Finance Director.

The Budget Presentation included the following:

1. Critical Issues & State Budget Deficit
2. Summary of Revenues and Expenses
3. Tax Impact and Closing Comments

Ralph Zovich discussed the following within his presentation:

- Budget Goals - To prepare a balanced, responsible budget under the current economic conditions.

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- Critical Factors
  - ✓ Declining Revenues
  - ✓ Property Revaluation
  - ✓ Depleted Fund Balance
  - ✓ Contractual Salary Adjustments
  - ✓ Rise in Unfunded Pension Liabilities
- Revenues & Expenditures
- Consolidated General Fund / Summary of Total Revenues
- Highlights of Revenue Changes
- Consolidated General Fund / Summary of Total Expenditures
- Highlights of Spending Changes
- Capital Outlays/NRE
- School Budget Issues - Summary of Issues and Factors affecting Education Costs
- Historical Enrollment
- Board of Education Summary
- Potential Board of Education Cost Savings
- Calculation of Tax Rate
- Effect of Property Revaluation
- Impact of Tax Increase
- Commentary & Observations
- Public Comment “Ground Rules”

Mayor David Merchant thanked the public audience for their presence this evening, as well as the Board of Finance and Ann Marie Rheault for all of their hard work with the budget, noting he hoped the town would support it.

Dr. Martin Semmel thanked the Board of Finance for all of their hard work in developing the budget. Dr. Martin Semmel stated that the assumptions that were made about consolidation of the Elementary Schools, reducing teachers, and some other costs had not been studied for what the actual impact would be and briefly elaborated. Dr. Semmel requested the Board of Finance restore the \$250,000 from their \$542,000, noting the impact it would have on the students and schools.

Melissa Johnson, Chairman of the Board of Education stated she was astonished at the Board of Finance for publicly make specific recommendations as to how the Board of Education should cut and use their budgetary dollars and briefly elaborated. She further stated the .84 or \$200,000 increase would be detrimental to all students in the district.

### 5. Public Input- Question and Answer Session

Jessica DuPont, 139 Lake Plymouth Blvd., Plymouth, CT stated the baseball field at Fisher School was not playable, briefly elaborated, noting she supports the Board of Education’s budget.

Ralph Zovich stated the proposed Board of Education’s budget was a \$4,000 increase in the Maintenance and Facilities and the Board of Finance was not recommending any change.

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Cindy Florenciau, 382 Harwinton Avenue, Plymouth, CT, questioned the Police Department Officer count, noted she was against teacher layoffs, taking monies from Special Education and merging schools and recommended raising the Mill rate with the extra monies being put into the School District

Ralph Zovich stated there 24 full-time authorized police officers and briefly elaborated.

Phillip Penn, Board of Education Business Manager stated \$113,000 was the net savings.

Diana Ieronimo, 9 Meghan Blvd., Plymouth, CT - questioned if there are no actual changes in police officer count why wasn't there enough money for the SRO position, recommending the position be reinstated.

Ralph Zovich stated the Mayor was working on labor management issue when resolved and the 24<sup>th</sup> police officer is back on duty; noting the Board of Finance wanted to see the interacting with the Plymouth Police Department and the school system.

Gary Belanger III, 256, Main Street, Terryville, CT questioned why the Board of Education couldn't get the full amount they requested and suggested increasing the Grant List and consolidating the Board of Education's offices.

Ralph Zovich stated the Board of Finance was charged with the duty of setting the bottom line allocation and the issue at hand is the uncertainty of the state funding and briefly elaborated.

Christopher Simo Kinzer, 52 Old Farm Road, Terryville, CT stated he was concerned that \$200,000 does not cover the Board of Education's expenses, paid close attention to Board of Education budget significantly and briefly elaborated.

Gerry Bourbonniere, 6 Fairmount Avenue, Terryville, CT stated that he attended Board of Education meeting and was pleasantly surprised of the number of kids that are staying in our town. Gerry Bourbonniere questioned when the last time the Board of Education overspent their budget was and briefly elaborated. Gerry Bourbonnier stated currently there was a House bill on the floor noting if you have 1000-2000 students, which is presently where we fall, the State of Connecticut would give the Board of Education 50% of school funding and briefly elaborated.

