

## SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

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TOLLAND, CT

### TOLLAND TOWN COUNCIL TOLLAND HIGH SCHOOL – AUDITORIUM APRIL 21, 2016 – 7:30 P.M.

2016 APR 25 AM 9:54

Sheila M Bailey

## ANNUAL BUDGET PRESENTATION

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Rick Field, Chair; William Eccles, Vice-Chair; Robert Green; Paul Krasusky; Kristen Morgan; Jeanne Schroeder and David Skoczulek

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Steven Werbner, Town Manager; Michael Wilkinson, Director of Administrative Services

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Rick Field called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Recited.
3. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:** None.
4. **ANNUAL BUDGET PRESENTATION**

4.1 Pursuant to C9-9 of the Town of Tolland Charter, the Town Council shall arrange for an annual budget presentation. The annual budget presentation is intended to provide information and encourage public discussion.

Mr. Field advised that prior to the Annual Budget Referendum the Town Council is required by Charter to arrange for an Annual Budget Presentation. As of now, no changes can be made to the budget. This meeting is to make sure the community has an idea of what the budget consists of. Mr. Field gave his presentation with the use of a PowerPoint.

The budget referendum will be on **Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>**. The question on the ballot will be:

***“Shall the Town of Tolland’s proposed 2016-2017 budget of \$55,972,582, reflecting a spending increase of \$1,373,652 or 2.52% which requires a tax rate of 34.34 mills, be adopted? Yes/No”***

Mr. Field began by saying that living in Tolland can be expensive, but it has been tagged a few times as one of the best communities to live in. Tolland was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> out of 46 towns by Connecticut Magazine in the \$200,000 – 249,000 median home value category.

The Town Council and Town Manager’s budget goal is to maintain important services, produce a fiscally responsible budget and continue to provide a quality education for our children and this year provide for certain programmatic improvements. Mr. Field thanked the Board of Education for their super job in working with them and the rest of the town to be a lot more open and transparent.

A slide was shown depicting the expenditure summary. The town departments have gone up 2.62%, capital expenditures have decreased 45.28%, debt service is up .17% and the BOE is up 2.99%, for a grand total of 2.52%.

The town expenditure drivers are: insurances (without health insurance), salaries (Union under negotiations, doesn't include the BOE), professional services (majority related to State Trooper Program), tree trimming and street sweeping, snow and ice control materials and machinery and equipment repairs. The expenditure revisions include adding the position of Assistant Planner/Zoning officer, filling the position of Laborer in the Parks Department, adding a half time custodial position, adding in part-time clerical position in Public Safety, eliminating the position of Town Engineer, eliminating the Resident State Trooper assigned as the SRO and increasing the amount budgeted for salt.

Sam Adlerstein addressed the BOE slides. The Town Council's approved BOE budget is \$39,420,471 = 2.99%. This is the budget that the BOE requested. He said they had a lot of meetings and input from a lot of community members and the Board.

The budget is built around four priorities. 1) Curriculum instruction and 2) technology: It is the core of what your schools do. It is supported by excellent technology, excellent facilities and a really strong culture and climate. There are two programs that they are continuing on: Focus on Math: built upon Singapore Math and Writers Workshop.

Reflecting back on this past year, he thanked the Superintendent and school staff for what they have done. He also thanked the parents and residents who have provided support. Dr. Willett and the Administrators have all done an amazing job. Students will be challenged, and they will find improved instruction and improved continuity. They want Tolland education to continue to stand for high quality. It is important to stay on the path they are on so that Tolland education can be respected and be able to draw new people into the community. They are trying very carefully to make what they are doing not expensive. He invites the residents to take some time to attend one of Dr. Willett's meetings. The schedule for those meetings is on the BOE's website.

Mr. Adlerstein continued with the priorities: (3) properly maintain facilities: Up until now, the facilities have been largely neglected. It is much less expensive and much smarter in the long run to do the preventative maintenance. This budget has a significant increase for facilities. A slide was shown outlining the systems and infrastructure needs. A big portion of the capital needs can be paid for by the State School Construction Grant. The last priority is 4) culture and climate: Culture and climate makes resilient children, which makes resilient adults. He closed by thanking them for supporting the budget, a budget that the BOE believes is the right one.

Mr. Field continued his presentation with a slide showing what the average homeowner has historically paid over the last six years. He suggested that town residents go to the website and use the tax calculation form to figure out what their new tax will be.

The next slide was "What can you as a citizen do going forward?" Become involved. Be informed. You can sign-up for Tolland notifications, like *Town of Tolland* on Facebook and follow on Twitter. He invites the residents to volunteer on Boards and Commissions and submit suggestions, questions or comments via the town's website. The Town needs you to share your knowledge, your ideas and your time to continue to keep Tolland a great place to live – to become a better place and to make sure our quality of life is sustainable.

Mr. Field closed by sharing the referendum question again, and reminded that the **Budget Referendum vote is Tuesday, May 3, 2016.**

## 5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

**Bob Rubino – 296 Weigold Road** – Mr. Rubino questioned the entry on the Expenditure Summary slide where it showed an \$80,000 reduction in the capital expenditure.

*Mr. Werbner said that is the general fund contribution that is in the capital budget. There are other sources of funding such as the \$9.6 million dollars they are recommending for bonding. So, there has been a decrease in terms of the general fund portion, but the overall capital budget is going up dramatically from other sources (borrowing, debt service, grants and fees for service).*

**Andy Powell of 21 Clear Brook Drive** – As a citizen, he thanked the BOE and Council for their excellent work. He is in support of this proposed budget, and asked that everyone get out and vote on May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

6. **ADJOURNMENT:** Robert Green moved to adjourn the meeting; Seconded by Jeanne Schroeder at 7:55 p.m. All were in favor.

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Richard J. Field, Council Chair

**Michelle A. Finnegan**  
**Town Council Clerk**