Minutes of a public hearing of the Board of Finance held on April 29, 2020, 7:00 p.m. via teleconference - Zoom

Present: Jean Fitzgerald, Judith Friedman, Ken Kaminsky, Fillmore McPherson, Justin Murphy and John Picard

Also present: Stacy Nobitz, Finance Director; Kristen Bartosic, Accountant; Art Sickle, Technology Director; Peggy Lyons, First Selectman; Bruce Wilson, Board of Selectmen; Lauren Rhines, Town Services Coordinator/Risk Manager

Ms. Fitzgerald called the public hearing to order at 7:00 p.m.

Chairman Jean Fitzgerald introduced the members of the Board of Finance. She noted that the Public Hearing would cover the Board of Finance approach to development of the budget, an overview of the proposed budget and then accept public comment on the budget.

**Board of Finance Approach**

Ms. Fitzgerald noted that, in their review of the budget, the Board of Finance prioritized and considered the needs of the community in response to the current economic conditions. With this in mind the Board only allowed limited additional budget requests. On the Town-side they reduced all additional requests not related to public safety, services and capital. On the Board of Education side, last night the Board of Education voted to reduce their additional requests by $127,000.

Ms. Fitzgerald noted that the Board of Finance will also be looking at long range financial planning to include budget forecasting, establishing goals and objectives and creating stability in the property taxes.

**Overview of Proposed Budget**

Ms. Fitzgerald reviewed the Board of Finance Recommended Expenditures with a chart showing the 2019-2020 budget and 2020-21 proposed budget, the dollar increase and the
percentage increase. The recommended expenditures for the Town budget are $28,481,832 which is an increase of $1,740,992 or 6.51%. The recommended Board of Education budget is $58,551,701 which is an increase of $503,598 or .87%. The total recommended budget is $87,033,533 which is an increase of $2,244,590 or 2.65%.

Ms. Fitzgerald reviewed the breakdown of the Town budget. She noted that the increase in Operations was primarily for salaries, benefits and contractual obligations and Capital is primarily due to the referendum being postponed by the Board of Selectmen. She noted that the Board of Finance will discuss the appropriate amount of funding for capital at the meeting to be held to set the mil rate. She further noted that the Reserve Funds are flat and Health Insurance has a small increase due to two good years of claims. The Debt Service has an increase primarily for the Library and remaining debt for the High School. Ms Fitzgerald summarized that the total increase is $1,740,992 or 6.51% over last year.

Ms. Fitzgerald reviewed the breakdown of the Board of Education budget noting the increases in General Education and Special Education and a small decrease in School Facilities due to the action taken by the Board of Finance last night. She further noted that Planned and Cycled Maintenance is flat, Health Insurance has a small increase due to two good years of claims and the Debt Service has a small decrease related to High School debt. Ms Fitzgerald summarized that the total increase is $503,598 or .87% over last year.

Ms. Fitzgerald reviewed Capital Expenditures recommendation (CIP) which covers the 5 year capital needs. CIP expenditures have been planned and saved for previously. The Projects for 2020-21 for Beach and Recreation, Education, General Government, Facilities, Public Safety, Public Works and Technology totaled $4,262,712. She noted that a number of blank spaces in the chart for future years are due to not having the referendum this year.

Ms. Fitzgerald reviewed the Annual Capital Budget Summery which outlined how the items on the previous slide will be funded. She noted that the total to fund includes additional funds for items planned for referendum so the Board of Finance will have to have further discussion on the level to fund.

Ms. Fitzgerald reviewed projected revenue. Intergovernmental revenue is projected to be reduced by .64% due to recent indictors from the State regarding PILOT and LOCIP funding. Other revenue is projected to increase 11.35% for permits, document fees and interest revenue. She noted that this projection does not include the tax collection rate.
Ms. Fitzgerald noted that the total budget as presented is $87,033,533. This would equate to a possible 28.63 mil rate which is a .28 increase from the prior year or .99%. To the property owner, this would mean a $112 increase for a house with an assessed value of $400,000 as the budget stands right now. She noted that this calculation assumes utilizing $500,000 from the undesignated fund balance and a 98.75% tax collection rate. She noted that the mil rate will not be set tonight but will be done at the Board of Finance meeting on May 5th.

Public Comment

Ms. Rhines noted that 30 e-mails or correspondence with comments on the proposed budget were received from the beginning of April through this afternoon. Eleven comments called for a budget cut, 12 comments called for approving the budget as proposed, and 7 comments were of another nature. She noted that all e-mails will be posted on the website.

