

MINUTES
REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING
SPECIAL MEETING #2
NOVEMBER 1, 2011

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TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
DARIEN CT.

CALL TO ORDER

The Special Meeting #2 of the Representative Town Meeting was called to order at 8:20 p.m. by Karen A. Armour, Moderator.

Upon Roll Call, the following members were present:

From District I, there were 12 members present, 2 absent.
From District II, there were 15 members present, 1 absent.
From District III, there were 16 members present, 0 absent.
From District IV, there were 14 members present, 2 absent.
From District V, there were 13 members present, 2 absent.
From District VI, there were 17 members present, 0 absent.

The absentees from District I were: Nelson, Sommer
The absentee from District II was: Hoffman.
The absentees from District IV were: Cameron, Millar.
The absentees from District V were: Davis, Russell.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

**** THE AGENDA WAS ACCEPTED BY UNIVERSAL CONSENT.**

11-13

CONSIDERATION AND ACTION ON APPROPRIATION OF \$6,979,000 FOR THE RENOVATION OF 35 LEROY AVENUE AND 2 RENSHAW ROAD AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS AND NOTES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$6,979,000 TO MEET SAID APPROPRIATION

Mrs. Armour asked speakers to limit themselves to 3 minutes and that they not reiterate what the previous speakers have said.

**** BRUCE ORR, DISTRICT V, CHAIRMAN OF FINANCE & BUDGET, MOVED:**

WHEREAS, The Board of Finance of the Town of Darien, at its October 18, 2011 meeting, appropriated \$6,979,000.00 for the renovation of 35 Leroy Avenue and 2 Renshaw Road and authorized the issuance of bonds and notes in that amount to meet said approval.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Representative Town Meeting of the Town of Darien hereby approves the resolution attached hereto and made part hereof.

RESOLVED:

Section 1. The sum of \$6,979,000 is appropriated for the renovation of 35 Leroy Avenue and the renovation and expansion of 2 Renshaw Road, both located in the Town of Darien (the "Town"), including, but not limited to, the renovation and adaptive re-use of 19,000 square feet at 35 Leroy Avenue to "as new" standards to primarily house the Darien Board of Education Central Office and other public uses and the renovation of and adaptive re-use of 23,600 square feet to as-new standards and the construction of a 1400 square foot addition at the Town Hall Annex located at 2 Renshaw Road to house the Darien Senior Activity Center and other community recreation activities in the new Mather Center, for a completed project with a combined 44,000 square feet, including, but not limited to, relocation of the Board of Education woodshop, installation of a central Board of Education food freezer, replacement of mechanical and electrical systems as well as engineering, architectural and administrative, printing, legal and financing costs related thereto (the "Project"), said appropriation to be inclusive of any and all state and federal grants-in-aid thereof.

Section 2. To meet said appropriation, and in lieu of a tax therefore, \$6,979,000 bonds of the Town or so much thereof as shall be necessary for such purpose, may be issued, maturing not later than the twentieth year after their date. Said bonds may be issued in one or more series as determined by the Board of Finance, or any Town official designated by the Board of Finance, and the amount of bonds of each series to be issued shall be fixed by the Board of Finance, or any Town official designated by the Board of Finance, in the amount necessary to meet the Town's share of the cost of the Project determined after considering the estimated amount of the state and federal grants-in-aid on the Project, and the anticipated times of the receipt of the proceeds thereof. The bonds shall be in the denomination of \$5,000 or a whole multiple thereof, be issued in fully registered form, be executed in the name and on behalf of the Town by the facsimile or manual signatures of the First Selectman and the Town Treasurer, bear the Town seal or a facsimile thereof, be certified by a bank or trust company, which bank or trust company may be designated the registrar and transfer agent, be payable at a bank or trust company, and be approved as to their legality by Pullman & Comley, LLC of Hartford, Connecticut. The bonds shall be general obligations of the Town and each of the

bonds shall recite that every requirement of law relating to its issue has been duly complied with, that such bond is within every debt and other limit prescribed by law, and that the full faith and credit of the Town is pledged to the payment of the principal thereof and interest thereon. The aggregate principal amount of the bonds of each series to be issued, the annual installments of principal, redemption provisions, if any, the certifying, registrar and transfer agent, and the paying agent, the date, time of issue and sale and other terms, details and particulars of such bonds, including the approval of the rate or rates of interest, shall be determined by the Board of Finance, or any Town official designated by the Board of Finance, in accordance with the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut, as amended (the "General Statutes").

Section 3. Said bonds shall be sold by the Board of Finance, or any Town official designated by the Board of Finance, and the Town Treasurer, in a competitive offering or by negotiation, in their discretion. If sold in a competitive offering, the bonds shall be sold at not less than par and accrued interest on the basis of the lowest true interest cost to the Town. If the bonds are sold by negotiation, provisions of the purchase agreement shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Finance, or any Town official designated by the Board of Finance.

Section 4. The Board of Finance, or any Town official designated by the Board of Finance, is authorized to issue and sell temporary notes in anticipation of the receipt of the proceeds of any series of said bonds and to determine the amount, date, date of maturity, interest rate, form and other details of such notes pursuant to the General Statutes. Notes evidencing such borrowings shall be signed by the First Selectman and the Town Treasurer, have the seal of the Town affixed, be payable at a bank or trust company designated by the Board of Finance, or any Town official designated by the Board of Finance, be approved as to their legality by Pullman & Comley, LLC of Hartford, Connecticut and be certified by a bank or trust company designated by the Board of Finance, or any Town official designated by the Board of Finance. The notes shall be general obligations of the Town and each of the notes shall recite that every requirement of law relating to its issue has been duly complied with, that such note is within every debt and other limit prescribed by law, and that the full faith and credit of the Town is pledged to the payment of the principal thereof and the interest thereon. The net interest cost on such notes, including renewals thereof, and the expense of preparing, issuing and marketing them, to the extent paid from the proceeds of such renewals or said bonds, shall be included as a

cost of the Project. Upon the sale of said bonds, the proceeds thereof, to the extent required, shall be applied forthwith to the payment of the principal of and the interest on any such notes then outstanding or shall be deposited with a bank or trust company in trust for such purpose.

Section 5. The Town hereby expresses its official intent pursuant to §1.150-2 of the Federal Income Tax Regulations, Title 26 (the "Regulations"), to reimburse expenditures paid sixty days prior to and anytime after the date of passage of this resolution in the maximum amount authorized hereby and for the Project defined herein with the proceeds of bonds, notes, or other obligations authorized to be issued by the Town. Such bonds, notes or other obligations shall be issued to reimburse such expenditures not later than 18 months after the later of the date of the expenditure or the substantial completion of the Project, or such later date the Regulations may authorize. The Town hereby certifies that the intention to reimburse as expressed herein is based upon its reasonable expectations as of this date. The Board of Finance, or any Town official designated by the Board of Finance, is authorized to pay Project expenses in accordance herewith pending the issuance of reimbursement bonds and to amend this declaration.

Section 6. The First Selectman, Town Treasurer and Finance Officer or any one of them are hereby authorized, on behalf of the Town, to enter into any agreements or otherwise covenant for the benefit of bondholders to provide information on an annual or other periodic basis to nationally recognized municipal securities information repositories or state based information repositories (the "Repositories") and to provide notices to the Repositories of material events as enumerated in Securities and Exchange Commission Exchange Act Rule 15c2-12, as amended, as may be necessary, appropriate or desirable to effect the sale of the bonds and notes authorized by this resolution and to perform all acts which are necessary or appropriate to issue and deliver the bonds or notes. If the bonds or notes authorized by this resolution are issued on a tax-exempt basis, the First Selectman, the Town Treasurer and the Finance Officer, or any one of them, are authorized to bind the Town pursuant to such representations and covenants as they deem necessary or advisable in order to maintain the continued exemption from federal income taxation of interest on the bonds or notes, including covenants to pay rebates of investment earnings to the United States in future years. Should such bonds or notes issues in anticipation of such bonds be issued in such form and manner that the interest on such bonds or notes is includable in the gross income of the holders thereof under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986,

as amended, then it is hereby determined that the issuance of such taxable bonds or notes is in the public interest.