Vicky Carey, stated the Board of Education overspent their budget in deficit well over 10-12 years ago.

Ralph Zovich stated some went into the Sinking Fund and briefly elaborated. He further stated any recommendations that come from the Central Office such as layoffs are made from the Board of Education not the Board of Finance

Martin Sandshaw, 7 Richmond, Plymouth, CT - Encouraged the Board of Education to reinstate \$342,000 into the Board of Education's budget if not possible a major portion of that and briefly elaborated.

Kathy Kosack, 201 Farmington Avenue, Terryville, CT- Suggested the Board of Education encumber some of those funds for next year's budget citing technology as an example technology and briefly

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elaborated. Kathy Kosak questioned asset forfeiture money uses and suggested cutting percentages within departments. Kathy Kosak stated she was upset about the condition of the girls' softball field. Ann Marie Rheault stated that asset forfeiture money is restricted money and Chief Krasicky could attest to that.

Vinnie Klimas, 5 Pearl Drive, Terryville, CT stated he fully supports the budget, noting he supports the Mayor's Office, his staff, the Town Council and briefly elaborated. He further stated as Chairman of the Housing Authority, he wanted to thank the Police Department, the Fire Department, the Fire Marshal, Fire Department Volunteers, the Recreation Department, the Town Clerk's Office, the Public Works Department, and the Library, noting he supported equal raises for all departments. Vinnie Klimas recommended the Board of Education and Superintendent establish a community wide task force to deal with the impact of the continuing declining enrollment and briefly elaborated.

Chief Karen Krasicky, Plymouth Police Department -clarification was made on the asset forfeiture money that it is not to be used for something in a general budget, noting it was used for narcotic, drug violations and for training reinforcement. She further stated the SRO should be a full time position and briefly elaborated on her reasoning. Chief Karen Krasicky requested the Board of Finance reinstate the SRO to a full time position.

Joe Kilduff, Republican Town Committee Chairman, 31 Prospect Street Ext., Terryville, CT - recommended the Board of Finance give the Board of Education the requested amount and reinstate the SRO position, noting if it fails then the understanding would be would be cut back.

Chet Scoville, Chairman Police Commission 24 North Street, Plymouth, CT stated the Plymouth Police Department needs that 25<sup>th</sup> position and briefly elaborated. He further stated the SRO helps kids with drug problems and home issues. Chet Scoville stated he respected and appreciated the Board of Finance and their work, noting he wanted the voters to make that decision. He further stated the Plymouth Police Officers were dedicated to the community and we need to fund everything they need.

Cindy Florenciau, 382 Harwinton Avenue, Plymouth, CT - Listed and compared mill rates, suggested setting a Mill that would fund what the town needs in order to make people want to live and work here.

Ralph Zovich stated it was not the Mill rate; it was the value of 1 Mill, noting the Grand List has shrunk, that needed to be reversed and briefly elaborated.

Gerry Bourbonniere, 6 Fairmount Avenue, Terryville, CT – stated to make money you have to spend money and we needed to invest in the Town's education system and briefly elaborated.

Cathy Paskus, 4 Arrow Drive, Terryville, CT – stated the Finance Board has given a budget, they continually vote it down, noting everyone was on same page in making town better. We need to get the vote out and briefly elaborated.

Ralph Zovich, stated we usually always put one question on the ballot but it does not give us any feedback. Our proposal for this year an advisory question, If "NO" in Question #1, please advise your reason below. Budget too high or Budget too low. The Board of Finance will forward Proposed Ballot Question to the Council.

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Vinnie Klimas 5 Pearl Drive, Terryville, CT recommended the Board of Finance check with the Town Attorney that it complies with legislative voting type ballot laws and if advisory questions had extreme restrictions if allowable.

