

WOLCOTT TOWN COUNCIL

PUBLIC HEARING

Council Chambers, Wolcott Town Hall

May 17, 2016

7:00 P.M.

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Note: These are summary minutes. A tape recording of this meeting is on file in Wolcott Town Hall, Commission Secretary's Office.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Town of Wolcott: FY 2016/2017 Proposed Budget

Chairman Valletta called the public hearing to order at 7:10 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance, and attendance was taken.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman David Valletta, Vice-Chairman Gale Lanza Mastrofrancesco, Francis Masi, Roger Picard, Jeffrey Slavin, Joseph Membrino, Donald Charette Sr., George Phelan, and Rachel Wisler

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Thomas G. Dunn; Linda Bruce, MFO; Taxpayers; et al.

CALL OF MEETING: (see attached)

Chairman Valletta advised that the public hearing notice was published in the Republican-American newspaper one time (**see attached**).

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Email dated May 11th from Lisa Lawson expressing her support of the Board of Education Proposed Budget

PUBLIC COMMENT:

At this time, Chairman Valletta advised that the purpose of this hearing is to hear public opinion on the proposed budget and requested that anyone coming forward please sign in and state their name and address.

A summary of comments is listed below.

1. **Linda Bruce, of 424 Boundline Road** came forward and stated that she has assisted in 14 general government budget proposals. Other than the Mayor speaking in favor of it, she can recall only two other residents speaking in favor of it. She does not feel that the general government budget gets enough credit for the services provided within its framework. The proposed budget is transparent; the majority of the line items are identified

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for individual expenses. Salaries and wages are only grouped in Depts. 211, 212, 311, 521, and 551, however, the salaries for those department supervisors are identified individually on separate budget line items. The major departments are as follows: Dept. 112 supports the Tri-Town Health District, Northwest Regional Mental Health Board, public fire charges, refuse collection, recycling & disposal for town residents, town public buildings, including the Board of Education's buildings, street lights, the Memorial Day Parade and Probate Court Costs. She chose those items because these services are a benefit for all residents. The total for those services are \$1,895,863. Dept. 113-School Bonds-the total recommended cost is \$2,045,114.00 with a \$693,096 reimbursement from the State. Net cost of \$1,352,018 is part of the general government budget. Depts. 211 & 212, police protection and dispatch; these emergency services are a 24/7 operation and are expected to be available at a moment's notice. The total proposed cost is \$4,345,177. The general government budget also supports the Wolcott Volunteer Fire Department, Fire Marshal, Civil Preparedness, Emergency Planning and the Wolcott Volunteer Ambulance. Many of the personnel are paid minimal dollars, such as their fire personnel who receive \$5.00 per fire call. The support services provided are listed in detail within the respective departmental budget, with a total proposed budget of \$1,358,780. Dept. 311-Public Works provides essential town services such as snow plowing, road paving, road repair, drainage construction, park maintenance, grass cutting for all town buildings and parks, including the Board of Education's buildings, grounds, and ballfields. In addition, the Public Works personnel have repaired, constructed and paved parking lots at the Town Hall, the Library, and several of the schools; total proposed budget is \$2,163,724. Dept. 521-Park & Recreation Dept. provides pre-school activities, after school programs, sports, and crafts. Also, some adult sports programs. The programs are ongoing throughout the year with Fall/Winter Programs, Winter/Spring Programs, and the Summer Playground Program. This budget also lends support to the Baseball of Association of Wolcott, Wolcott Youth Lacrosse Club, Wolcott Junior Basketball, Wolcott Youth Athletic Association, Wolcott Girls Softball Association, Infant & Toddler Program, & Wolcott Midget Football; total proposed budget \$186,170. Dept. 551-Library is available to all residents. Pre-school, students, and adults have programs available at the library; total proposed budget \$584,020. Dept. 571-Commission for Special Needs supports recreational activities such as bowling, Rainbow Day Camp, and the Special Olympics; total proposed budget \$47,816. She would like to call attention to the Town Council, Town Clerk, Treasurer, Finance, Tax Collector, Assessor, Board of Assessment Appeals, Building Inspector, Planning & Zoning, Inland Wetlands & Conservation, Economic Development, Zoning Board of

