

## TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT

### *Special Town Council Meeting and Budget Workshop*

**APRIL 15, 2010**

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The following Minutes are the record of a Special Meeting and Budget Workshop of the Wallingford Town Council which was held in the Robert Earley Auditorium of Town Hall. Chairman Robert f. Parisi Called to Order at 6:03 P.M. on Thursday, April 15, 2010. Responding present to the Roll Call given by Town Clerk Barbara Thompson were Councilors Vincent Cervoni, Nick Economopoulos, Jerry Farrell, Jr., Craig C. Fishbein, John LeTourneau, Robert F. Parisi, Rosemary Rascati, John J. Sullivan and Vincent F. Testa, Jr. Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr. and Comptroller James Bowes were also present at roll call.

The meeting began with A Moment of Silence. Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance. The Roll Call was taken.

Chairman Parisi said that as you know the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks were not included in this year's budget but that resident, Jason Zandri, is spearheading an effort to raise funds through public subscription to be able to present the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks Celebration. He said that part of that effort is a ziti dinner at Zandri's Stillwood Inn on Friday, May 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 P.M. Tickets are \$25.00.

**3. Acceptance and Appropriation of Grants awarded to the Board of Education as follows:**

Title IV

IDEA- Part B

Pre-School Handicapped

Summer School

ACES

Formation of Adult Medical Entrepreneurs (FAME)

And a new award

ARRA –Education Technology (Title IID)

- Board of Education

Chairman Parisi said that at the last Town Council meeting, the Council tabled the Appropriation of Grants that were awarded to the Board of Education because some Councilors wanted more information.

*In Attendance: Dr. Salvatore Menzo, Superintendent of School  
Linda Winters, Business Manager  
Thomas Hennessey, Chair, Board of Education*

Dr. Menzo referred to a document that the Council should have received to help clarify questions that the Council had. He invited any questions that the Council still had.

Mr. Fishbein thanked the panel for the information they sent and noted that it was immediate. He said that he appreciates it. He wanted to know more about the *Title IV Grant for Safe and Drug Free Schools* and asked if this is an anti-bullying program. Ms. Winters said that was correct. Dr. Menzo added that it was an on-going program and is fully funded, stating that \$17,390 is the expense. Mr. Fishbein said he is concerned with grants that end. Dr. Menzo said that the Title IV grant is awarded for two years and is an entitlement grant that the BOE receives from the State of Connecticut Department of Education and that it has been in existence and funded for a number of years. Mr. Fishbein asked about funding periods.

Ms. Winters explained how grant funding crosses into other award years. Mr. Fishbein said that he is concerned with the 75% being expended at the very beginning of our next school year.

Mr. Fishbein next asked about the *Adult Education* grant of \$326,365, and how it relates to the setting of the State of Connecticut budget. Ms. Winters explained that this grant was approved and it provides matching funds to funds that are budgeted in the BOE budget for adult education and the state notifies the town what the matching portion will be, and this year it is 39.85% for 12 months.

Mr. Fishbein asked for explanation of 'property' in the *IDEA- Part B grant*. Ms. Winters said the 'property' is to buy assistive technology equipment for students with special needs. Mr. Menzo said that depending on what the service is, it could be software, or it could be hardware. The Special Ed Director said that money varies from year to year, and it is used for specific needs for identified students and that it could be hardware, like augmentation devices, or software. Ms. Winters stated that it is a 24-month grant and that they can file for revisions and allocate the funds to other line items. It depends upon student evaluations and various reports to identify student needs and that it is a dynamic process since same student needs change.

The *FAME* grant - Mr. Fishbein asked about transportation or mileage on the budget form. Ms. Winters said that it is for training for a CNA Program and that the Wallingford School District does not pay for mileage but the students who are part of this program are reimbursed by the Workforce Alliance. Student physicals come from the Workforce Alliance.

Regarding the *Educational Technology* budget form, Mr. Fishbein pointed to 'Other Purchased Services' for \$7,591. Dr. Menzo said that is for a software program implemented this year to allow the district to collect data on students for K-8 with the goal of implementing it for grades 9 and 10 next year. The student does an assessment form, and then it is scanned into the live-based, web-program which gives teachers on-demand use of the data. He said that training will continue on the program which has a variety of analysis tools to it.

