

**REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING  
TOWN OF DARIEN, CONNECTICUT  
FINANCE & BUDGET COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of a Meeting Held on January 20, 2009**

On January 20, 2009, a meeting of the RTM Finance & Budget Committee was held in the Oakroom at the Darien Board of Education Building with ten of fifteen members present.

**Present were:**

Harry Artinian  
Charles Brode  
Jack Davis  
Ted Hawkins  
Terry Duffy  
Bruce Orr  
Anita Rycenga  
Bill Smith  
Marc Thorne  
Virgil Wenger

**Absent were:** Barry Baldwin, Andrew Millar, John Price, Michael Rudnick and Reilly Tierney

The Chairman, Bruce Orr, called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. Also present, was John Boulton chairman of the Board of Education.

The agenda for the meeting was accepted. Mr. Boulton proceeded to give an overview of the three year teacher's contract commencing on July 1, 2009 recently negotiated. The timing of the negotiations is dictated by State law and the agreement was arrived at on 10/16/08. . The total salary increase which includes general wage increase and step cost is 3.9%, 4.2%, and 4.2%. It was noted that we have one of the higher step costs in the area which is a direct result of having a youthful staff. Employee health premium share will increase 1% per year over the life of the contract. The actual health insurance premium increases beyond year one are unknown. Providers were changed from United Health to Anthem primarily due to the fact that Norwalk Hospital took United Health off of their list of approved providers. Tuition reimbursement was doubled from \$15k to \$30k primarily as a "give" to encourage a spirit of negotiation. Mr. Boulton said our contract is free of many "work rules" which exist in other contracts. He also compared our increases to those of Greenwich, Wilton and Weston and the State. Wilton and Weston both in arbitration. Statewide avg. is 3.68%, 4.07%, and 4.27%. Brief overview of the arbitration process was given. If the RTM rejects the contract it goes to arbitration.

Our meeting temporarily adjourned at 7:40 p.m., so all could go downstairs and listen in on the Board of Education's meeting with Board of Finance chairman, Murry Stegelmann. Murry requested that the BOE strive to bring their budget increase down to 3.5%.

Once back upstairs in the Oakroom, discussion began regarding the contract. Harry Artinian moved to accept the contract as negotiated and it was unanimously approved.

Marc Thorne and Jack Davis left the meeting at that point.

Discussion shifted to the Royle School boiler replacement and the associated request from Mr. Engemann, Director of Facilities for early funding. This requires a special appropriation of funds from next year's budget into this fiscal year. The Board of Finance has said this will be the only capital expenditure allowable for next year's budget and we will wait to see if that is stipulated in the resolution presented for approval. It will be slated for RTM discussion and approval at the March meeting.

Bruce Orr noted that we have a new member from District 1, Reilly Tierney, who will be on the BOE subcommittee.

Jack Davis returned to the meeting.

By January 27, 2009 Bruce Orr and Jack Davis wish to have a list of comments and suggestions from our committee circulated to the Board of Education, with a copy going to the Board of Finance. All members are encouraged to e-mail or call Jack with your ideas/concerns/thoughts about the BOE budget. It will be circulated to all members once crafted, for final approval prior to release. This led to a lively discussion about the budget. A major item of concern continues to be special education costs and reimbursements from State. The cost represents appx. 16% (net) of the

BOE budget and 9 ½ staff members need to be hired to accommodate special Ed needs in the next budget year. To be explored is the possibility of taking the reimbursement segment of the budget out of the BOE budget and putting it in the BOS budget. Many are concerned that the reimbursement from the State will diminish due to tax revenue falling off at State level. All members are encouraged to communicate with our State representatives to have them push to continue reimbursing Darien for these costs to the highest extent possible since we ask so little of them in the way of any other subsidies. Other cost cutting suggestions included possibly closing some of the schools that are open on weekends thus saving on energy and associated costs. A closer look at changes in demographics is favored as well as a possible shift in policies.

The BOS meeting schedule was just received with the RTM meeting warning just recently mailed. The general sentiment was that it should have gotten to us earlier and upon further review, our suggestion last year, to hold the Performance Measures Presentation session over two days vs. one, was not acted upon. It was unanimously decided that Bruce Orr send a letter to the BOS strongly encouraging them to amend the schedule to provide for two time slots. There is no time for Q&A within the one session. The BOF will be copied on the letter.

Bruce Orr moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Dated: Jan. 21, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

Anita M. Rycenga, Clerk

RTM Finance & Budget Committee