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Appeals, Registrar of Voters, and Commission on Aging. All of these departments are essential to Wolcott's Municipal Government. Collectively, these departments have a total proposed budget of \$1,654,763 and provide services to all residents and taxpayers. It has been a challenge for the Mayor to develop a fiscally responsible budget without personnel layoffs, reducing services and neglecting property and equipment maintenance. The proposed budget includes leasing costs for the purchase of emergency services and road service equipment. The last five budgets have encountered challenges to counteract loss of state and local revenues, escalating costs, and loss of state funding for essential services. They have managed to provide all necessary town services and continue all programs. To adjust for these challenges, they have combined positions, reduced staffing through attrition, instituted more efficient modes of operations, and used the public bidding process to obtain goods & services at reasonable, competitive pricing. In summary, she hopes the services provided through the general government budget are not taken for granted. She requests that the Town Council review both the General Government and Board of Education budgets thoroughly and while not a welcome prospect, realize that to continue all services and programs, a cost increase is unavoidable.

- 2. Dan Oliveira, of 14 Bilby Drive** came forward and stated that he wishes tonight that they could have had a presentation of what they could expect from the State and the impact it will have. He stated that he has reviewed some of the figures of the proposed budget and noted that in light of these financial times and in a very uncertain economy, they should not be adding new programs to the budget, specifically a new athletics program in the school budget. He is not judging the Lacrosse program, he is speaking in terms of additional expenditures. The program will add about \$21,000 to the budget. The high school currently has a pretty healthy athletics program and a new program would be good if they were flush with money. He would ask that the Council keep this all in mind when making their decision. He would like to know what the final numbers were from the State.

Mayor Dunn advised that the State did pass the budget and noted that the Town of Wolcott lost about \$374,000.

- 3. Gina Griffin, of 34 Michael Terrace** came forward and stated that she is here this evening to show support for the education budget and requested that it be approved as presented. She noted that she understands that these are hard times but that they must look towards the future.

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4. **Pam Conway, of 167 South Colman** came forward and expressed her support for the Board of Education budget. She is speaking as a taxpayer, a parent and as a teacher in the Wolcott school system. The cuts at the State level will certainly affect their schools. People move to Wolcott because of the schools. Students learn better in smaller settings and need technology and resources in their classrooms; they need these skills. With respect to the Project Explorer program, she noted that it is extremely valuable. Having a program for gifted students is just as important as supporting core curriculum. She requested that the budget be approved as presented, but if cuts are made she asked that they do not entertain cutting the gifted and talented program.
 5. **Michelle Thies, of 43 Simon Drive** came forward and stated that she is also speaking as a taxpayer, a parent and as a teacher in the Wolcott school system. She is a former Project Explorer student and a parent of a Project Explorer student. She stated that Wolcott is known for their good school system. They do not have a vibrant downtown area with shops and restaurants, but the quality of schools is a source of pride. Wolcott is one of the very last communities in Connecticut that has a gifted and talented program. It would be devastating to the Town of Wolcott for this program to be cut. Fully funding the education budget is critical to maintaining their reputation of having a quality school system. She strongly encourages the Council to adopt the budget as presented.
 6. **Lisa Fernandes, of 79 Idlewood Road** came forward and stated that she was drawn to Wolcott because of the school system. She had children in the gifted program and involved in athletics. She requested that the education budget be approved as proposed.
 7. **James Rapisarda, of 110 Richard Avenue** came forward and stated that he was also drawn to this community because of the wonderful school system. He requested that the education budget be approved as proposed.
 8. **Sarita Carrington, of 8 Farmingbury Road** came forward and stated that she was also drawn to Wolcott because of the school system. She hopes that they will seriously consider approving the education budget as presented.
 9. **Marian Bolsvert, of 72 Chesterfield Avenue** came forward and expressed that she is also in favor of the proposed education budget. She pointed out that over the past three to four years that have seen

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increases of 1% or less, which in fact was really a cut to the budget because of the contractual increases. If they continue with this pattern, people will no longer be coming here because of the school system.