Mr. Cervoni asked if there is a net impact on the Board of Education budget either this year or next year. Ms. Winters responded that grants are managed in a separate fund. She stated that the IDEA- Part B grant pays salaries, and that for the 2010-2011 budget, they have already reduced those salaries.

There were no comments from the public.

Mr. Sullivan thanked Ms. Winters and Superintendent Menzo for the quick response in getting this information to the Council. He said that the other night he hemmed and hawed with questions. He called the response outstanding.

#### MOTION

Mr. Farrell moved acceptance and appropriation of grants awarded to the Board of Education as follows:

- Title IV
- IDEA- Part B
- Pre-School Handicapped
- Summer School
- ACES

### Formation of Adult Medical Entrepreneurs (FAME)

And a new award

ARRA –Education Technology (Title IID)

Mrs. Rascati seconded.

There were no comments from the public.

Mr. Bowes added that the *Adult Basic Education* grant should have been included in the motion. Mayor Dickinson stated that unless someone objects that this is for the list of grants and can be included.

### MOTION AMENDMENT

Mr. Farrell added to his motion of the list of grants the *Adult Basic Education* grant. Seconded by Mrs. Rascati. There were no further comments.

All nine (9) Councilors present voted Aye. The motion carried.

## **BUDGET WORKSHOP**

### **4. Board of Education**

*In Attendance: Dr. Salvatore Menzo, Superintendent of School  
Linda Winters, Business Manager  
Thomas Hennessey, Chair, Board of Education*

Dr. Menzo handed out the new 2010-2011 Recommended Budget Executive Summary to the Council. He discussed the highlights of the summary stating it included the overall object budget with a 4.56 % increase listing certified and non-certified staff reductions. He said that at the elementary level there are 15 certified reductions, at the middle school level there are 3 certified reductions and at the high school level 17.4 and system-wide 4.8, which amounts to 40.2 certified staff reductions. In the non-certified area, he continued at the elementary level 21.5, at the middle school level 4.5 and high school 10.5, system-wide 6.5, totaling 43 non-certified staff members. Dr. Menzo discussed the percentage of increase or decrease of objects.

Responding to Mr. Economopoulos' question, Dr. Menzo said that the term 'certified' refers to any teacher, any administrator, anyone that is holding a Connecticut State certification from the State of Connecticut Department of Education. He said that 'non-certified' refers to clerical, paraprofessional, or anyone who is not a classified employee holding a certification.

Dr. Menzo said that they added an object description section this year with more detail regarding increases and decreases. He discussed some of this detail. He said that the goal of this document is to make their budget more understandable than their budget book. He referred to page 13, the inclusive list of all of the reductions, the dollar amount which is connected to them as well as how the Board of Education went from a 9.94% sustained services budget to a 4.56% increase. He said that as much as possible, their goal was to make the reductions far from the classroom and to stay away from personnel in the reductions.

Mr. Economopoulos, concerned about staff layoff, asked to look at page 1 again. He asked about high school class scheduling, courses, sections, number of students and in the various categories, such as honors courses. Dr. Menzo said that is being finalized with the first and

second run of numbers. Mr. Economopoulos asked under certified how many of them are classroom teachers, how many of them are non-classroom teachers. Dr. Menzo said that they are all classroom teachers. Mr. Economopoulos said that we are not laying off a guidance counselor, a psychologist, a social worker or administrators Dr. Menzo said that at the present time, it is not a recommendation. Mr. Economopoulos said that he is shocked and that is what effects classroom size the most. Dr. Menzo said that high school population over the last ten years has dropped, and staff has increased over that time. Mr. Economopoulos wanted to know if staff was added because of NCLB and inclusion, and who requires a person with them all day, and that certain students have escorts. Dr. Menzo said he would not say that the primary reason for increasing classrooms teachers has been because of the reasons given by Mr. Economopoulos. He said that the items that would have increased the number of teachers is basically because certain teachers might have been hired for three classes and then been extended for two additional sections. When that 'pocket' moved through, the reduction in force did not occur as the person was already on staff, and they stayed in the position. He said that this has happened throughout the system and noted that the number of 2<sup>nd</sup> graders next year will be high. Dr. Menzo said that they are trying to make everything as equitable as possible.

