

A Public Hearing was held Monday, April 11, 2016 at Woodbury Middle School, 67 Washington Ave., Woodbury CT.

Present: George Bauer, Carol Ann Brown, Charles Cosgriff, Michael Devine, Janet Morgan, and Maryanne Van Aken. Also, Wayne McAllister, Eric Bergeron, Kimberly Culkin, Christina Fensore, Susan Greene, Alice Jones, Michael Molzon, William Nemecek, Michael Rafferty, Susan Ruddock, Pamela Sordi and Holly Wrenn; BoE clerk Debra Carlton, one member of the press, and about fifteen additional members of the community.

Absent: Superintendent Anna Cutaia-Leonard, John Chapman and Pamela Zmek

Mr. Bauer called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Bauer appointed Woodbury Town Moderator, Lou DeLuca, to serve as moderator for the public hearing.

Mr. DeLuca 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 2016-2017.

Mr. Bauer made an opening statement, thanking those in attendance for coming out, and saying that they would be shown how the budget supports what the district wants to accomplish in the 2016-2017 school year. He turned the presentation over to Mr. McAllister.

Mr. McAllister noted the budget, representing a 1.28% increase, is not an incremental budget, but rather a programmatic one. He noted completion this year of an ELA curriculum, and said next year's focus will be on Mathematics, Business, and Agriscience curriculum. Declining enrollment has been addressed through a 5% reduction in staff. He gave an historical perspective of budget increases over the years. He highlighted improvements in next year's budget, including literacy and math specialists and the rationale for them; additional music staff (0.2FTE) and hopes for a musical instrument repository; technology improvements, texts for ELA, and PSAT for all grade 9 students; the addition of a swim team at NHS, uniform replacement, equipment, safety and security enhancements, a list of maintenance projects, and class size data showing a reduction in sections at each elementary school. He also offered budget numbers in a comparison by object.

Mr. DeLuca opened the floor for public comment:

Gary Suslavich, Woodbury, asked for details of the swim program and how substitutes are being funded. He expressed concerns about funding for Agriscience students from out-of-district, and about long term planning to address declining enrollment. He returned later in the evening to cite the Blum & Shapiro report and the actual costs of the Agriscience program.

Richard Snyder, Woodbury, voiced his concern that the bonding for the building project will further increase the tax burden of senior citizens, above the seemingly low 1.28% budget increase and slight increase to the mil rate.

Hearing no further comments, Mr. DeLuca adjourned the public hearing at 8:09 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

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