**** THE MOTION WAS SECONDED FROM THE FLOOR.**

Bruce Orr, District V, Chairman of Finance & Budget, read that committee's report (attached).

E. Reilly Tierney, District I, a member of the Finance & Budget Committee, read the minority report of the committee (attached).

Lois Schneider, District I, Chairman of the Education Committee, read that committee's report (attached).

Mark Adiletta, District V, Chairman of the Public Works Committee, read the committee report (attached).

John van der Kieft, District V, Chairman of PZ&H, read the committee report (attached).

Elisabeth Bacon, District II, read the PZ&H minority report (attached).

Carolyn Schoonmaker, District IV, Chairman of Public Health & Safety, read the committee report (attached).

Susan Lehan, District III, read the minority report of Public Health & Safety (attached).

First Selectman David Campbell read the Selectmen's report. (attached)

Callie Sullivan read the minority report of the Board of Selectmen. (attached)

Selectman David Bayne said they all agree on the need for a senior center, but the Board of Education never asked to move. The senior center can be done at half the cost or less. This is a massive building project being undertaken on a hope and on speculation. They should demand data and real costs. 35 Leroy Avenue should be sold to defray the cost of the senior center.

Fred Conze, Chairman of the P&Z Commission, read prepared remarks in favor of the resolution

Eric Voight gave the minority report of the P&Z Commission. (attached)

Liz Mao, Chairman of the Board of Finance, said that body met on October 18th to discuss this resolution. They had a two-hour discussion and voted 4-3 in favor of the resolution. The majority felt it was a good use of space and fiscally responsible; the minority felt there were unanswered questions.

Joan Hendrickson, Town Treasurer, read a speech about the Town's financial situation (attached).

Preston Bealle, District VI, made a point of order: Mrs. Hendrickson's comments were not pertinent to the Resolution on the floor.

Joe Pankowski, Chairman of the Commission on Aging, said that thirty studies have been done in the twelve years that he has been a member of the commission. He said that the time is now. This is a \$6,000,000 project for their seniors. After 3 p.m., the senior center is currently used as a community center. Bonding rates are now historically low. This will cost \$71.90 per taxpayer per year, or \$1.38 per week, less than a cup of coffee at Starbucks. It is a super plan. They will have all of the parking they want. It is a very important vote, and he urged everyone to vote yes.

Debra Hertz, Chairman of the Social Services Commission, spoke in support of the resolution. She said nothing is perfect; this is a very good project.

Norman Guimond, District VI, Chairman of the Board of Education Mather Center Building Committee, read a prepared report in favor of the resolution (attached).

Preston Bealle, District VI, said it was time to vote.

Barbara Thorne, District II, said that the numbers have changed, and it is too fast and too slow and too political and should go to referendum.

Sarah Seelye, District II, said everyone has worked very hard on this. Dave Campbell, Jayme Stevenson and Jerry Nielsen put this forward and she fully supports it.

Martin Magida, District II, said he was voting against this.

Sam Schoonmaker, District IV, said he was a younger man when this discussion began. For twelve years, six different administrations have discussed this issue. All RTM members are familiar with it. A no vote means you go back to square one and affordable housing, for seniors or otherwise, is in limbo again.

**** SAM SCHOONMAKER, DISTRICT IV, MOVED TO CALL THE QUESTION.
** THE MOTION WAS SECONDED FROM THE FLOOR.
** MOTION PASSED BY A STANDING TALLY VOTE OF 2/3RDS IN FAVOR.**

**** ITEM 11-13 CARRIED ON A RISING TALLY VOTE OF 58 IN FAVOR, 28
OPPOSED, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

**** UPON MOTION MADE AND SECONDED FROM THE FLOOR, IT WAS
VOTED TO ADJOURN AT 10:15 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Telesco
Telesco Secretarial Services

APPENDIX

DISTRICT I

(11-13)

Bishko	yes
Glassmeyer	yes
Hegarty	no
Imbimbo	no
Kahn	no
Kelly, P.	yes
Nelson	absent
Ness	yes
Schneider	yes
Schulz-Amatruda	no
Schwarz	no
Sini	yes
Sommer	absent
Tierney	no

DISTRICT II

Bacon	no
Cummings	yes
Gallo	yes
Harman	yes
Hilton	yes
Hoffman	no
Howe	yes
Magida	no
Maguire	no
Marston	yes
McIlmurray	yes
Mundt	no
Noe	no
Seelye	yes
Thorne, B.	no
Thorne, M	no

DISTRICT III

Bayne	no
Brode	yes
Burke	no
Cardone	yes
Coyle	yes
Duffy	yes
Fead	no
Ferretti	no
LeHan	no
Maroney	yes
Martens	yes
Moore	yes
Morton	yes
Olvany	yes
Smith	yes
Young	yes

DISTRICT IV

(11-13)

Cameron	absent
Cleary	no
Davis	no
Fiore	yes
Hardison	no
Kemp	yes
McIlree	yes
Millar	absent
Miller	yes
Morrison	no
Peters	yes
Rayhill	yes
Rycenga	yes
Savage	yes
C.Schoonmaker	yes
S.Schoonmaker	yes

DISTRICT V

Adiletta	yes
Camuti	absent
Conniff	yes
Dailey	no
Davis	absent
George	yes
Hennessy	yes
Orr	yes
Patrick	yes
Pierret	yes
Ritchie	yes
Russell	absent
Sharp	yes
Stolar	yes
vanderKieft	yes

DISTRICT VI

Adelman	no
Armour	Did not vote
Baldwin	no
Bealle	yes
Conologue	yes
Grogan	yes
Guimond, M.	yes
Guimond, N.	yes
Hawkins	yes
Kelly, H.	absent
McDermott	no
McLean	yes
McNamara	yes
Palen	yes
Plehaty	no
Poli	yes
Swenson	yes

**Finance & Budget Committee
Report to RTM, Nov. 1 , 2011**

**(11-13) RTM RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF
\$6,979,000.00 FOR THE RENOVATION OF 35 LEROY AVENUE AND 2
RENSHAW ROAD AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS AND
NOTES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$6,979,000.00 TO MEET SAID
APPROPRIATION**

I am Bruce Orr, District 5 and Chair of Finance and Budget.

I move Resolution (11-13) and ask for a second.

If there are no objections, I propose to waive the reading of the Resolution.

The F&B committee met on Oct. 26th, 2011, with 12 of 14 members present comprising a quorum. We were joined by a number of elected officials and community volunteers, including the Chairman of the Commission on Aging, members of the Facilities Building Committee, the Chair of the Board of Finance, the First Selectman's office and a member of the Board of Education.

Over the past several weeks, the Committee has done extensive due diligence on this facilities optimization project, including tours of the current facilities, meetings with the Building Committee, attendance at relevant BOF and BOS meetings and reviews of architectural and planning documents. Consistent with Finance & Budget Committee's mandate and responsibilities, our primary focus on this project is to assess and evaluate the costs and the benefits to the taxpayers of the Town... not to second guess the overall strategic merits of the project, but to ensure that the cost/benefit analysis is in the best interests of the taxpayers

The clear consensus of the Committee is that addressing the need for upgraded Senior Center facilities is long overdue.

Most of the Committee's debate centered around the proposed square footage utilization, particularly in regards to cost of renovating and moving the BOE to larger quarters and the space requirements of the relocated Senior Center to the Mather Community Center. It was noted that there will be unallocated and un-renovated space available at 35 Leroy for future public or private interests.

It was pointed out that when the facilities realignment is completed, 18,000 s/f of program space will be eliminated at Edgerton Street, as that building is taken out of service and demolished.