Mr. Economopoulos said that he is a firm supporter of Dr. Menzo and of his staff and all of his colleagues but that Dr. Menzo has missed the boat by knocking off 40 certified positions as all classroom teachers. He said he thinks that it is unfair and that he doesn't have the true feel of what is going on in the reduction of staff situation because he will have a tough time facing people and saying that there are 17 or 10 less teachers at one high school but that we have five guidance counselors and six of this and five of that. He said that he is very surprised.

Dr. Menzo responded that none of these cuts were taken lightly and that it is a team with the Board of Education and the professionals in the district that make the decisions that they feel will have the least impact on the students. He said they have to look at their numbers across the schools. Mr. Economopoulos said there are teachers in our system that are with students five or six hours a day, and they have a greater impact on the students than perhaps a guidance counselor might have. Dr. Menzo did not share that opinion.

Mr. Fishbein reminded the Council of an administrator resolution with regard to layoffs that the Council passed a few weeks ago. He next referred to a comparative analysis chart in the budget book and the one being used now (Executive Summary). Dr. Menzo said that this one reflects the reductions that are proposed. Mr. Fishbein asked about some of the detail on page 1. Dr. Menzo described the difference between high school greeters and security and that they perform different duties to create a safe environment, especially in relation to the configuration of the buildings.

Mr. Hennessey stated that the system has lost over 600 students in the last five years and that during this time they eliminated one administrative person at Lyman Hall High School, and they have cut an administrative intern this year.

Dr. Menzo said that they have looked at a variety of items, tried to address all areas and to make as many reductions in a non-traditional way from other districts and to make it as equitable as possible. He reviewed the list on page 13 of the Executive Summary. He noted allocations, which is the supply money that goes to teachers for classrooms and it has been reduced several times throughout the budget process this year. He said that in the past that has been something that has been purchased with pre-buy money and that they are getting away from that this year so they can get a clear understanding of how they allocate funds in that area.

He talked about the reduction of special week-end programs and his work with the Parks and Recreation Department to mitigate that. He said that between the two high schools that there is a \$100,000 revenue line in 'Pay-for-Play,' which was approved by the board when the budget came forward. Dr. Menzo discussed other reductions, including unemployment costs.

Mr. Fishbein asked about pay phones and established that we pay for pay phones mostly due to reduction of use.

Mr. Economopoulos reacted to pay-for-play and said it creates a lot of problems and asked what other towns have this program. He said that there are many problems with parents, coaches and players who are not given playing time in a regular environment, and now with pay-for-play being implemented, the problems will be exacerbated. He continued stating that it is his assumption that inter-scholastic athletics was an elite sport and that something else similar to pay-for-play would be called intramurals where everybody can play. He asked if we have intramurals anymore. Dr. Menzo said that he does not believe that we do.

Dr. Menzo named pay-for-play districts Wethersfield, Watertown, Cheshire, Shelton, Madison, Colchester, East Hampton, Simsbury, Tolland, Ledyard South Windsor. Mr. Economopoulos said they would be better off cutting freshman team sports or JV sports. Dr. Menzo said that he brings up an obvious concern of everyone. He said that the \$100,000 revenue saves, keeps, two teaching positions that is a concern of ours because we want to keep more teachers in the classroom to assist students.

Mr. Testa asked if this included any fee for any other extra-curricular activity other than a sport. Dr. Menzo said there would not be any other activity fee. Mr. Testa expressed that he has always considered sports as an integral part of the educational program insofar as it develops character and the mind more effectively for some kids than what is studied in the classroom. He asked about security people hired by the athletic director at the high school level to in effect stand around and keep an eye on things. This is a considerable cost and asked if this area was reviewed. Dr. Menzo said that they have an obligation to maintain a certain level of standards for student safety, and that they did review it. Mr. Testa asked if in this budget year they would take another look at this area.

