



TOWN CLERK
SUFFIELD, CT

2025 APR 14 AM 8:30

REC'D BY:

Town of Suffield
Board of Finance (BOF)
Town Hall 1st Floor Conference Room
83 Mountain Road, Suffield, CT

Monday, April 7, 2025 – 7:00 pm Budget Review Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Eric Harrington, Michael Haines, Dr. Ann Huntington, Brian Kost, and Mark Sinopoli

Members Absent: Chris Childs **Alternates Present:** Arthur Christian II, Tom Frenaye, and Mark Englander **Alternates Absent:** None

Also Present: Finance Director Amanda Moore

1. Chair Harrington called the budget review meeting to order at 7:00 pm.
2. Chair Harrington conducted the Pledge of Allegiance. **Mr. Haines made a motion to give Mr. Childs voting rights to Mr. Frenaye. Mr. Kost seconded. All in favor; motion passed 5:0.**
3. Chairman Comment – Chair Harrington addressed an error in the previous meeting's agenda regarding the Board of Education discussion, explaining that the correct procedure would have been to amend the agenda at the beginning of that meeting. To ensure transparency, the Board of Education will provide a summary of their previous presentation at tonight's meeting.
4. Correspondence/Citizen comment – Five separate emails were received from citizens and were forwarded to Board of Finance members. E-mails from Libby Begin, Rob Johnson, and Amy Healy expressed support for reinstating the middle school librarian and e-mails from Robert McCool and Debra Dudack expressed support for the BOE budget.
Citizen Comment – Kathryn McCluskey – 170 Marbern Drive – Ms. McCluskey is a teacher at the high school and asked the Board to approve the Board of Education budget and asked for consideration in reinstating the middle school librarian position.
Debra Dudack – 315 Prospect St. – Ms. Dudack is on the Board of Education and highlighted key points from her email to the Board regarding the BOE budget.
Amy Healy – Ms. Healy read the email she sent to the Board, expressing support for the middle school librarian.
Gregory Sparzo – 445 Lake Road – Mr. Sparzo is on the Board of Education and addressed the Board of Finance regarding the middle school librarian position and his understanding of being fiscally responsible when creating a budget in a tough year.
Brian Fry – 43 Wisteria Lane – Mr. Fry is on the Board of Education and stated that he feels that he has gradually watched the budget not be invested in what is best for the students. He asked the Board to accept the Board of Education budget without any further reductions and would like the middle school librarian position to be reinstated.
Anthony Ferreira – 95 Bridge St. – Mr. Ferreira stated he is advocating for no further reductions in the Board of Education budget and did not appreciate a comment at the last Board of Finance meeting regarding Special Education.
5. Budget Review
 - a. Board of Education – Summary of Review at the 3/31/2025 meeting - Business Manager Eric Remington, Superintendent Matthew Dunbar, and Board of Education Chair Maureen Sattan presented a proposed budget is \$42,275,929, an increase of 7.03% over the current year (6.59% with a special revenue offset). Ms. Sattan reported the budget is tight, with no areas of significant contingency, and minor changes in assumptions will have a significant impact throughout the year. The budget includes a 20% increase in health insurance costs and a reduction of six full-time

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employees with no offsetting increase in positions. The budget includes a 5.94% increase in gross spending, with a decrease in grant revenue due to the loss of a high-cost outplaced choice student. A reduction in the personnel turnover vacancy factor has added \$100,000 to the budget due to fewer retirements. Superintendent Dunbar explained that while the number of special education students has grown, teaching staff has remained relatively stable, with an increase in paraprofessionals to meet student needs cost effectively.

b. General Budget Discussion – Adjustments

Board of Selectmen proposed budget of \$18,799,184. **Mr. Kost made a motion to increase Library Trust Endowment Revenue by \$20,000 and increase Library Books expense by \$10,000. Mr. Haines seconded. All in favor; motion passed 6:0.** Board of Selectman budget is \$18,789,184, a 2.59% increase over the current year

Board of Education proposed budget of \$42,275,928. Dr. Huntington asked about the removal of staffing on the proposed budget and asked the salary for the middle school librarian. With benefits it is approximately a \$107,000 reduction. Mr. Frenaye spoke regarding the medical fund and the 20% increase in medical expenses and inquired if the Board of Finance could help offset those expenses. Those offsets will be addressed later in the meeting. **Mr. Kost made a motion to reduce the Board of Education budget by \$250,000. Mr. Haines seconded.** Mr. Kost noted this reduction is justified by an updated assumption on OPEB contributions, saving \$90,000, and a low vacancy factor in the current budget. The proposed reduction would still result in a 6% increase when accounting for the \$175,000 grant reclassification. The Board notes that Suffield has averaged a 4% compound growth rate per student over the last 10 years, slightly higher than the state average. **Motion passed 4:2 with Dr. Huntington and Mr. Frenaye voting no.** The Board of Education budget is \$42,025,928, a 6.40% increase over the current year.

Capital Expenditures (ACCE) – Mr. Haines asked for clarification on the SHS Tech-Ed Room Conversion for \$395,000. Superintendent Dunbar stated it would allow for high tech equipment which would transform the room to bring modern technology and is tied into the new curriculum. **Mr. Kost made a motion to remove the beach volleyball courts cost of \$78,000. Mr. Sinopoli seconded. Motion passed 4:2 with Dr. Huntington and Mr. Frenaye voting no.** ACCE Capital Expenditures are \$3,715,029, a 27.02% increase over the current year.

Capital Sweeps - **Mr. Kost made a motion to transfer \$514,009 from excess monies from completed capital projects in the Capital & Non-Recurring Fund to the General Fund. Mr. Haines seconded. All in favor; motion passed 6:0.**

Non-Tax Revenue / Reserves – **Mr. Kost made a motion to transfer \$150,000 from the Off Duty Fund to the General Fund. Mr. Haines seconded. All in favor; motion passed 6:0.**

Mr. Kost made a motion to transfer out of the General Fund \$2,750,000 and transfer into the CNRE Fund \$2,000,000. Mr. Haines seconded. All in favor; motion passed 6:0. It was noted that the \$750,000 difference offsets some of the health insurance increases in the operating budgets.

c. Potential vote to approve budget for Public Hearing – Ms. Moore recommended amending the prior motion.

Mr. Kost motioned to withdraw his original motion to transfer out of the General Fund \$2,750,000 and transfer into the CNRE Fund \$2,000,000. Mr. Sinopoli seconded. All in favor; motion passed 6:0.

Mr. Kost made a motion to transfer \$2,000,000 from the General Fund undesignated fund balance into the CNRE Fund. Mr. Sinopoli seconded. All in favor; motion passed 6:0.

Mr. Kost made a motion to transfer \$750,000 out of the General Fund undesignated fund. Mr. Haines seconded. Motion passed 6:0.

Mr. Kost made a motion to accept the FY 2025-26 Town of Suffield budget for \$69,100,316. Mr. Haines seconded. Motion passed 4:2 with Dr. Huntington and Mr. Frenaye voting no.

- d. **Mr. Kost made a motion to approve a FY 2025-26 Budget of \$69,100,316 with a proposed mill rate of 23.41 for the Public Hearing to be held on Wednesday, April 23, 2025 at Suffield Middle School at 7:00 pm. Mr. Sinopoli seconded. Motion passed 5:1 with Dr. Huntington voting no.**
6. **Mr. Haines made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Kost seconded. All in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Irwin
Recording Secretary

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