While some citizens may question Darien's long-term lack of investment in non-educational facilities, the Town has a rich history of efficient and fiscally responsible utilization of Town assets. One of the best examples is the beautiful building we are now meeting... the Mather Center. Built in 1926 as Darien's first high school and later expanded in 1952 with the addition of the gym and annex. But the story really starts in 1910, when Royle School was built at 719 Post Rd. as one of Darien's first modern, brick elementary schools. As the Town's population expanded, Royle School was moved to its current location on Mansfield Avenue and in 1949, the Town Hall was relocated to 719 Post Rd. In the 1980's, several schools were closed and consolidated, including Mather Jr. High School. In 1985, this building was renovated and the Town Hall was reopened here and soon joined by the BOE, who had been renting commercial space on the Post Rd.

And what became of 719 Post Rd...? The Old Town Hall Houses, one of two affordable properties owned and managed by the Darien Housing Authority, with 30 senior affordable units. While the long-term use of the Edgerton site is not part of this funding request, a building committee has been formed to explore development of senior affordable housing on that site.

One critical element... and assumption of this appropriation and bonding request, is the impact on Town debt levels and taxation. As you will likely hear tonight from the representatives from the BOF, the Town is currently below its self-imposed debt ceiling of \$100 million and it is forecasted that debt levels and the cost of debt service will continue to decline in the coming years, as there are no major capital projects on the horizon. With the current low interest rate environment, combined with Darien's excellent credit rating, it is anticipated that the cost of debt service for the taxpayer with a \$1.1 million assessed property will be about \$60/year over the life of a 20 year bonding issue.

The Committee also looked at operational costs forecasts for the two renovated spaces. By operational costs, we refer to maintenance and utility costs – not programming costs. The Building Committee estimates – upon project completion – call for an annual savings of about \$19,000. While this is an only estimate based on current and forecast operating expenses, the logic is sound, as we are taking out of service a relatively high maintenance, energy inefficient building.

The Committee also briefly debated the notion of including the cost of 35 Leroy in the overall cost of the project. While there some logic, it is seldom done with assets already bonded and in the Town's overall capital base. One member commented that "if one were looking for the \$4.2 million, you should not look at 35 Leroy Ave. but to the corner of Hecker and the Post Road"... of course meaning that the \$4.2 million investment was central to the capital plan of the

new library and that we happened to get a very useable and sound building in return for taxpayer support of the fabulous new library.

The Committee voted 10 to 2 in favor of this resolution. The two dissenting voters generally wanted the project downsized, to include housing the Senior Center and BOE offices together in the Mather Annex. In a moment, I would like to invite Mr. Tierney to provide some brief remarks for the minority opinion.

The Committee recommends that the RTM votes in favor of this resolution.

Bruce G. Orr, Sr.
Chairman, Nov. 1, 2011

The minority concludes that, while the proposed facilities realignment satisfactorily address certain critical issues such as the poor condition of the current senior center on Edgerton, and improved utilization of space in the current Board of Education annex, the all-in cost of the proposed full scale version of the "Shuffle" simply does not justify its substantial cost during a period when all of us know the town's finances have come under severe pressure mostly from soaring costs at the Board of Education.

I want to first talk about the positives in this proposal and thank the Selectman for providing for an extremely transparent process which has engaged a lot of the town, and allowed us to become well versed in the details of this project

The majority of the Selectman and Board of Finance have made a compelling case that the current senior center no longer serves the Darien seniors well.

The building is aging, its maintenance cost is high; and, the poor condition of the facilities may actually be discouraging potential participants from taking advantage of otherwise attractive programming. So we strongly agree that we need a new senior center.

Additionally the tours of the Board of Education annex convinced me, and many of my fellow RTM members I'm sure, that the current utilization of the BofE annex space is completely sub-optimal and that certain aspects of the space could be relocated to available space at the town dump. It makes complete sense to me that this space could be part of a solution for relocating the senior center. I am impressed by the design aspects that Norm Guimond and the building committee have put forward. The design seems to thoughtfully address the relevant stakeholder needs and space requirements. The space is roughly the same amount of space currently used at the current senior center but would be more intelligently laid out and much more attractive, and could I believe, become a real asset to the town.

But even with these clear positives, I believe that, on balance, the scope of this project overreaches and simply costs too much. First of all, I have never heard anyone make the case that the Board of Education's existing office

space is inappropriate or sub-optimal (Not least of all from the Board of Education itself). A move to the old library has meaningful costs, minimal clear benefits and raises legitimate questions about what the BOE is going to do with all that brand new space.

Additionally, while most people acknowledge the senior center is lacking, I have never heard any of my neighbors say to me that what we really need is a \$7 million "community center." Most Darienites view the Y, the DCA, the Library, the country clubs to some extent, as existing community centers. I am worried that the "community center" aspect of this project is an after-thought designed to broaden the project's appeal, when certain people are uncertain about just how utilized the current senior center is. I have heard nothing to suggest that the Darienites will get a lot of new program offerings from the Community Center, rather simply that existing groups that are already having meetings elsewhere could meet in a much nicer and very expensive space.

Second of all, not moving to Board of Education to 35 Leroy does not mean that 35 Leroy should sit vacant (which everybody would agree is a complete waste). 35 Leroy is a town asset that has clear value probably somewhere between \$3.5 million and \$4.5 million. If we chose to sell it, the entire senior center relocation to the annex would be virtually self funding (at the high end of the range). Why in gods name, would we ever think of paying \$7 million for the benefits of the senior center relocation when the net cost could be \$1 million or \$2 million.

The most common argument that I have heard again this approach is that selling 35 Leroy would result in a developer buying the property for a high density affordable housing project that the town might fund undesirable. I think this argument is baseless. Nobody is currently proposing affordable housing at 35 Leroy. The Idea was effectively voted down in the last election. The town can sell the property to whoever it wants for whatever purpose it finds in our best interest and since we are fortunate enough to currently be protected for by the moratorium for the time being, now would be the least risky time to sell the

property given that cP&Z could reject such a proposal outright. That is in fact the entire purpose we sought the moratorium in the first place.

Additionally, I am really unimpressed with arguments that the project's cost is acceptable simply because we are still under the board of finance target \$100 million debt ceiling and that we may as well do it now because interest rates are low. That argument is weak and could be used to justify any costly project. The fact is that financing this project will result in a pro-forma debt level of less than \$2 million away from the cap. Why would we ever reduce our financial flexibility during such difficult economic times, when bond investors and rating agencies are so concerned about towns with growing debt burdens.

As I evaluated the pluses and minuses of this project, and discussed it *ad nauseum* with my neighbors, I kept coming back to the conclusion that this project is not such a bad idea on its own or even ridiculously expensive or unneeded its just simply not worth the cost.

We, the government of Darien have been raising the Mill Rate repeatedly on our neighbors high single digit increases every year. In one week, many of us our going to stand before our neighbors for re-election. How many of you are campaigning on more tax increases? What are you going to tell your neighbors when they have to hear the news that the Board of Education is going to ask for another 5 or 7 percent increase in spending next year that the debt service is going up and that the board of selectman budget will probably rise as well. While everybody wants Darien to remain a town with attractive facilities, adequate services and the best education in Fairfield county, you can't really expect to continue that fine balance if you keep saying yes to every desirable but unnessicarily expensive project that comes. You have to start cutting costs somewhere. I think you should start by saying NO to this one.

RTM Education Committee
Report to the RTM on November 1, 2011
Resolution (11-13) Renovation of 35 Leroy Avenue and 2 Renshaw Road

Good evening. My name is Lois Schneider and I chair the RTM Education Committee.

The RTM Education Committee met this evening with 12 of 13 members present. Members of the Building Committee, Board of Ed and several other guests joined us to answer our questions. This follows earlier discussions with the Board of Ed and the Administration at our September meeting and, for many of us, tours of the facilities.