Mr. Hennessey commented on pay-for-play and potential individual family hardship and that the board will address this issue. It is not the board's intention to keep anybody that can't afford to play away from sports.

Dr. Menzo read the recommended budget revisions on page 16 and said that they are beginning to work on the \$2,505,420 reduction. Page 16 indicated where they are at this point and that they are far from the goal that has been set for them. He said that they recently received a medical reduction of \$569,348 and that they are cutting some line items from next year's budget to refine the budget. He mentioned the strategic plan in next year's budget has been reduced by \$35,000. In his review of page 16, he stated that the Harvest Park Program has been relocated to the old Vo-Ag space at Lyman Hall which is being renovated to receive it. The savings realized of \$80,698, includes transportation costs. He reviewed that they re-wrote the custodial bid for the elementary schools and will realize a \$200,000 savings. Mr. Economopoulos observed that the cost of the Sheehan bleachers equaling four teachers. A discussion regarding capital projects, CRRRA funds and creative budgeting ensued with regard to necessary capital projects versus class-size and classroom teachers and pay-for-play.

Dr. Menzo said that they are still investigating reductions that are savings that will keep us away from reducing further services. He went through the rest of the report, including the addition of a Vo-Ag teacher to accommodate the increase in students; the Vo-Ag projected revenues, which come to the district from students who come to the Vo-Ag from out-of-town and pay tuition. He pointed out page 19, a listing of other grants that they receive and the last page, page 20 is a list of the capital items. It should be noted that the Energy Efficiency Plan grant which was originally \$1.2 million but because of the hard work of George Adair, Rick Hendershot and some of the Board of Education members, including Mr. Hennessey, they received grants of \$490,850 to offset the expenditure. It will make schools more efficient.

Mr. Testa, page 16, said that he spent a day at Harvest Park with the little people. He asked if the renovations at LHHS will include the little people. Dr. Menzo said that they will be accommodated in one of the elementary schools. Mr. Testa asked also about gas storage at the schools.

In response to Mr. Economopoulos, Dr. Menzo said the figure stated is the savings for one year with regard to Harvest Park, including the re-fit.

Mr. LeTourneau asked about Boiler Room drainage on page 20 and wanted to know why Sheehan was not there. Dr. Menzo is a different scenario as it is one they can delay for next year. Mr. LeTourneau is in favor of getting all of it done now with CRRA money which will not be there next year. Mr. LeTourneau asked about an HVAC unit that has not worked in four years and is not in the budget. Dr. Menzo said that there are lots of items that need attention immediately and maintenance has not been kept up as they should have been doing. In response to a request from the Mayor, Dr. Menzo said that they developed a ranked list of other items of importance not in the budget that need attention. He said the ones listed on page 20 are of the highest priority. Mr. LeTourneau asked about paying for parking at the high schools. Dr. Menzo said that they did an extended study with the principals on this issue that included the number of spaces and what other area towns charge for parking. He said that the estimated revenue was \$10,000 to \$12,000 for each high school, which was brought to the Board. Considering the income which would be helpful, they were not receiving a lot of positive feedback from their constituents in other towns where a parking program was implemented because of the necessary supervision. The Board decided it would be difficult to enforce especially in light of staff reductions and that it would not be adopted. Dr. Menzo said that he concurred with that decision. Mr. LeTourneau said he had parking forms from Xavier and Mercy high schools where parking is viewed as a privilege at \$100 per year. He said that he would pass along the monitoring system that they use.

James Bowes, Comptroller, in clarifying for Mr. LeTourneau with regard to the items on page 20, referred to a memo from the Mayor, which categorized the items that the Board put into the 2010-2011 budget, and some other items scheduled to 'come down the pike' in FY 2011-2012 or after. He said that there are 16 items on this list, and you will see those items also on page 20 and that they are items that the Board put into their 2010-2011 budget. He said that if they have their druthers, the CRRA funds of \$1.4 million would be spent for those items for the school system as soon as they get the funds. Mr. Letourneau expressed his concern for boiler room drainage maintenance.