Stephen Dowler, 80 Edinburgh Lane, noted that he had submitted a letter previously but also wanted to comment. In response to a question by Mr. Dowler, Ms. Fitzgerald noted that the Board of Finance will not be voting on setting a mil rate this evening. Mr. Dowler also commented that, given the unprecedented times, he has concerns about any increase in the budget. He asked that the Board of Finance members continue to work to lower the budget since any increase would be difficult for the taxpayers.

Ryan McMillian, 24 Lenore Drive, questioned if the Board has a contingency plan that would be implemented if the tax collection rate ends up lower than projected and a gap in revenue is created. He questioned if a tax increase or increase in borrowing would be considered. Ms. Fitzgerald noted that public comment is for comment only, not discussion, and she noted that she will reply to Mr. McMillan’s e-mail after the meeting.

Stephen Mack, 16 Evarts Lane, noted that he had sent a letter to the Board of Finance with a copy to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education. He thanked the Board for their efforts in working to keep the mil rate as low as possible. He expressed concern about the number of items that needed to be reduced in order to be able to provide the negotiated the salary increases, which are a significant part of the budget. He suggested that, with residents losing their jobs, having hours cut or business being lost, this is not the time for town employee raises. He suggested that negotiations for a 6 month or year delay of increases be considered. Mr. Mack also questioned if, after paying drivers to keep them on staff, there are any savings related to school bus service reductions that are being passed along to the Town.
Joan Walker, 39 Stepping Stone Lane, thanked the Board for their work on the budget. She indicated her support for approving the budget as proposed. She is concerned that there will be many unknowns in the future and it will be harder to make changes in the future. She complimented the Board of Education for their efforts to limit their increase. She also commented that this is a time that Town Employees are working extra hard to provide critical services and she supports their efforts.

Mr. McPherson commented on Mr. McMillian’s concern about the possible impact if the tax collection rate comes in lower than projected. He noted that the Town maintains a fund balance sufficient to cover any shortfall for emergency needs. In response to Mr. McMillian’s question whether the Town would borrow money if necessary, Mr. McPherson noted that the Town doesn’t borrow money for any items except land or buildings.

Ms. Fitzgerald agreed that the Town is not in danger if there is a revenue shortfall. She is confident in the Town’s fiscal health.

Ms. Fitzgerald noted that the Board of Finance will continue to work with the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education to be responsible and work together in looking at the 2020-21 budget and the following year’s budget which could also be impacted.

14. **Adjourn.** On motion made by Mr. Picard, and seconded by Mr. McPherson, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Terry Holland-Buckley  
Clerk
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Dear BOF,

As I pointed out on Facebook, you guys are out of your minds with the proposed budget. You need to wake up and recognize we are in the midst of a crisis that is seeing local businesses shut down, small business owners crippled, and citizens of this town experiencing job loss and/or income cut backs.

THERE IS NO "STATUS QUO" SOLUTION THAT MAKES SENSE.

I would strongly urge you to go back to the drawing board and come back with a budget that has substantial cuts that line up with the economic and social conditions we are facing now and in the near term. Yes, key services will be cut. So what? Don’t you think families and businesses in town are going thru the same exercise?

If you move ahead with this budget, I will be among those that can’t pay my property taxes due to my business being absolutely destroyed by the shutdown. My income has gone to ZERO. You can’t expect the citizens of this town to proceed with a business as usual budget request....do your jobs and rethink your request. It will not be approved.

Bob Allen
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To quote Peggy Lyons:
“Details and links to access the Public Hearing are on the town’s meeting calendar.”
I cannot find any such info on the town’s website. Please let me know how to attend this meeting.

John Armstrong

Sent from Mail for Windows 10
4-24-20

TO: Jean Fitzgerald Chairwoman

I am writing in the strongest possible support of adopting the budgets as detailed on the Madison web site. During this crisis I know everyone is concerned about the long-term ramifications of town spending. Our town leadership is clearly aware and responding judiciously—hence the deferral of the two large spending referenda scheduled for October.

Both the town and BOE budgets are appropriately conservative. There is no money for new positions, new programs or anything but the “bare bones”. The total increase for the proposed BOE budget is below the rate of inflation. The 1.1% increase in the mill rate is well below recent historical increases and mostly reflects contractual obligations for essential services.

With the future tax basis uncertain there is great temptation to push for deeper cuts. We need to avoid this temptation! To pursue further cuts would potentially limit the town’s flexibility during this crisis. We need to maintain funding for essential town services (emergency etc.). We need to maximize our capacity to adapt to a completely novel educational environment going forward—whether that is home/distance learning, staggered school times or other potential options.