The key points from an Education Committee viewpoint include:

- 1). Relocating the Board of Ed – This is being done to accommodate the proposed Mather Community and Senior Center at Town Hall.
- 2). With the school enrollment having increased for more than a dozen years and currently running at capacity, administrative offices need to continue to be housed separately from the schools.
- 3). Process – The Board of Ed approved educational specifications which stated the needed requirements in the new space. Recently, there were very minor modifications made to these to reflect the architectural realities of 35 Leroy.
- 4). Key points:
 - a) Current usage of Town Hall includes offices, meeting rooms, food freezer, workshop and storage.
 - b). Staff moving from Town Hall to 35 Leroy with well organized office space plus storage for records and IT. The offices will be located on 1 floor and the use of redesigned adjacencies will provide more efficiencies.
 - c). Maintenance workshop will be moved to the Public Works garage.
 - d). Food freezer and supplies will move from Town Hall to Public Works area, also reusing available space.
 - e). 2 current Food Service and 3 special ed staff will move to Central office and there will be some Special Ed support areas for a total of 624 square feet incrementally for all the changes.
- 5). Former Children’s library will be used for Board of Ed meetings, but also be available for town use and separate from Board of Ed offices.
- 6). The 35 Leroy facility will be upgraded for HVAC, wiring for office technology, and roof.
- 7). Natural gas has been requested to be pulled to the 35 Leroy building to reduce fuel costs and dual burners are part of the plan.
- 8). Some potential capital expenditures will be needed over the long term to the current facilities if the move doesn’t occur.
- 9). And most importantly, the Board of Ed requested that the facility, moving and operating costs be cost neutral so as to not impact the Education budget. This is the plan to date.

As a committee we voted on support of the proposed resolution from an education viewpoint.

We voted 7 in favor and 5 opposed. Those in favor voted to accommodate the needs of the town for the overall plan. Those opposed feel that the plan doesn’t enhance the educational program and is not necessary.

We reserved our overall opinions and vote on the total plan for the RTM meeting.

Thank you very much.

COMMENTS TO REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING

TOWN OF DARIEN, CONNECTICUT

MARK ADILETTA – CHAIR - PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Special Meeting, Tuesday November 2nd, 2011

- PWC held a Special Session 10/11/2011 with 8 of 13 members present. Please note this meeting was held 2 weeks after the September RTM meeting at which the BOS Facilities Realignment was presented and before Resolution 11-13 was forwarded to Committees for consideration. The main agenda item that evening was discussion of the renovation at 35 Leroy Avenue, ~~renovation~~ expansion and renovation at 2 Renshaw Road and rehabilitation of the DPW garage at Ledge Road. Collectively, I will refer to these related items as “the Shuffle”.
- On hand for Q&A with the committee that evening was First Selectman Mr. Campbell and Selectman Mr. Nielsen. The meeting aired on CH79 for all those interested.
- I reported to the Committee on a tour I had taken earlier of the DPW Garage facility. Specifically, as part of the shuffle plan there is a proposal to relocate the (BOE) paper supply storage, food products storage (for the elementary and middle school students), and a wood shop to the DPW garages. As part of the plan approx. 1,200 sq. ft. will be added at an existing 2-story garage bay. It was noted BOE and DPW staff worked together on the plan and will work together on the move. It was explained that the relocation to the DPW garages would improve the efficiency of the current staff of the BOE and DPW specifically, in part, due to fewer BOE employees being dispatched to Town Hall for supplies to be distributed. The overall cost of the DPW garage portion of the plan was estimated at approximately \$120,000 - \$130,000 as much of the work will be performed by staff and cost is included in the current budget. This includes approximately \$40k for 2nd floor slab, the rough plans for which have existed for many years but never been implemented. The remainder of the cost is for a new replacement freezer for the BOE food storage, additional construction costs and the move itself.

- Please note members of the PWC tour the DPW garage annually, are generally familiar with the layout and how the BOE and DPW work together at the facility.
- During discussion of the broader Shuffle plan that followed concerns were raised about the increase in overall space from approx 19,000 sq/ft at the current senior center to 23,000 sq/ft for the new community center as well as why the BOE could not remain at the Town Hall facility.
- Mr. Campbell pointed out that the Town would be eliminating the current senior center thus consolidating 3 buildings facilities into 2 facilities and eliminating the building most in need of repairs. He noted the location of the senior center at Town Hall would improve the delivery of services to the seniors since the Social Services Dept, the Parks & Rec Dept and the Health Dept are all located at Town Hall.
- In conclusion, as there was no resolution before the PWC at the time the committee took a sense of the meeting vote related to just the portion of the Shuffle plan related to proposed activities at the DPW garage on Ledge Road. Specifically it read: "As part of the overall facilities realignment plan (The Shuffle), the PWC supports the reallocation of space and the building of a 2nd floor in existing garage bays at the DPW garage for an estimated \$120,00-\$130,000.
- The committee voted 5 yes, 3 no.
- Of those who voted yes, one added these proposed improvements at the DPW garage may make sense independent of the greater Shuffle plan.
- The nays cited lack of information and detailed mechanical drawings on the proposed plan for the DPW garage and concerns that a "yes" vote to support the activities at the DPW garage may enable the broader plan or could be construed as a vote for the broader plan.

I applaud the members of the PWC for the time and effort they spent Researching the project and touring the facilities. I also thank Pat D'arenzo and the DPW staff for the time they spent providing information and touring the DPW site.

Thank you

“The Facilities Shift”

PZ&H met on Mon. Oct. 17 with all members present for the purpose of discussing whether the Committee would be in support of the proposed bonding of \$6,979,000 to fund the Selectmen’s proposal to shift the Sr. Ctr. to the Town Hall Annex and to relocate the BOE offices to the former Library in order to provide for the Sr. Ctr.

The Building Committee was given the charge to determine whether “the Shift” could satisfy the needs of the Sr. Ctr. as well as existing Arts Center and Park & Rec activities conducted at the Sr. Ctr. and whether the former Library could accommodate staffing and provide for efficient operations of the BOE.

In the charge to the Building Committee the Sr. Ctr. was redefined as the Mather Community Center in view of the multiplicity of services that would be provided through the Sr. Ctr., the Arts Center, Park and Rec, and Youth Services. The Sr. Ctr. has already been providing for programs conducted by the Arts Center, and Park and Rec. This multiplicity of services will be further extended through programs already conducted by the Arts Center and Youth Services at the Town Hall Annex; and, are to continue there if “The Shift” is implemented. Consequently the new Community Center designation to address multiple Town services.

It was noted Mandatory Referrals for the planned usage of 2 Renshaw Road, the Town Hall Annex, and 35 Leroy Ave., the former library, were found to be consistent with the Town Plan and were approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission in October, 2010.

The “Facilities Shift” will provide an opportunity to benefit from the full utilization of under-utilized town-owned property at favorable costs. With the exception of a 520 sq. ft., one story addition adjacent to the dining area to house a kitchen, all work for the Community Ctr., and the BOE offices, will be within existing footprints. No other external construction will be needed.

The Committee noted the underutilization of a sizeable amount of storage space in the Annex will afford an opportunity to more effectively and efficiently utilize this space. During tours of the Annex, conducted by the Building Committee and the Selectmen, committee members had observed marginal use of these areas. More efficient use of these areas will address one of the goals of the Town Plan --- the “upgrading and renovating of existing Town facilities”.

An issue that was resolved, and that had gained concern, was --- must bonding approval depend upon special permit approvals. It was noted that bonding approvals are not dependent on special permit approvals and that for two recent projects --- the new High School and the major renovation to Police Hdq. currently underway --- bonding was approved well in advance of special permit approvals.

The "Shift" calls for the relocation of all activities, for both facilities, to be within existing structures consequently much discussion centered on space usage.