Chairman Parisi asked about rooftop HVAC preventive maintenance in the system. Dr. Menzo said that they do have inspections, which are done by both the district's person and by contracted services. He said the Director of Maintenance oversees this process and sees that it happens. Chairman said that he is concerned about how appropriate our preventative

maintenance is, especially since this particular rooftop HVAC system has not been working for some time according to the list on page 20. Dr. Menzo said that in working with the district's HVAC person this year that they have saved about \$30,000 to \$40,000. Chairman Parisi stated that lots of money can be saved with a properly system and properly maintained facility.

Dr. Menzo reported a change in the way the end-of-the-year unexpended fund balance will be treated henceforth. In the past it was used to pre-purchase re-occurring items but that from this point forth, the Board has committed to using the unexpended fund balance to purchase capital improvement items, items that will allow them to maintain our building at a higher level.

Given that Mr. Fishbein attended most of the Board of Education budget meetings, he observed that he appreciates all of the work that has been done on this budget. He asked about the vehicle that needs replacement on page 20. Dr. Menzo said that it is a maintenance crew service vehicle. They are looking at either a truck or a van. The rooftop HVAC being discussed is located at Sheehan. In light of the fact that the town pays for school buses to go down the streets of students who park their cars at school, Mr. Fishbein made remarks regarding paying for parking at the high schools and said he thinks that \$50 per month versus \$100 per school year is in order when we are talking about increasing taxes. He commented on enforcement and said that he thinks that it is a privilege to park at school.

Mr. Fishbein stated that as a result of the open choice program that currently Wallingford has approximately 90 students from New Haven in our school system. He said that we spend approximately \$14,000 of the traditional student and about \$33,000 each on the special needs students and the only remuneration that we get from these students is \$2,500 from the State of Connecticut per student. Ms. Winters said that is correct but for schools that have ten or more students there is a bonus of \$436, and that the total amount for the current year is \$257,923. She said that their calculation that we charge tuition for students who attend in our district is approximately \$9,500 for a regular ed student and special students, which is what they use for grants, is \$12,227. Mr. Fishbein said that he looks at simple numbers by taking the Board of Education budget and dividing it by the number of students they are servicing. He said that he thinks that we are losing about \$1.2 million through the open choice program. He asked Dr. Menzo if it makes sense to continue with the open choice program. He said that's a lot of teachers.

Dr. Menzo said that he believes it makes sense to operate the open space program because when you disperse the 90 students across the schools and across the grade levels the fact is that they are not changing the allocation of teachers in our district. If the 90 students were taken away tomorrow, it would not lower the number a teachers needed. For instance, there is one 1<sup>st</sup> grader from New Haven. He said this is not significant. He continued stating that there are seven 2<sup>nd</sup> graders across four schools. He noted nine 3<sup>rd</sup> graders across five schools, nine 4<sup>th</sup> graders across five schools, eleven 5<sup>th</sup> graders across five schools. He observed that the impact of these students is not significant enough to reduce. He said that from an educator point of view urban students and our students both benefit beyond the dollars and cents.

Mr. Fishbein said he is looking at tax increase. He asked how many students from Wallingford go into New Haven. Dr. Menzo said that the New Haven school district is a magnet school set-up and remarked that 309 Wallingford students attend school out-of-district. He said those schools include- Wintergreen, Thomas-Edison, Wilcox, Collaborative Alternative Magnet, Mill Road School, Village School, Whitney High School, Sound Ridge, Annie Fisher Magnet School, Beecher School, Benjamin Jepson Magnet, Betsy Ross, Cooperative High School, Davis Magnet, Engineering Science University, High School in the Community, Hill Regional

High School, High Leadership, John C. Daniels, King Robertson Magnet School, Sheridan Magnet, New Haven Academy, Ross-Woodward School, Sound School and Nonnewaug High School. He said that the \$257,923 has been used to off-set what the board would not be able to fund in things such as a variety of technology including hardware and software, reading books, library books. He commented that if they were to remove this opportunity for our students and for their students, then next year we would be seeing reductions in what they can provide for student resources since they use the funds for all students and to supplement the educational opportunity. He said that would be a \$250,000 reduction in supplementary materials that they are now able to buy. Mr. Hennessey noted that the open choice program will be entering the tenth year of a ten-year agreement with the State of Connecticut next year.