There is no doubt that the pandemic will require many months of recovery. That is as true for the town as it is for us as individuals. Our fastest route to a new “normal” is patience, prudence and planning. I believe these budgets reflect that approach.

Mark Aron
27 Scenic Rd., Madison, CT
To: Jean Fitzgerald, Chairwoman

Dear Chairwoman,

I am pleased that the Board of Education has continued their fiscal restraint during this health and economic crisis. Not only was last year’s budget, an overall cut in expenditures, but it has sought to maintain the high quality of education that we come to expect. Kudos to our teachers and school district in their successful shift to distance learning.

Although my children are grown and are young adults now, they were greatly benefitted by the excellence of the Madison school system, their specialized curricula, and their outstanding teachers. The strong K-12 educational foundation allows students to transition to successful college experiences and then to fulfilling careers.

I fully support the 20-21 Town and Board of Education budgets. As a high school teacher in an at-risk school district for over 40 years, I was keenly aware of the differences in major determinates for student success, such as class size, course offerings, facilities, and community and parental support and participation.

The Board of Education has recommended a budget that represents only a 1.09% increased spending over last year, while making significant cuts to the administration’s requested budget, eliminating four proposed new positions along with new curricula for a total of $294,710 in cuts. The total increase comes in below the rate of inflation.

The Board of Finance has already met and reduced the town budget to reflect current economic uncertainty. It includes no new positions while maintaining essential services for our residents. It meets the town’s financial and contractual obligations, as well as supporting public health and safety in this difficult time of pandemic. The result is a proposed minimal mill rate increase of 1.1%, which is well below historic averages.

Please support our town and education budgets for our future.

Andrea Aron
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I hope this email finds you well.

Our town like many in the state, country and globe are seeing deaths, layoffs, business closing - some possibly forever. The board of Finance needs to recognize the horrors among us and act accordingly. I recommend the board of Finance cut the budget 5-10%.

The incessant increases every year have squeezed households in the town, and the taxpayers need relief from years of misdirection and miscalculations. You all know someone who has been laid off, or runs a business that has been forced to close, are you going to kick them in the stomach while they are down? I certainly hope not. Cut the budget, provide relief.

The town should be furloughing employees and putting the financial burden back on the the State that has sucked so much from our town.

Towns like East Lyme - even Vernon are cutting and not increasing. There is no sane reason to have a tax increase.

In case you didn't know - one million American citizens have been afflicted with COVID-19. This is NOT going away, any tax increase will only push people to foreclosure, anger, and even worse.

See the light, do the right - cut the budget.
Sam Anderson
Dear Members of the Board of Finance,

I am writing today in support of the school and town budgets that are proposed for 2020-2021.

I am thrilled to see an allocation for life guards at the town beaches. I was also pleased to see that the library budget has been restored after last year's drastic cuts. My family is very much looking forward to enjoying safe beaches and the wonderful new library once we are able.

With a child in elementary school, I am also in support of the school budget.

Thank you for taking on this difficult task in these tough circumstances.

All best,
Kristin Brown
531 Green Hill Road
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Lady and Gentlemen;
As a long time resident and property owner of over 30 years in Town, I am again surprised by the increases in both the Town and BOE budgets this year, especially in times of economic and social health crisis with all the local business closures and school enrollment declining year after year.
A quick analysis of the budget figures as published in the Source on April 23rd shows that both Town and School budgets came in under the approved figures for 2019-20 by $1,393,863 and $154,849 respectively. The same two budgets are asking for increases of; $1,740,992 and $737,626 respectively for 2020-21.
With both budgets being “underspent” last year, why are we asking and approving these increases, especially in the Town Budgets for 2020-21?
Usually if a budget is “underspent” then the next budget is “reduced” by at least that amount going forward.
Please explain these amounts being approved particularly in the Town Budget.
Thanks!

Larry Brundrett
17 Salem Road
Madison CT 06443
TEL:203-245-2449
CELL: 203-530-5865
E-mail: LarryB69@comcast.net

A Veteran is someone who, at one time in their life, wrote a blank check made payable to, “The United States of America in an amount up to and including my life”.

Good Afternoon

I was pretty shocked to see that my town is requesting a budget increase of almost 2.372 MILLION dollars (See Photo Attach.) during a time that many are not working, businesses are shuttered, people are being laid off and furloughed, and the economic future is a question mark.