As current programs conducted at the Sr. Ctr. are to be continued program needs were the determining factor in establishing space requirements at the Annex. The BOE will shift its offices to 35 Leroy, adding the Food Services Director and Secretary who presently occupy a portable classroom at Royle School and three Special Ed personnel who presently are located offsite. The BOE's Maintenance Shop plus freezer, dry goods and paper storage will be relocated to the Town Garage on Ledge Road.

The Committee also noted that repairs to the exterior of the Annex plus the replacement of windows in disrepair with energy efficient windows will stem current heat loss and help conserve future heating costs.

A sense of the meeting vote was called for an indication of the Committee's support of "The Facilities Shift". 13 voted in favor. 3 opposed. 1 abstention.

Tonight the Committee held a Special Meeting to determine support for the proposal to bond \$6,979,000 for the funding of "The Facilities Shift". 11 voted in favor. 4 opposed. 0 abstentions.

of 15 present

John van der Kieft
Chairman, PZ&H

November 1, 2011

RTM Mtg.

PZ&H Committee - Minority Report

Prepared and submitted by Liz Bacon, Carolyn Bayne, MaryLu Cleary, Dana Fead

Those of us on the PZ&H Committee who did not vote to support the Shuffle are submitting a Minority Report to highlight our concerns.

Respectfully, we would like to address the following four items:

1. We are concerned and do not agree with:

The Management of our Committee Assignment Timeline

- Prior to this evening, PZ&H's first and only meeting where the Shuffle was an agenda item was October 17th. The meeting lasted less than 90 minutes. The tone of the meeting was assumptive and the suggestion of a study group or task force was dismissed.

This accelerated process precluded a review of the Shuffle consistent with previous PZ&H committee assignments

In the past, it has been the practice of our committee to devote considerably more time vetting issues of this magnitude.

2. We are concerned and do not agree with:

The very Ordinary Use of an Extraordinary Asset

- Relegating 35 Leroy to Administrative office & storage space is simply not worthy of its unique characteristics in terms of location and \$4M+ value.
- To date, no Best Use Study has been done for this property.

3. We are concerned and do not agree with:

The Due Diligence on this project: We feel it is below our Committee's previous standards, as well as Private Business Standards

- Specifically, the lack of a detailed financial statement that accounts for the value of 35 Leroy and operating costs for the project as a whole.
- The narrow passage (4 to 3) of this bonding measure by the BOF is significant. We were impressed with and direct you to the points expressed in detail by the 3 dissenting votes in B O Finance meeting.

And finally #4, we are concerned about the **lack of a fully articulated mission statement and data that justifies the level of usage by Darien residents envisioned for this project.**

- As has been pointed out *ad nauseam*, no one disputes the need for improvements.

But the scope of this project leapt from a Senior Center to a Community Center very quickly. It's now bigger and more expensive than originally advertised.

We are particularly troubled by the stakeholders unchallenged wish lists and square footage requests. In what business environment would all requests be accepted without challenge or justification?

- Darien citizens will pay 100% of the cost of this project. Unlike the Library where we participate in a reciprocal state-wide system, we are under no obligation to extend usage and build a facility to accommodate users beyond Darien.

- We are skeptical of the crystal-ball assumption that this is “the last of the big projects” on the Darien horizon ...

We all know, *Stuff Happens*, we think we have it covered and then we don't.

- The point is, given today's fragile and precarious economic environment, we are offended by the very slippery-slope notion that because Darien has a “*high fiscal capacity*” an overreaching project such as the Shuffle is so comfortably within our reach.

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RTM Public Health & Safety Committee Report
November 1, 2011

The Public Health & Safety Committee met on October 26, 2011, with 6 of 10 members present. We discussed in general the renovations and moves of the Senior Center into Town Hall and Board of Education into the Old Library. There were questions as to the cost of the project, but we focused on public health and safety issues.

From the point of view of the PH&S Committee, the move of the seniors places them closer to counseling on health and social service issues; to certain medical attention, such as flu shots; to borrowing medical equipment, such as walkers and wheelchairs; and to getting relief on certain financial matters and services required by many of the elderly, such as rent assistance or fuel assistance.

According to the Director of the Senior Center, Beth Paris, and the Director of Social Services Department, Olive Hauser, and a member of the Commission on Aging, Mary McCarthy, they work closely together on many of their mutual clientele.

The proximity of the Health and Social Service Departments allows the benefits provided to the seniors to be given to everyone using the Community Center. Everyone can easily get their dump and beach stickers or go to the Art Center for painting or dance too. This is one-stop shopping.

In the case of an emergency, the Town Hall renovation will provide a shelter for the community. The Town Hall and the Police Department are closely connected through their emergency communication system.

The building will be brought up to code with the addition of a fire sprinkler system throughout the Annex, ~~and in the present gym, which is a large part of the square foot expense.~~ *and in 35 Leroy Ave.* Also, there will be several additional bathrooms with adult size toilets, a welcome sight for the seniors after dealing with young children's toilets all these years!

The Health Department Director, David Knauf, would like to use the new kitchen planned in this renovation for training restaurant owners to learn about requirements of food and kitchen inspections.

There was a ~~tear~~ ^{concern} among the committee that the Arts Council and the Community Center might push the Senior Center into the background, dominating the use of rooms for their own purposes. With the growing young population, this idea was certainly valid. Park and Recreation Department will be scheduling the use of all of the rooms, including the auditorium at 35 Leroy ^{Ave.}, ~~with the exception of the woodworking and stained glass/craft rooms designated for the seniors.~~

After a lengthy discussion, a vote was taken with 4 in favor and 2 opposed to Resolution (11-13) appropriating the sum of \$6,979,000 for the renovation of 35 Leroy and 2 Renshaw Road and authorizing the issuance of bonds and notes in the amount of \$6,979,000 to meet said appropriation.

Carolyn Schoonmaker
Chairman PH&S

Dist. 4



Minority Report – Public Health and Safety Meeting, October 26th, 2011

The minority members of the committee who voted against the Shuffle ordinance did so for two reasons. First, they felt that the interests of Darien's seniors were not fully optimized by the proposal. Because the Mather Center is being built as a community center and not exclusively a senior center, committee members felt that resources and access initially dedicated to seniors, may diminish over time as other groups in town seek to use the facility. This may be especially true if projected participation levels are overstated.

Secondly, the minority members of the committee felt that relocating the Board of Ed to 35 Leroy would increase the cost and decrease the efficiency of the project. Construction would be done at two locations, with space left unused at 35 Leroy. We feel that the town should revisit previous plans to build a new senior center at Edgerton and evaluate the other needs addressed in the Shuffle independently and on their own merits.

Susan Lettan presenting

David M. Campbell
RTM Address
11/1/11: Special Meeting

Thank you for coming out to this Special Meeting to vote on the Bonding Resolution for the facilities. I want to thank all the RTM members who took time out of their weekends to tour the facilities and see what I saw when I first took office two years ago; poorly utilized buildings with little or no maintenance being performed.

Thank you for making this issue a top priority. I also want to thank the Building Committee for all their hard work over the past year.

Over the last twelve years we have had thirty (30) studies and plenty of discussion about what to do with our Senior Center during the past six administrations.

What is proposed tonight is a practical solution that solves most of the Town's facilities problems. We will be consolidating all Town Maintenance at the Town Garage. We will finally be putting a town asset, 35 Leroy Ave., to use. We will be tearing down an 18,000 square foot maintenance nightmare, the old Senior Center. We will replace that building, at no cost to the Town/taxpayers, with twenty (20) new living units of Senior Affordable Housing. When the Facilities Plan is approved a volunteer group will begin designing and getting proper approvals from land use boards so construction can begin approximately a year from now. Our Town Counsel has looked into the deed restrictions and feels confident that the restriction would not preclude the building of twenty (20) units on the old Senior Center site.