10. **Steve Marcelynas, of 14 Ransom Hall Road** came forward and expressed that he supports the proposed education budget. He moved back to Wolcott because of the education system in Wolcott. He works at Southern and sees many kids coming that are not prepared at all. He is confident that his kids are receiving an excellent education in Wolcott and will be prepared for what they need in the future.
11. **Vinny Thibeau, of 14 Wilson Road** came forward and expressed that he supports the proposed education budget. He has put a lot of faith in Wolcott's educational system and his kids have benefited greatly from it. His youngest son also greatly benefits from the special needs programs that are provided. He is an avid supporter of technology in the schools and he also greatly supports a Lacrosse program being introduced at the high school.
12. **Lauren Whitney, of 60 Winterbrook Road** came forward and stated that she would like to echo everything that the previous speaker stated. She also stated that she feels strongly that they are in need of the new math program. Lastly, she is a strong supporter of a Lacrosse program at the high school level. Recently a college coach came to the field to see her daughter. Two schools also called her daughter. Colleges are looking at this sport and it needs to be implemented at the high school level.
13. **Jan Jones, of 14 Ransom Hall Road** came forward and noted that she did not grow up in Wolcott or even in this country. She moved here because it is her husband's hometown and it is the school system that convinced them stay. She is also very impressed with the after school programs. The music and drama programs in this town are fantastic. She urged the Council to try not to touch the programs that really develops these kids beyond the classroom experience.
14. **Nicholas Rapisarda, of 110 Richard Avenue** came forward and requested that cuts not be made to the proposed education budget. He graduated six years ago from Wolcott High School and has seen many students at the college level that are unprepared. He is becoming a teacher because of the Wolcott School System because he wants to influence students.

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- 15. Lorraine Shea, of 11 Anita Terrace** came forward and stated that that if anyone has been listening then they have heard the passion in the way the townspeople speak. The money spent in the school system is well spent. The results speak for themselves. They are mandated to provide for special needs students at the State and Federal levels. They should be willingly offering to provide assistance at the other end of the spectrum for the talented and gifted students. She requested that the education budget be approved as presented.
- 16. Arline Tansley, of 47 Pond Drive** came forward and stated that she is a school administrator. She has personally witnessed people moving into town because of the education system. Also, the values of comparable homes in surrounding towns are selling for about \$50,000 less than in Wolcott due to the fact that they have desecrated their education budgets year after year. Wolcott provides an excellent education system and she cannot imagine what this town would be like if they cut the education much more. The values of their homes are dependent on the education system and she urges that the education budget be approved as presented.
- 17. Joe Monroe, of 6 S. Colman Road** came forward and requested that the education budget remain intact. He has had the privilege over the last 30 years to be a teacher, a coach, an athletic director and a principal. They work hard every day to provide their kids with the best opportunities so that they have a great future. Any substantial cut to the education budget will result in cutting programs and services.
- 18. Justin Darley, of 273 Beach Road** came forward and expressed that he fully supports the proposed education budget as presented. He is also in support of a new high school Lacrosse team. They have had a club team for about 9 years now, but having a high school team will open up a lot of opportunities to play in college.
- 19. Joe Capozzi, of 5 Eva Terrace** came forward and expressed that he fully supports the proposed education budget as presented. Lacrosse has been a part of his life for seven years now and his dream is to play in college. The first step for that would be to have a high school team.
- 20. Taylor Goffredo, of 77 Cedar Avenue** came forward and expressed that he fully supports the proposed education budget as presented. She is also in support of a high school Lacrosse team. It would open up many more

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doors and opportunities. She also knows many girls who would like to play in college.