This is not the time to be increasing taxes and I shouldn't even have to be typing this email and telling you this. Isn't it common sense?

I believe all you folks are volunteers, so I'm either hoping that you sharpen your pencil and not only cancel this increase and find ways to REDUCE the budget or I'm hoping that this increase request wakes up a lot of people in this town.

If you are going to send me a reply that includes state mandates, laws, etc. and guaranteed union increases then please don't respond.

Thank you and good luck
Michael Clark
43 Church lane
203 530-4262
<table>
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<td>AMOUNT REQUESTED TO FUND TOWN GOVERNMENT FOR 2020-2021</td>
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<td>GRAND TOTAL APPROVED FOR 2019-2020</td>
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<td>INCREASE IN AMOUNT TO FUND TOWN AND EDUCATION:</td>
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Hello members of the board of finance,
My name is Jake Daignault and I am the student representative/liaison on the Board of Madison Youth and Family Services. I would like to express gratitude and thanks for the continued funding of MYFS. As a student, I am working hard to ensure students at Hand are getting the maximal amount of support and help that MYFS has to offer as well as ensuring the students are utilizing the programs and assistance offered. MYFS is one of the key places in the town that can actually make change to be ensured in the future. Working with the youth in town is vital and I don’t think many actually get the chance to do this. The youth have a lot to say and will say it given the possibility... MYFS gives a lot of youth that opportunity to speak up and this is why it is essential to keep it funded and running. Training in Peer Advocates is something that will stick with me for the rest of my life and getting this role as a liaison has been unbelievably incredible. There are so many great things that we, as youth, want to do in our community to make it better and by funding MYFS, you are giving us the chance to do some of the things that we want to. I cannot express the gratitude I have for allowing me to continue pursuing my dreams and allowing me to do what I love while I am a member of the board. I don’t know if anyone on this board came to our survey data rollout panel discussion but it was just one of the many great examples of MYFS empowering youth and giving us a medium to express our voice. I would love to discuss at any time with any members of this board what the liaisons for MYFS do and what MYFS does for the student community, and how and what you can do to support the youth of our town in our mission to create a better, more supportive, and overall happier, community. (beyond you’re super generous financial support!). Thank you again for the money, but in all actuality, thank you for the opportunities you are sustaining and creating.
Sincerely,
Jake Daignault
CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Town of Madison/Madison Public Schools. Do not click links, open attachments, or reply unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I am writing to thank the Board of Finance for your continued support and full funding of Madison Youth and Family Services as you finalize the annual budget.

As a board member and parent of two teenagers, I am keenly aware of how crucial the services they provide are in normal circumstances. In the face of the Covid 19 Pandemic, they are even more essential. I am also a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and I am witnessing first hand how the current crisis is affecting people’s mental health and financial security. People are in need of the supports MYFS provides more than ever as we face this crisis. The programs and resources they provide will help children and families dealing with an increase in anxiety and depression, substance abuse and domestic violence. In addition they are a critical in identifying and providing families struggling to pay their bills and put food on the table with needed resources.

I believe MYFS is already demonstrating they are a crucial first responder in this crisis. We need to continue to support the critical work they do.

Sincerely,

Pamela Davies
MYFS Board Member

Sent from my iPhone
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The world and our small town are battling the COVID-19 virus. We have read that the Board would like to adopt a new budget without the citizens of Madison using their right to vote. We implore our representatives to keep our current budget and delay this very important vote, for a new budget, to a later date when it is safe to have our citizens exercise their right to vote. Alternatively, there are many innovative procedures that our local government could adopt during this time to allow citizens the right to vote on their local budget, such as mail-in ballot or voting on multiple days to abide by social distancing.

Any increase at this time would be devastating to many families who have lost jobs, insurance, or own a small business affected by this crisis. There should not be an increase in taxes without proper representation by all Madison citizens. Typically, the voting process allows an initial decline in passing the budget if the citizens do not agree, which allows the Board of Finance to take a closer look at cutting costs wherever possible. This streamlined process will not allow this and this is highly concerning.

Therefore, it is our belief and position that the current proposed budget not be approved because there are increases in the current proposed budget. If a budget must be approved, we strongly recommend that no increases be made for this fiscal year.