The Board of Finance has approved the Bonding Resolution because it fits into their prudent financial guidelines. The majority of the Board of Finance sees the wisdom of moving forward as a good use of Town assets. This resolution in no way restricts the Town's ability to manage its finances or threatens the Town's AAA rating.

The time to move our town forward is tonight. This facilities move is driven by the people we need to serve, OUR SENIOR POPULATION. These are the people who have supported our town with hard work and their tax dollars for many years. This discussion has gone on for too many years. In the meantime, our seniors have been in a decaying building with inferior: infrastructure, heat, air conditioning, bathrooms and stairs. It is time to move from talk to action.

With a yes vote you can show the seniors in this town that we value the contributions they . have made and continue to make in our community. Give the seniors the place they deserve as part of the Mather Community Center.

~~July 18, 2011~~

Callie Sullivan

Nov. 1, 2011

I voted against the bonding request for the shuffle because I believe it is Government's Job to fill gaps in services, not space in buildings.

For the last 22 months, the Board of Selectmen has addressed a single gap in our services to the Darien Community: the need for a new Senior Center.

We all agree, The building we have is in bad shape, and we need a new one. As elected officials we must fill this gap in a responsible, cost effective, affordable, way. What troubles me most, is that At some point in time, our "senior center need" became a "community center need". This is a government sponsored, manufactured need. It is way to justify an unjustifiable expense. What do I mean?

What I am saying is that there has been no quantified gap or deficiency in Darien's recreational facilities which requires the building of a community center. There has been no recorded "demand" in the four years I've been on the Board of Selectmen. Not a single citizen has come forward and asked us to explore building a community center. No one has asked us to address a lack of meeting spaces either. No study has been done, no business plan, no targeted strategic thinking about what the needs of our entire community might be over the next 5 to 10 years.

There have been no discussions with other community service providers, like the YMCA, the Darien Library, or the Darien Community Association. There is no consensus on what a community center would look like, who it would serve, or how it would serve them. There has been No community input on where it should be located, or Most importantly, how it should be funded. Will we charge residents and non-residents equally? Who will administrate the paperwork and stand at the door? How many employees will the Community center require we hire? We haven't answered these questions because we didn't know we had this problem. We have been sold this problem.

There is also NO Gap in the services which the Board of Education provides which demands that they vacate their space at Town Hall. They are doing their job well in their current location, and have not requested the move, or indicated that they will be more productive or cost effective in another location.

There is no GAP in the efficiency of the Board of Education's storage facilities, workshops or freezers, which demands they be moved or renovated.

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Thus ANY dollars that we spend Moving the afore mentioned services or employees, or retrofitting another space to put them in – is a waste of taxpayer’s dollars. You will be filling a building – not filling a gap, or addressing a need.

So, back to the need we all agree must be addressed: the senior center.

Currently our Senior Center is used by a finite number of Darien residents on a daily basis, as well as seniors from other communities.

HOW MANY seniors from each demographic use our center on a given day - say on a Wednesday, in June, remains a mystery. How many individuals from Darien dine, and then how many attend a class or workshop –Is unknown. Who are they? Are there 30 different Darien folks on Wed, then a different group of 30 Darien Seniors on Thursdays? We know a lot of people come from all over Darien ,Stamford,and Norwalk when lunch is provided by the speaker. Free lunch has a way of bringing people “to the table” so to speak. What is the attendance differential between when lunch is “free” versus when seniors must pay for it? Why are we building a venue for 150 people to have lunch, when on average we have only 30-40 paying to dine on a daily basis?

Requests for the specific number of unique daily visitors from Darien as well as other demographics, who use the center on any given day of the week - were denied. Repeatedly.

Can it be that we have spent Hundreds of thousands of Dollars to create a proposal which will reorganize our government into separate silos, put into motion a whole new cost center, possibly hire several new employees, and spend almost 12 Million dollars, without knowing the exact number of people from our community who utilize the one gap we are trying to fill? How could we know how BIG to build the senior center –without this information?

Why is it that from the very beginning the work which the facilities task force undertook was so limited? Why have requests for Smaller “Right sized options” been ignored? Why, if New Canaan, Westport, and Ridgefield have more Seniors than we have, is our center proposed to be more than double the size of theirs?.

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While every other municipal government in our state, and our country, is actively streamlining their administrative functions, and finding SMALLER, less costly solutions to their service obligations, we here in Darien are going BIG!

Big Spaces, Big dollars, Big Overhead

Well I still have BIG Concerns! And you SHOULD TOO!

If we had pursued the investigation of a “right sized stand alone senior center” while working through the specifics of the shuffle, we would be considering some very different cost options. We could build a new, energy efficient, beautiful, warm, non-institutional, 16,000 square ft. building with an 8,000 sq. ft. footprint, for roughly 4.6 Million Dollars, and BE DONE. If we sold 35 Leroy, we would not be adding to our debt. Or, we could build Affordable Housing where it is appropriate, in the center of town, and still SPEND \$4Million less than the proposed shuffle.

The Edgerton site, with its 22 buses entering, and 22 buses leaving between 7:30 and 8:30am, then again at 2:30-3:15, Is no place for Senior housing. I was there this morning, and I was amazed at the noise level as the buses came barreling up and down the hill from the middle school. Breaks squealing, smoke belching. Imagine your aged aunt pulling her car out in front of one of them... It will not be safe. The Edgerton site is not the right place for senior affordable housing. It is in the underbelly of Middlesex Middle school. The parking lot is used a dozen times a year for overflow parking - On 3 consecutive back to school nights, plays, concerts and performances throughout the year, as well as at graduation. Where will the extra cars park? How many more people will we have to pay to keep our roadways clear, when before it was a no brainer to park at the senior center.

We need to pause tonight, and think about where our community is going to be after our town wide property revaluation in 2013. Do we really want to have expanding government programs... and YES – the SHUFFLE does represent expanding government programs with a whole new “Community center” element, while our tax base is in all likelihood going to shrink 10-20%.

We can and will take care of our seniors by building them a new right sized center, but not without reviewing all of the options, weighing all of the costs,

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analyzing CURRENT values of commercial property, and setting all of the options, side by side, so we don't spend more than we can afford – to fill buildings instead of needs. Vote no tonight. We can do better for our seniors and The entire Darien community.

ERIC VOIGT RTM SPECIAL MEETING NOV. 1, 2011
RE: 11-13

Good evening Madam Moderator, members of the RTM, other elected and town officials, and members of the public.

My name is Eric Voigt. I am a member of the Darien Planning & Zoning Commission. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak before you tonight.

I am here because I have heard it suggested recently that the Planning & Zoning Commission has essentially signed off on the proposal to move the Board of Education offices to the former Darien Library building at 35 Leroy Avenue and the Senior Center to the Town Hall location at 2 Renshaw Road. This is not correct.

On October 20, 2010, a special meeting of the Planning & Zoning Commission was held to consider two narrow issues referred to us by the Board of Selectman:

1. Whether the proposal to convert the Board of Education office and storage space to a Senior/Community Center was consistent with the 2006 Town Plan of Conservation & Development; and
2. Whether the proposal to convert the former Darien Library building at 35 Leroy to Board of Education offices and other possible uses was consistent with the 2006 Town Plan of Conservation & Development.

With regard to issue 1, while the Commission voted unanimously that the proposal to move the Senior Center to 2 Renshaw Road was consistent with the 2006 Town Plan, the Commission's Referral Report to the Board of Selectmen underscored the existing recommendation in the Town Plan that a comprehensive analysis of the space needs at Town Hall be undertaken. Despite this, a space needs assessment has not been performed.

The Commission's Referral Report also noted that further details of the proposal would need to be reviewed by the Commission as part of a required Special Permit application process.

This review will cover many issues, including, but not limited to, hours of operation, schedules and programs, and related issues such as traffic and parking. This Special Permit application process has not yet commenced, and there has been no public hearing on this project at which members of the public would be given an opportunity to comment on the proposal. Therefore, it is impossible at this time to identify what modifications may be made to the plan to move the Senior Center to 2 Renshaw Road.

