

A Public Hearing was held Tuesday, March 26, 2019 at Woodbury Middle School, 67 Washington Ave., Woodbury CT.

Present: Board members: Janet Morgan, Maryanne Van Aken, Michael Devine, Carol Ann Brown, John Chapman, George Bauer, David Lampart. Also in attendance were Dr. Olzacki, Michael Rafferty, Bill Nemecek, Suzi Greene, Donna Marcinek, Pam Sordi, Julie Luby, Moderator Lou DeLuca, and approximately 4 members of the community, CT voices reporter and BOE clerk, Natascha Schwartz.

Missing: Pamela Zmek

Ms. Morgan called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Morgan appointed Woodbury Town Moderator, Lou DeLuca, to serve as moderator for the public hearing. He appointed BOE Secretary, Ms. Brown, to serve as the meeting clerk.

Mr. DeLuca read the following call: To present and receive questions about the Regional School District 14 Superintendent's proposed budget for 2019-2020. He turned the presentation over to Dr. Olzacki.

Dr. Olzacki commented that when he was hired in October, he was asked to listen and learn of the needs and wants, understanding that it would be a difficult budget year. Was in both communities what fears of people and wants and goals of communities were and how we as educators could address those needs.

Dr. Olzacki showed the video of his recommended budget presentation. The total recommended budget is \$35,319,886 representing a 3.92% increase.

Questions:

Q: Valerie Leblanc of Woodbury asked why the flooring in portables were replaced. She understood from Dr. O's presentation that the Region recommended removing the portables.

A: Mr. McAllister advised Ms. Leblanc that the flooring was removed last year during the summer due to the discovery of mold.

Valerie Leblanc also stated that being a teacher for 19 years, she is concerned in the reduction in elementary staffing and packing children into classrooms. She believes it is a detriment to the district and children. She asked the BOE to review and see if there are any other considerations possible.

Q: Stephanie Chapman of Woodbury mentioned that in the District Advisory Committee's final report, one of the recommendations was the possibility of renting out the central office space for revenue to the district. She asked what the plan is for the space?

A: Ms. Morgan replied that the BOE received the report, but with budget season coinciding with the report coming out, and haven't reviewed the report as of yet. She went on to mention that this has not been factored into the 2019-2020 budget. Once the board has time to review, they will be able to make recommendations to Superintendent and staff.

Ms. Chapman had a few ideas which she brought to the BOE's attention: She suggested leasing out the additional space to a daycare or preschool type facility which teachers and staff could use. It would be a paid service, but as it would be on site, it might be an incentive for retaining staff. Ms. Chapman is also concerned regarding the fact that MES will be going from 3 first grade units down to 2, and asked the BOE to consider the possibility of having paraprofessionals brought back into those classrooms, as they will now have more students to attend to.

Comment: Rebecca Angarano of Woodbury mentioned to the BOE members that she has 3 kindergartners and wanted to reiterate her concerns with the impending changes to MES 1<sup>st</sup> grade level from 3 to 2 units. MES to the 1<sup>st</sup> grade level. my family and most K parents are concerned with changes at 1<sup>st</sup> grade level going from 3 to 2 and foresees a lot of children's needs falling through cracks. She went on to state that these young children the extra guidance now, but stopping at 1<sup>st</sup> grade, to be able to supply the necessary ratio of teacher to students that has been proven to best address children's needs doesn't seem to be the best use of budget money. MES had a situation in Kindergarten this year where a teacher left early, a substitute was put into place came, and the students finally got a permanent teacher, but those students had an upheaval and haven't received a solid year of instruction, and now they will have a similar upheaval next year going into 1<sup>st</sup> grade. They suffered a learning curve this year and will now have to do it all over again next year but increasing class sizes. She mentioned that she understands that the BOE needs to push the budget money where it needs to be, but spreading the teachers too thinly.

Comment: Tikva Rose of Woodbury asked the BOE if they would consider postponing the cut by one year, or perhaps having a full time paraprofessional in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. She went on to state that she would like to sit together and come up with a way to make it work for everyone.

Dr. DeLuca asked if there were any further questions or comments.

Hearing no further comments, Mr. DeLuca adjourned the public hearing at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Carol Ann Brown, Secretary  
Regional School District 14 Board of Education

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Natascha Z. Schwartz, Board Clerk, 3/28/2019