Regards,

John and Abigail Apuzzo (67 Governors Way, Madison, CT)
Rhines, Lauren

From: FRANK DRANGINIS <franksail@me.com>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2020 3:33 PM
To: BOF
Subject: Fiscal Year 2020- 2021 Budget

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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Dear Members of the Madison Board of Finance,

With the Madison town budget for fiscal year 2020- 2021 now being reviewed I appreciate the opportunity to just offer a note related to the importance of keeping the ship steady during these difficult times. I would suggest that maintaining current funding levels or necessary additions be the proper course of action versus consideration of reductions due to the Covid19 crisis. Although I am not privy to all the ins and outs of the budget my sense is it is better to be on the positive side of the balance sheet than find the town in need of funds if cuts were instituted specific to anticipation of Covid19 issues that may or may not materialize. The minutes of the March 17, 2020 meeting close with the last two paragraphs supporting the idea that it is better to have than ask! From the comments in those meeting minutes it appears the town has experienced need for crisis related funds in the past but given appropriate funding the funds were available and reimbursement from various government agencies could take place after the fact versus struggling to get in line for the funds during the immediate crisis. No better example than the difficulties small businesses are having trying to obtain federal funds given the Covid19 crisis.

Certainly over time the financial impact of the crisis will be better known and if changes are needed adjustments can be made supported by information at that time.

Thanks to all committee members for your good work in continuing to make Madison a great place to live.

Best wishes to stay healthy!

Regards,
Frank Dranginis
21 Evarts Lane
Madison, Ct
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How much more deficit spending is Madison going to put on taxpayers backs considering Madison has over spent by 30 million dollars already?

With the problem of coronavirus, the overwhelming effect will take years to "maybe" recover.

This situation should be understood by Finance Board and all spending cut by 10% for town and school budgets. Common sense dictates this outcome.

With the layoffs of people, businesses closed, etc and social distancing for who knows how long, make Ms. Lyons understand this alone will change everything for school, businesses, any size of gathering with a 6 foot distance between students and all other people!

Where and how much has town saved with almost no snow winter and almost all electricity shut off for 1-3 months in all the vacant schools and other town buildings?

How much money is Madison saving now on heating, gas, diesel with long term oil "crash"?

Any increases need to be put on STOP for at least 2-4 years.

NO CAPITAL PROJECTS! Schools, etc for 2-5 years.

Now is chance for Finance Board to hold the line. The taxpayers of Madison can’t vote on budget. NO IF ANDS OR BUTS.

Hold the line to last year’s budget. Unusual times require unusual answers. Cut last years budget by 10%.

You should be looking at Yankee Institute which has much research about what is happening with Connecticut. Virginia governor is cutting teacher salaries. Pratt and Whitney is furloughing hourly employees and cutting pay for salaried employees by 10% until at least end of year. Consider the coming tsunami of a massive real estate crash. It is time for Madison to be realistic and do the same!

Please pass this email on to "ALL" members of the Finance Board and this is a request of each member. Each member needs to read and fully understand what the Yankee Institute says about the whole state of Connecticut.

I request a statement from each board member on their position of my full email and I request that the full email be read at the public hearing on April 29.

Greg and Susan Dworak
729 Summer Hill Road
Madison
Good evening,

My name is Lauren Kaplan and I am a senior at Daniel Hand High School. I want to thank you for keeping MYFS fully funded in next year's budget. I am a student liaison on the Madison Youth and Family Services board and cannot begin to explain how much their work means to me! I have been a Peer Advocate since my freshman year and it has shaped me to be who I am today. All of Madison Youth and Family Services' work is so inspiring and truly keeps our town and school community together. Thank you so much!

All the best,

Lauren Kaplan
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I thank the BOF for its contemplative and frugal decisions regarding the 2020/2021 general budget, particularly because of the uncertainties brought to us by COVID-19. I laud and support the BOF and their decisions wholeheartedly. In particular I thank the BOF for approving a much needed increase of funding to the fire/ambulance department budget in this time of their/our need and because of their obvious commitment to our the community over the years. I also want to thank the BOF for keeping our local library vibrant and alive and able to serve us. I was disappointed that the library did not get all it needed or asked for but I understand that the financial uncertainties of the time may have affected this decision by the BOF and others. Thank you BOF for your efforts and your commitment to the citizens of Madison in this time of crisis and uncertainty. Terry Kensler

Sent from Mail for Windows 10
Dear Members of the Board of Finance,

Over the last few weeks I've been reviewing the upcoming budget with great interest particularly because it will not be voted upon by residents at the customary referendum. The Board has done a wonderful job trying to keep expenses to a minimum and a small tax increase would normally be viewed very positively. Unfortunately everything changed by the end of February with our town and the state adversely effected by COVID-19 and that is a game changer.