At this time, Chairman Valletta inquired if anyone else would like to come forward, at which time there were no further comments.

ADJOURNMENT:

Upon **MOTION** by Gale Mastrofrancesco, seconded by Jeffrey Slavin, it was unanimously voted to **adjourn** the Public Hearing 7:50 p.m.

APPROVED:

Elizabeth Gaudiosi
Commission Secretary

David Valletta, Chairman
WOLCOTT TOWN COUNCIL

**TOWN OF WOLCOTT
PUBLIC NOTICE**

Take notice that a Public Hearing of the Wolcott Town Council will be held in the Town Council Chambers at Wolcott Town Hall, 10 Kenea Avenue, Wolcott, CT, on Tuesday evening, May 17, 2016, at 7:00 p.m., for the proposed Town of Wolcott Budget for Fiscal Year 2016-2017.

All interested citizens will have the opportunity to submit written & oral comments at the hearing.

The proposed budget may be examined & copies obtained from the Finance Office; Mon-Wed 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Thurs. 8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., Fri 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., Wolcott Town Hall, 10 Kenea Ave., Wolcott, CT.

Dated Wolcott, CT
9th Day of May 2016
David Valletta, Chairman
Wolcott Town Council

Publish one (1) time: Republican-American Newspaper on
Monday, May 9, 2016

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Dated Wolcott, CT
9th Day of May 2016
David Valletta, Chairman
Wolcott Town Council
R-A May 9, 2016

Beth Gaudiosi

Subject: FW: Contact Town Council?

From: lmartinelli22@sbcglobal.net [mailto:lmartinelli22@sbcglobal.net]

Sent: Wednesday, May 11, 2016 2:33 PM

To: Beth Gaudiosi <bgaudiosi@wolcottct.org>

Subject: Re: Contact Town Council?

Hi Beth,

Below is what I would like to provide to the council....thank you for the help!

Dear Wolcott Town Council Members,

Due to travel I am not able to attend the public hearing on the Board of Education budget being presented on May 17th. In light of this I am expressing my comments in writing.

I wish to express strong support for the proposed budget. Dr. Gasper has prepared a budget that is both fiscally responsible and, in light of what other districts are requesting, more than reasonable. The proposed increases ensure the town meets not only its contractual obligations but also helps to increase the level of services and opportunities provide to our children.

As a member of the Wolcott community for several years I understand Wolcott has a long history of having very low spend rate per pupil, in some years being the lowest spending district in the state. While I am supportive of being fiscally responsible as well as efficient in our spending, this is not a "metric" the town should be proud of and I hope, does not become a factor in the decision making around this budget.

Our children deserve the best education possible and I strongly urge you to approve the proposed budget.

Sincerely,

Lisa Lawson

WOLCOTT TOWN COUNCIL

SIGN-IN SHEET

PUBLIC HEARING

Tuesday, May 17, 2016

<u>NAME (Please Print)</u>	<u>ADDRESS (Please Print)</u>
1. Linda Bruce	424 Bound Line Rd.
2. Dan Oliveira	24 Belby Dr.
3. Gina Griffin	39 Middlebury
4. Pam Conway	167 S. Colman
5. Michelle Thies	43 Simon Drive
6. Lisa Fernandez	79 Idlewood Rd
7. James Rapisarda	110 Richard Ave
8. Sarah Antragan Carrington	8 Ironsides Rd.
9. Marian Potosvert	72 Chesterfield Ave
10. Steve Marcelinas	14 Ransom Hill Rd
11. Young Thibault	14 Wilson Rd
12. Laureen Whitney	108 Winterbrook Rd
13. Jan Jones	14 Ransom Hill Rd
14. Nicholas Rapisarda	110 Richard Ave
15. Lorraine Shea	11 Anita

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19-17. Joe Capozzi S Eras Terrace

18. Justin Darley 273 Beach Road

20-19. Taylor Goffredo 77 Cedar Avenue

20. Woj Rive Tamsky 47 Pond Dr.

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