



Town of Suffield
Board of Finance (BOF)
Budget Review Meeting Minutes
Suffield Town Hall – 83 Mountain Road, Suffield, CT
Monday, March 25, 2024 – 7 pm

Members Present: Chris Childs, Eric Harrington, Dr. Ann Huntington, Brian Kost, Mark Sinopoli **Members Absent:** Michael Haines **Alternates Present:** Arthur Christian II, Mark Englander, Tom Frenaye **Alternates Absent:** None

Also Present: Interim Finance Director Lynn Nenni and First Selectman Colin Moll

1. Chair Harrington called the Budget Review Meeting to order at 7:01 pm.
2. Chair Harrington conducted the Pledge of Allegiance. **Mr. Sinopoli made a motion to give Mr. Haines' voting rights to Mr. Englander. Dr. Huntington seconded. All in favor; motion passed 5:0.**
3. Correspondence/Citizen Comment - None
4. Budget Review
 - a. Board of Education – Business Manager Eric Remington, Superintendent Timothy Van Tassel, Board of Education Chair Maureen Sattan, and Vice Chair Melissa Finnigan presented the proposed FY 25 budget. Superintendent Van Tassel thanked Mr. Kost for his work as liaison to the BOE. The proposed budget is \$39,672,389, an increase of \$1,138,495, or 2.95%, over FY 24. Headcount is increasing by 1.5 FTEs, although 2.0 of these FTEs are “budget neutral” in that they are replacing contracted services. Also of note, certified positions are decreasing by 2.0 FTEs. It was noted that Salaries and Health Benefits account for 82% of the total budget. There is slightly lower enrollment in the schools; they project 2,046 students (2,003 in-district, 22 Outplacements, and 21 Magnet Tuition.) in October 2024. The ARP ESSER and CHOICE grants have expired for FY 25; therefore, salaries and benefits paid for by those grants in the amount of \$498,000 are being moved to the General Fund budget. They have budgeted a \$200,000 payroll vacancy credit. The proposed \$39,672,389 budget is a net figure; it does not include expenses covered by revenues from grants and other non-property tax sources. There has been a 17.18% increase in Special Education Enrollment since 2014-2015, which has, in turn, increased special education-related costs. Higher utilities and repairs are another driver of the budget increase. An offset to these higher costs was a one-time reduction in health insurance costs of \$485,000, which was based on better-than-expected claims experience in FY 24. As of FY 23, Suffield spent \$19,068 per student (115th out of 169 municipalities in State; 26th out of 30 towns in DRG). There was discussion surrounding student performance over time and how we compare to other towns in our DRG. The State of Connecticut has mandated a new reading program, which will be funded by the Board of Education and, if the money is not available there, grant money will be used. The new playgrounds at the schools were discussed.
 - b. General Budget Discussion – Chair Harrington stated that there are several Town departments presenting their budgets at the April 1, 2024, meeting. It is expected that the Board will have a good understanding of where the budget stands after that meeting and hopes to finalize the proposed budget at the April 8, 2024, regular meeting. If not, the proposed budget will be finalized on April 15, 2024.
5. **Dr. Huntington made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Childs seconded. All in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:48 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Irwin
Recording Secretary

These minutes are not official until accepted at a subsequent meeting.