With respect to the referral regarding whether the proposal to convert the former Darien Library building at 35 Leroy to Board of Education offices was consistent with the 2006 Town Plan of Conservation & Development, in a 4-2 vote, the Planning & Zoning Commission found that the proposal was consistent with the Town Plan. The two dissenting members, including myself, felt that converting the space at 35 Leroy to government office space was inconsistent with the Town Plan which, as written, specifically recommends in multiple instances using 35 Leroy for housing. Unless and until those specific recommendations are modified or removed, I stand by my position.

While the majority of the Commission found that the proposal to move the Board of Education offices to 35 Leroy Avenue was consistent with the 2006 Town Plan, the Commission's Referral Report to the Board of Selectmen also noted that further details of the proposal would need to be reviewed by the Commission as part of a required Special Permit application process. Again, this review will cover many issues, including, but not limited to, hours of operation, schedules and programs, and related issues such as traffic and parking. The application would also require a full needs and use assessment of the spaces being occupied.

This Special Permit application process has not yet commenced, and there has been no public hearing on this project at which members of the public would be given an opportunity to

comment on the proposal. Therefore, it is impossible at this time to identify what modifications may be made to the plan to move the Board of Education offices to the former Darien Library building at 35 Leroy Avenue.

To the extent that there is any confusion over the involvement that the Planning & Zoning Commission has had in approving any aspects of the proposal to move the Board of Education offices to the former Darien Library building at 35 Leroy Avenue and the Senior Center to the Town Hall location at 2 Renshaw Road, I hope this makes clear that the Commission's involvement has been extremely limited to this point.

Thank you for your time and attention.

RTM Comments- Joan

I am pleased to be back in the RTM, where I served for 12 years as a representative in District 5 and a member of the RTM Education Committee. For the past 6 years I have been privileged to serve as Town Treasurer. As many of you know that is a very challenging job in this economic environment.

I am here tonight because I would like to talk about the rationale and finances of the Community Center project from my perspective. First, I'll speak about some general financial issues and then the community center specifically. I ask for your patience as I will be trying to take you through some analysis and detail.

To begin, I would like to make an assumption. I think that everyone in this room believes in fiscal responsibility. If anyone doesn't believe in fiscal responsibility raise your hand and prove me wrong. So, let's not argue whether "my dad's fiscal responsibility is bigger than your dad's fiscal responsibility. Let's start with the premise we all want to be fiscally responsible and we all want to do the right thing for Darien.

Let's Talk about Tax Increases and Income issues:

First, I would like to talk about the non-tax revenue side of the budget which in FY2011 was \$9,617, 165. This is money that we made, not from taxes, that help offset our budgeted expenses. Specifically from my perspective, last year the General Fund investment income was \$217,877 which is about 9% over budget of \$200,000.

Now, let's discuss the costs. There was a 3.92% increase in the mill rate, but that number used alone is misleading. The mill rate increase which can be directly attributed to the operating costs of the town were 2.1% and that is BEFORE any of the above mentioned revenue is added back. Let me tell you what you get for your 2.1% operating increase—all the services you receive—1) Assessor, 2) Building Dept. 3) Finance Dept., 4) Fire Protection, 5) the Health Dept., 6) Human Resources, 7) Information Systems, 8) Operational funds for the Library, 9) Parks and Recreation, 10) Planning and Zoning, 11) the Police Dept., 12) the Public Works Dept. 13) the Registrar's office, 14) the Senior Center, 15) the Selectman's Office, 16) the Social Services Office, 17) the Tax Collector's office, 18) the Town Clerk's Office, 19) the Youth Commission and finally, 20) me—The Treasurer's office. There were 20 essential functions that continued to serve this town with that 2.1% before revenues (such as mine) are added back in.

The increase in our budget mostly came from Board of Education. And if anyone thinks I am dumping on the BOE think again. I am very supportive of our excellent schools. However, prices of oil and health insurance are rising. Special Education is a black hole in a school budget because it is an unfunded state mandate. The Board never knows whether it has a child moving to town who might cost it \$10,000 a year to educate or \$100,000. While I support Special Education, I do not support the way that the state has mandated it to be administered—to be born by every town individually by law with maybe some support from the state. It is the wild card of school funding every year and the state reimbursements are always uncertain.

I have seen comparisons of our tax increase against other towns. Personally, I don't like comparisons between apples and oranges. For example, our 3.92% increase was compared to Ridgefield which increased only 1.03 %. However, there are some pertinent facts missing as to how those budget numbers are reached. For example, if you have a child who plays sports or does an outside activity at DHS you are charged \$100 a year. If you lived in Ridgefield and played sports, you would be charged \$225 per sport per season per child.

I did the math for my own child. My son played sports at DHS and I paid nothing extra for this privilege. If he was there today, I would pay \$400 over four years. However, if I had lived in Ridgefield I would have paid \$675 a year and \$2,700 for four years. So, when you compare numbers, make sure you read the fine print and the foot notes. By the way, Ridgefield brought in \$315,000 this year through this "pay for play" program that I have just described.

There are only a finite number of ways that towns can manage their mill rate increases and it is important to know how they do it—such as levying additional user fees to cut down on mill rate increases such as pay to play. Another way to do it is by maneuvering with their reserve surplus. So let's talk about the reserve surplus also known as the Fund Balance next.

Reserve Surplus or Fund Balance:

For those of you unfamiliar with the term, the reserve surplus or the Fund Balance is a fund that serves as the town's piggy bank or savings account. As of right now we are sitting with \$16 million in our reserve surplus. I invest this money. I currently have \$7,733,225 of this reserve surplus sitting in bank CDs earning a about 1%, the rest of the money is in liquid money funds.

Some towns keep their tax rates down by dipping significantly into that reserve surplus/fund balance instead of passing on the actual tax increases. In Darien, we estimate that \$1.1 million of the fund balance will offset the mill rate increase in a fiscal year. However, historically, we have never used all that we estimated and used much smaller amounts.

Darien has an enormous and extremely conservative reserve surplus. Last summer with one of my summer interns I did a market survey of Fairfield County Towns and cities to find out about their reserve surplus and their reserve surplus policies. In a nutshell, we have the highest reserve surplus by percentage in Fairfield County. In some cases, our reserve surplus is double percentage wise of other towns.

So when someone says we don't have the money to do another project that is just not true. If we wanted to we could write a check for the Community Center project tomorrow. I would not recommend paying in cash for a capital project- that would not be smart. I would prefer bonding, but the issue is we could do it if we wanted to do so. By the way, every town I talked to said they wished they had as much money as Darien.

Let's talk about Debt Service:

Another comment I have heard is that we have too much debt already. Again, that is not true. Actual debt service numbers are available on our website so I will not define them here. I only wish the federal government was as controlled about their debt as Darien has been. Our debt service is actually decreasing. I authorize the payments to our paying agent quarterly, so I see the schedules. Our huge projects- 7 schools were done years ago. They have been bonded and whenever possible, rebonded to lower costs. Our current project, the police station has been bonded and we also bonded 35 Leroy years ago. It is important to understand that these are sunk costs and well on their way to being paid off.

So, we are fiscally responsible but what have we done wrong in Darien:

Short-term we have been very responsible in Darien, but we have done some things, both from a financial and strategic viewpoint that I believe were wrong. Over the years we have not taken a long-term approach to our finances and our needs. Let me explain.

We have kept our budgets balanced, but we have cut our noses off to spite our faces, because we have always been concerned with the short-term. We haven't really financially evaluated our long term needs until the past 10-15 years. Let me give you an example. We used to budget repairs to the old Tokeneke School year after year. No one has ever adequately explained to me why we built a flat roofed school with an underground plant in New England. Finally, about 10 years ago, the BOE at the request of the BOF decided to look at whether it cost more to keep repairing the school or was it better to tear it down and build a whole new school. You know the answer to that – we have a beautiful new Tokeneke school. I use this example, for a reason. If you are just looking at yearly budgets and making do, you can make the wrong decision. Sometimes you need to look at the larger decisions and the greater needs.