The item that now stands out to me is salary increases in multiple areas of town departments, both union and non-union. In our current environment it would seem to be inappropriate to grant anyone a salary increase with so many people out of work, with less work or with a business closed by a state mandate. We strive to reduce infections through social distancing and masks, but we should also care for individuals whose finances are affected by this pandemic. To that end the Board of Selectman has already granted a 3 month deferment program for eligible taxpayers to provide some relief and now it is time for the Board of Finance and all others who are provided town funds to see what can be done to help residents.

I fully understand that there are contractual obligations to pay these salary increases and in order to get any relief you will need to work with all departments, union and non-union, to unanimously agree to a delay. That is an enormous task with no time to get it done. Those who have gainful employment should be grateful to have a job, even at their current salary, and delaying implementation doesn't take away the increase, it merely postpones it. As we've all been hearing, we are in this together.

Thank you for your consideration and ongoing efforts,

Best regards,

Steve Mack

Steven P. Mack
SPM Design
16 Evarts Lane
Madison, CT 06443
Cell 203.556.7082
spmdesign@yahoo.com
Dear Board of Finance Members,

Thank you all for providing a vehicle for public comment during these unprecedented times.

I have reviewed both town and boe budgets in the source (line by line as was my habit from my years on the board of ed). My feeling and knowledge of the board of education budget, is that while it does not seem like a substantial increase, the board of ed should review it to look for additional savings. The budget discussion occurred and the increase was put forward and approved prior to the deep financial hit taken by many of our town residents, who are, as you all know, the main source of revenue for funding this budget. I am not sure of the town policy when it comes to reviewing the boe budget or what would need to happen to send it back for review prior to the vote by your board in the first week of May. Most likely this email should go to the board of ed but I haven't seen anything about sending them budget feedback so you all are my first line.

In particular, there are two areas that I feel should be particularly examined. The first is the curriculum cycle. The curriculum cycle costs are not outlined as a line item, but rather are unspecified costs that extend into multiple line items including salaries, stipends, and significant costs in substitute teachers as teachers are pulled out to work on it. With the change in administration there may be an entirely different direction taken on the curriculum in the near future, and it makes very little sense to keep spending money along a path that may be reversed or changing course within a year. Freezing the curriculum cycle updates for the time being could result in a cost savings that would allow us to potentially flatten the budget at this time. This is not a quick line item elimination exercise, however, as I mentioned the costs are carried in several lines so a detailed review would need to occur.

Tied to that should be a hiring freeze on all new, non-enrollment based positions or increase in hours. This includes guidance, literacy and math coaching, and any other positions that are not based on student enrollment. These positions have been requested based on the existing curriculum structure, which may be changing in short order, leaving us responsible for positions (and associated health care costs) that no longer make sense for the district.

Also, I am curious about any potential savings from this year's budget. There should be some maintenance savings, including heating, transportation fuel, electricity, etc, although that is probably insignificant - but as I mentioned, the substitute teacher line item is substantial and generally $400K plus. Divided evenly, that is about 45K per month. There should be some savings that occur from this year's budget. Between maintenance and substitute teaching for two months, we should see at least $100K unspent. I would be curious to know if that can go into the reserve to offset next year's budget and keep it flat or combined with the changes outline above, slightly lower our Y/Y on that side of the house.

Thank you all for the time and energy you spend on this process and on this board. It is an important job - and you are (mostly silently) appreciated by many.

Happy Marino
11 Creamery Lane
Madison, CT 06443
From: Ryan Michaels <rmichaelis1980@gmail.com>
Sent time: 04/10/2020 08:20:15 AM
To: bof@madisonct.org
Subject: 2021 tax year

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the Town of Madison/Madison Public Schools. Do not click links, open attachments, or reply unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I am a resident of Madison for the previous six months. I have young children, which is why I was encouraged to move here. I did not have much time to do more than online research and online conversation with Madison residents prior to my move.

My assessment so far is that the elementary school my kids would go to is unsatisfactory in terms of condition, although, anecdotally, the teachers are great.

The taxes are high and having now had the ability to learn more about neighboring towns, I'm not entirely sure why. It seems that the propagated image of Madison's exceptional schools and family-friendly town is propped up by an older generation of wealthy people whom have failed to vote for budgetery allocations for services most important to the growing population of young families (Albeit, the library opening is highly anticipated).

It is hard to imagine staying in this town when it seems likely that a private or charter school will be much more beneficial for my kids.

I hope this can serve as a reminder that young, middle/upper-class families are the future of Madison. There are some great features and benefits of this town. We must work to make it an affordable place for the families that are here and looking to move to the area.