Tracy Dupont, 139 Lake Plymouth Blvd., Plymouth, CT stated just by having the “YES” or “NO” on the ballot question then it would not inform the Board of Finance of why they voted the way they did -was it too high or too low.

Karen Kulesa, 14 Dewey Avenue, Terryville, CT stated that this is not going to tell us what part of the budget they disagree with.

Jessica DuPont, 139 Lake Plymouth Blvd., Plymouth, CT stated, is it possible for an advisory question to be separate from ballot for further input.

### **Board Members' Comments**

Pattie DeHuff – stated while working with the Parks & Recreation portion of the budget she learned about an option/program available to residents under the Parks & Recreation Department, which is pay to play, understanding it will cost something to participate and briefly elaborated. Pattie DeHuff questioned if students would be willing to come up with the amount/difference of the requested Board of Education’s requested budget, which would be \$274.00 per student (figure included SRO) and briefly elaborated. She further stated she looks at both sides and tries to evaluate what the Town can afford.

Vicky Carey stated the Board of Education does encumber money and noted she had a list from last year, in addition to the money they gave back to the Town and briefly elaborated. Vicky Carey stated she wished that the Board of Education had provided at least their budget, so that the parents could see where the money is actually going. Vicky Carey stated the either Board of Education or Town had to come up with the \$67,000 for the SRO position, noting she felt it should be from the Board of Education’s budget. Vicky Carey stated the Board of Education has wireless access points that they need to provide, visitor management software, and other items in the Board of Education budget that are important and that should be available for the public to view. She further stated some parents and elderly people do not have or use computers or are not able to attend meetings. Vicky Carey stated the Board of Education was 60% of the Town budget and if the school board went over their budget they are, by Town Charter, allowed a one-time appropriation.

Philip Penn stated all budget information has been posted and available on website for months.

Mike Hults, Principal, Terryville High School, stated he would like the Board of Finance to clarify how the Board of Education could be any more transparent with the public in the budget process and briefly elaborated.

Ralph Zovich stated the Board of Finance’s only responsibility, per the Charter and State law was to provide the Board of Education with a bottom line allocation and briefly elaborated.

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Vicky Carey stated there are many elderly people that do not have access to computers. Years ago, we had these documents available not only at town hall but also at the library.

Ann Marie Rheault stated that is it not the Board of Finance's responsibility to ask the Board of Education to bring copies of their budget to this meeting.

Ralph Zovich stated all information was previously given at the joint meeting with the Board of Education. To clarify will provide information (hard copy) if requested or can be viewed/downloaded from website.

Jay Dorso – Thanked the public for coming out tonight, noting people care about the Town. He further stated from the Board of Finance's side they view it differently, but it was nice to see the Board of Education's view, as well. Jay Dorso stated the Public made many great points, both younger and older people, and by putting everyone's thoughts together it would be beneficial for the future of the Town.

Jim Kilduff noted it would bad if the Town did not get the money from the State of Connecticut and briefly elaborated. Jim Kilduff stated different departments had taken hits over the years, including the the Public Works Department, who were doing a great job. Jim Kilduff stated the clerical staff is now cross-trained, to streamline processes. Jim Kilduff stated he was a huge supporter of education, noting the Board of Education had provided detailed presentation and briefly elaborated. Jim Kilduff stated the Board of Finance was trying to be prudent, noting the Town was in a very bad fiscal situation.

Ralph Zovich stated the meeting following this evening's Public Hearing there would be joint meeting of the Board of Education, Board of Finance and the Town Council

Ralph Zovich stated by Town Charter the first referendum had to be held on or before May 3<sup>rd</sup> and a date would be set this evening.

Ralph Zovich thanked everyone for their participation this evening and declared the Public Hearing closed.

**6. Adjourn to Joint Meeting with Town Council & Board of Education**

There being no further business of the Board of Finance, a motion was made by James Zalot, seconded by Vicky Carey to adjourn at 10:05 p.m. This motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Yokubinas,  
Recording Secretary