I believe this is why Darien unlike other area towns is 98% built out. We did not make strategic land acquisitions when we had the chance. Usually, the reason was the same, “that project costs too much money”. Sound familiar.

Let me give you a few historical examples of what we missed. In the early seventies we could have bought the Trendly property which was a nursery for \$800,000. The price was viewed as too high. For all of you who live on Red Rose Circle and environs, the Trendly property was where your houses now are. With foresight, we could have had our own Waveney Park for \$800,000.

Here's another example I have heard of—we could have bought the convent which was on the end of Long Neck Point for \$1 MM. Again, it was turned down because the price was too high.

I don't have the costs of all the other properties we looked at but here are others we did not buy: The Daddario property, the Duhaime property, the Procaccini property, the Mason property. The Daddario property is where Avalon is. The Mason property is now the home of the Darien library. The Procaccini property was offered to the Town in 2004

for approximately \$7.5 million. Recently, I checked the Town Clerk's documents and found that the Proccacini property plus some surrounding property was sold for \$13,850,000 this year. There will be 62 condominiums of roughly 3000 square feet each built there. Please note, however, it took 8 years to get this deal done proving that it is one thing to have an appraisal and another thing to get the property sold and developed. Appraisals and sales are two different things and you have to allow a lot of time in between.

Bottom line, when these acquisitions were proposed we always thought they were too expensive. So, when does land around here get cheap? How often do we get a chance to buy land? I sat in this RTM when we bought 35 Leroy. We bought it to use for town purposes not just for affordable housing. In fact, the RTM voted against the restriction of its use for affordable housing that had been stipulated by the BOF. The RTM specifically wanted to use the old library for any town need we as a town deemed appropriate. I also want to emphasize that the RTM at that time did not want to sell the property, but again, wanted it retained for town needs. That was the will of the RTM at the time and that was what I voted for.

Now, I want to talk about Value Investing:

I manage the town's short-term investments, so I like to look at investments from a return point of view instead of just a cost point of view. From the exhibits on the town website, we know that our mythical \$1.1 million assessed house will cost an estimated \$1,168 in tax increases over 20 years. For example, it is estimated to cost \$71.90 in the second year (2013-2014) which is the highest yearly amount and then goes down every year after that. However, let's look at what this project might return to you in appreciation of your home value. For many people, our homes are our largest assets. The community center project will certainly add to the desirability of the town. So, let's say the community center conservatively adds ½ of 1% to your house value that would be \$5,500. So you have will invest \$1,168 over 20 years for a potential return of \$5,500 or more. I think that is a great return on your long-term investment. I wish I could get that with my short-term investments. To give you some long-term versus short-term perspective let me give you an example. My \$217,000 in investment income last year would return to our roughly 7000 taxpayers about \$31.13 per taxpayer. I can get you enough for a pizza and beer on a Friday night. The community center offers a much greater potential return not only to our town but to each of our taxpayers over the long term.

In broader term, we have to decide if we are going to see this project as a problem or a golden opportunity. By the numbers, I see it as an opportunity and here is why. Right now, property values are depressed due to the continuing recession. We know recessions don't last forever. Even the great depression didn't last forever. So, doesn't it make sense to invest when things are undervalued and ride the wave up like a value investor such as Warren Buffett does. Right now, construction costs are cheaper than before and bonding costs are very low. Companies need work and they will bid aggressively for our business. There has never been a better scenario if you view this as a value investor. For all these reasons I think this community center is a great investment for all of you as a financial investment in your town and your property.

Finally, let's talk about the difference between Municipalities and Corporations:

I hear a lot about how we should run this town as a business. I used to say it myself. The problem with this statement is that we are not a business, we are a community. We do not have shareholders, we have stakeholders. We don't just fire bunches of teachers when times get tough and budgets have to be met the way a corporation downsizes and fires employees at will. We still need to provide services to the people of this town and don't have that option to not do "that business anymore". Additionally, we have 10 unions/associations in Darien that affect our actions and abilities to do a lot of things due to union contracts. But, most importantly, as a community our job is to educate our kids, keep our community safe and operational as well as take care of all of our community members. We have not done this for all members of our community and that gets to a discussion of not only value investing, but VALUES investing. What are our community's values and how do we invest to meet them.

I have heard a lot of backlash against the senior center that it doesn't serve many people and why should we build them a new center. First, of all we have been discussing this project for 10 years. We have done almost every other project in town and left the seniors languishing. Now, we have a chance to build a senior center within the context of a larger more visionary community center. My own feeling is "It's time!!!"

Building a specialized center is not a new thing in Darien. You have to look no further than the Depot as an example. Not every high school kid uses the Depot, but it is everything to some kids here in Town. I shudder to think what would happen to some of our kids if the Depot and its amazing staff were not there as a resource to guide them and provide a safe haven. The seniors served by the new senior center/community center can be looked at the same way as the teenagers using the depot. Not all seniors will use the new community center, but for some it will be everything.

As a community we are supposed to serve all our constituents. We cannot just decide not to plow your street next winter or not send the firemen to your house for a fire. We serve all and we must have services for all. That is what we do and who we are. I cannot tell you what your values are, but I can tell you that this community center is congruent with my values of what a community like Darien should be.

In conclusion, I believe this community center is financially a good investment, the timing is good, we have the money, our debt service is fine and most importantly it is the right thing to do. So, let's do it. RTM members, it's up to you.

Norm Guimond Comments to RTM
November 1, 2011

My name is Norm Guimond and I am a member of District 6 of the RTM. As you may know, I am the chairman of the BOE Central Office/Mather Center Building Committee. While I have been the building committee chair for a year now, my involvement with the Senior Center and the old library at 35 Leroy extends back nearly 5 years.

The Selectmen appointed me to the Commission on Aging several years ago. Joe Pankowski, chair of that commission, enlisted my help in understanding and documenting the shocking conditions at the Senior Center, determining what needed to be done and then presenting these findings to the Selectmen. We were successful in getting some remediation. But the existing Senior Center is beyond salvaging.

I served as vice chair of the Community Homes at Leroy Advisory Committee, CHALAC. This committee worked with the developer which created a plan for 21 units of affordable housing at the old library. It was a good plan and I ^{supported} ~~voted for~~ it. That plan did not fly.

Because of my knowledge of both the Senior Center and 35 Leroy, the current Selectmen appointed me to the Facilities Task Force to look into the realignment commonly referred to as the Shuffle. It was during this stint that I began to appreciate what an opportunity we had before us in the two good, well-built buildings. In fact, we have four opportunities. First, we can replace the deteriorating Senior Center with a Community

Center that meets not only the needs of seniors but multi-generational needs of our community. Second, we can utilize significant amounts of wasted space at the Annex – if you've taken the tour, you've seen it first-hand. Third, we actually use 35 Leroy, which has been sitting empty for nearly 4 years. 35 Leroy is well suited for adaptive reuse as office space for the Board of Education. And finally, we can satisfy the greatest housing need in town, as reported by DAHAC in 2008, by constructing 20 units of affordable senior housing at Edgerton.

I welcomed my appointment to the building committee because I was excited to participate in a plan that met so many of the town's needs. While the CHALAC plan was good, it only addressed a single issue – affordable housing. This plan is comprehensive and addresses multiple issues.

Our committee selected architects for this plan who have designed 20 senior centers in the State of Connecticut and many municipal offices. They have worked with all of the stakeholders including Youth Services, Senior Center, Darien Arts Center and Board of Education and have created a plan this town can be proud of.

I hope you will join me in voting YES for this bonding resolution.