Best,

Ryan
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As a resident for over 20 years I don’t think it is fair for decisions to be made virtually about the town. Whether it be the future of Island Avenue lease or any other major decision that effects the town and tax payers. This is an unprecedented time for all and certainly not fair to have the community involved in any decision making even if it can be done virtually for some.

Lynda Montesi
Madison Ct.
To The Board of Finance:

In the middle of a pandemic and what will be a severe financial downturn, this is not the time to bond additional projects (community center and/or schools and have the additional cost of a special referendum). People are losing their jobs and will not be able to afford taxes as they currently stand. The budget needs to be cut under the circumstances. In addition, small businesses will not be able to pay rent and residents will not be able to pay mortgages. Please be sensitive as to what is going on in this town, this state, and this country. Please cut the budget 15% - this is what a majority of taxpayers want.

Kathy Rasimas  
John Rasimas-Ct. Deputy State Auditor and Professor of Governmental Accounting and Auditing at CCSU

4 Governors Way  
Madison, Ct. 06443

Sent from my iPhone
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Please explain the need for salaries totaling this much money. Is any going for outside town counselors? Where is the $800,000 going? How much is going for outside counselors?

Please explain why certified teachers salaries are increasing by $365,346 while the number of teachers employed, due to a decreasing student body, are going down.

Thanks,

Bob Roxbrough
91 Woodsvale Rd.
Madison, Ct.06443
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The school financing needs to be increased ...the kids need greater support than estimated ....District needs greater educational facilities able to provide even mediocre educations...Madison is living on past laurels re its ed system ...seems Scarice saw what was coming and flew the coop!

Sent from my iPhone
CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Town of Madison/Madison Public Schools. Do not click links, open attachments, or reply unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Millions of people are out of work. Town businesses have been closed, through no fault of their own. Families are sacrificing and cutting their budgets. The town needs to do the same. This is outrageous in a times like this. Back to the drawing board. Everyone is sacrificing the town must sacrifice too!!!

Andy Skroly
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Board of Finance members, Please keep the Youth and Family Services Department fully funded. I saw how valuable their services were this past June when several employees of the agency helped the Polson Middle School students grieve the death of teacher Dave D’Alessio in the most kind and sensitive manner possible. Without full funding this type of compassionate and comprehensive service for our Polson students would not have been possible.

Art Symonds
MYS Board member

Sent from my iPhone
Rhines, Lauren

From: Joan Walker <Joan.walker@unapen.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2020 5:56 PM
To: BOF
Subject: Comments for BoF Public Hearing

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Town of Madison/Madison Public Schools. Do not click links, open attachments, or reply unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Board of Finance,

I am writing to you to urge you to approve the current budget and make no further cuts. Both the BoE and Town came in with very reasonable budgets.

BoE budget increase is 1.09% over last year. BoE significantly cut the budget presented to them from the administration, only including moderate increases to facilities repairs and maintenance, custodial supplies and increase hours for an SRO along with contractual obligations. Those contractual obligations should be considered sacrosanct, bearing in mind what we have asked our teachers to do in response to the pandemic and the changes they will need to make going forward.

The Town budget includes no new positions, it maintains essential services for our residents, it supports public health and safety in this time of pandemic. This budget also meets the town’s contractual obligations. Together, it is my understanding that with the use of funds from the fund balance, the increase to the mill rate will be 1.1%.

It is unknown what the long-term impact the current pandemic will have on our community. Changes may need to be made to how we educate and how we do business as a Town. Until those things are determined please approve the current budgets as they stand today.

Sincerely,
Joan Walker

Joan M. Walker
39 Stepping Stone Lane
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All,

I wanted to briefly comment on the proposed budget, to the extent that I understand it, given the various articles published in the Source and the material posted on your website.

From my perspective, as a relatively new Madison resident arriving in 2016, I have enjoyed and appreciated the way Madison has worked through challenging financial times across our state to maintain a quality of life that is simply wonderful. My wife and I have made many friends since our arrival and plan to stay in Madison for the foreseeable future as evidenced by our recent investment in purchasing a home (8/2019) south of Route 1 in the Island Avenue community.

Key to our success as new residents in this community has been your approach to funding our town in a manner that balances fiscal restraint with quality of life. As far as I can tell from the proposed budget this is in evidence yet again with a pragmatic proposal to maintain our community’s character and assets without drastic budget cuts. We know a level-headed perspective and steady hand will be important to our community’s success given the unforeseen challenges of future years as we overcome the Coronavirus disaster and address the ensuing changes to our culture and society.

Thank you for your efforts and commitment to Madison.

Sincerely,

Tony West
5 Windward Lane
Madison
To the Board of Finance, Board of Education, and Board of Selectmen,

Thank you for volunteering your time and energy to our Town, especially during this COVID-19 crisis. I am grateful for your work, and appreciate your willingness to consider my remarks.

We are in a moment of transition:

- Transition from a pre- to a post-covid economy that is already taking a heavy toll on Madison’s residents and businesses
- Transition to a new (unnamed) School Superintendent
- Transition to a post-covid education system that may alter how our schools operate
- Transition to a post-covid commercial environment that could, we hope, favor the suburbs over urban centers for the first time in a generation

Where we end up is guess. Today we only know that the coming year promises much hardship, sacrifices, and continued uncertainty for all.

Ideally, the Board of Finance and the Board of Education could cut the budget by an amount commensurate with the losses suffered by our homeowners and businesses. But given the time, fixed costs, and existing commitments, we know that’s not possible.

Instead, the prudent thing to do is to maintain last year’s levels for both the Town and Education budgets. In the absence of a vote and in recognition of the current dire economic circumstances, this approach would be responsible and welcomed. Our fiscal approach would compare favorably to our neighboring towns.

This is the time to make brave moves to reduce costs. While I’m not versed enough to recommend specific cuts, I encourage you to think with courage.

Next year and thereafter, when we know more of the lasting effects of this transition and with the benefit of public discussion, we can begin the process of building our future. And we’ll be better positioned to pay for it.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jerry Davis
297 Neck Rd
Madison CT
203-245-4400
Dear members of the board of finance:

I would like to share with you a snippet of data, which was released by the CT DOL earlier today. You can review the data sets at https://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/claimsdata.asp

The graph below is from the DOL's town-by-town initial jobless claims dataset and includes 5 years of monthly data attributes.

This graph is one data attribute that demonstrates we are not operating in normal conditions. I ask that the BOF move forward a budget that demonstrates fiscal responsibility.

Sincerely,
Ryan Duques
Wildcat Road
Madison, CT
To all (inclusive of BOS, BOF & BOE):

First, a thank you for volunteering to lead the Town of Madison, especially during these difficult times. You have undertaken a great responsibility and fiduciary role in raising your hands to serve, evermore highlighted by the challenges of Covid-19, and we sincerely and respectfully thank you again.

This correspondence is simply a call for fiscal prudence in regards to the pending Town and Education Budgets.

Our underlying belief is the only prudent and ethical budgets which should be put forth is one that is held-flat, with no increase, a “Zero-budget increase” across both budgets. In light of not having a town-wide referendum vote on the budget, no one can fault the collective boards for committing to a "no increase" budget; to do otherwise is questionable.

"Where & what to cut" we cannot honestly provide a detailed or specific line-item. Our hope is you will hold the fiscal line as per the expiring budgets, wherein the "where" to save & "what" to cut, can be revisited, with the hindsight of Covid-19 and its specific impact on the people and businesses of Madison.

If immediate items do need to be contemplated, on the Education side, perhaps realizing the savings from the High School debt service decrease ($400K+/-), the education savings that should be realized with a declining enrollment, or the savings in salary for a new superintendent (both timing of the new hire and the salary & benefits at which she/he will be hired)? On the Town side, why the larger (actual dollar) increase this year? Can there be no savings at the Town level?

These are not easy times, nor usual. We strongly urge you to err on the side of fiscal prudence.

Sincerely,

Stephen Dowler          Bruce Beebe
Jerry Davis              Eric Hill
Tim Clorite              Bill Clorite
Russell Hodge            Rick Fearon
David Milano             Lurrae Lupone
Rhines, Lauren

From: Ryan McMillian <ryanmcmillianllc@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2020 3:35 PM
To: BOF
Subject: Budget Comment 4/29/20

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Town of Madison/Madison Public Schools. Do not click links, open attachments, or reply unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I would like the BoF to address the planned increases for headcount and salaries for 2020. Has the board reviewed the planned hiring increase and raises for staff in light of the recent economic change? The board should consider these increases that would be funded by a higher mill rate...an increase that will be shouldered by several residents that no longer have incomes. While I don't doubt the hard work of town employees and that raises may be justified in a normal year, this is not a normal year. I would appreciate some transparency into this decision and any changes that have occurred.

Ryan McMillian
24 Lenore Dr, Madison, CT 06443