They talked about the open choice fund allocation to the individual schools which Ms. Winters said is the back of the Executive Summary book but is not broken down by school.

Mr. Fishbein turned to a transportation study and referred when the Board of Education came before the Town Council to ask for money for this study, which they indicated had not been done in a long time, if ever, as you currently anticipate doing. He said the Board of Education minutes state that they intend to hire a transportation coordinator in the very near future. Dr. Menzo said that was the plan but unfortunately plans do change and they abandoned that opportunity due to changing circumstances in the union. He clarified that this is not the transportation coordinator in terms of the consultant, which is still going on.

Mr. Sullivan said that he attended every budget meeting and sat out with parents at Sheehan and in the band room. He also said that he attended every focus group except Yalesville. He thinks that he understands where the parents stood and that he has a personal investment in the school budget as a father of a 1<sup>st</sup> grader. He said there was a plan to ever lay off an administrator. Dr. Menzo said that is correct. Mr. Sullivan confirmed with Dr. Menzo that the Board of Education came before the Town Council for an RFP with respect to the transportation study. He asked if \$490,850 for energy efficiency plan is a 'lock'. And are we going to get that specific amount or do we already have it? Dr. Menzo said that the PUC approved it and explained some of the detail. Mr. Sullivan was interested in the return of investment. Dr. Menzo said about 2.4 years. *(Everyone shared a good laugh with regard to a comment about a geography lesson in the 'classroom climate zones')*

Mr. Sullivan asked if we had an estimate of what the energy efficiency plan of what it's going to save us on a yearly basis. Dr. Menzo said for the total expenditure of \$1 million that it would take 2.4 years to return \$1 million and to calculate that out it would be approximately \$400,000 to \$500,000 per year.

Mr. Sullivan said that he knows how hard the Board of Education has worked, that he has called many members of the Board as well as some of the administrators, and they have got this down to bare bones. He realizes the impact this is going to cause in our school system because no one wants to see anyone laid off. He said it's not a good time to be laid off. There are no jobs out there, and we know how hard people in the school system work. This is why we have one of the best school systems in the area. He promises to all the parents and the teachers that he will do his best to pick the budget clean and try to find money for the school.

Mr. Cervoni acknowledged courageous parents who spoke during the Public Hearing telling their personal stories. He noted that in addition to the cuts the Board of Education took to their own budget, they are now faced with the Mayor's proposed budget cutting it an additional \$922,000. He asked about the impact to the students at the extremes, the talented and gifted



and those dealing with challenges, especially in light of the cuts to the Saturday and after school programs. Dr. Menzo said that the Saturday talented and gifted programs would be reduced but that they are going to try to offer pay-for-play opportunity, or a pay-for-participate opportunity. In terms of special education, they are trying to mitigate the reductions by making certain that they look at the needs of the students and in looking at the services that they need to provide, they believe in the reductions they made allow them to provide services for the students at a high level. He said that they are concerned, however, since reductions are still in the future. He said that the choices they will make from this point on are going to be difficult in that all students must be considered. The goal, in the words of Mr. Cervoni, is to maintain continuity of service. Dr. Menzo agreed and that they will be working with parents, etc. to make transition of services be appropriate. He remarked that the professional and exceptional teaching staff that works very hard with their parents to make personal connections. He said that it is a challenge and that it isn't easy. None of this has been easy.

Mr. Cervoni turned to open-choice with respect to the Vocational-Agricultural Program. He said that we collect about \$10,600 per student who attends the Vo-Ag program at Lyman Hall, and there is about \$14,000 per student spent in education. He asked what determines what the district pays in tuition to other schools for Wallingford students versus what we collect in tuition who come to our town. Dr. Menzo replied that some of it is state statute and some on legislation. He gave some examples dealing with fee structures and reimbursement from the state. He continued stating that Wallingford is based on a calculation for out-of-district on a tuition basis, a fee that we charge any student. \$9,687 is the tuition. He said that there are students in the Vo-Ag Program that are from ten towns in Connecticut, including Meriden, East Haven, West Haven and Hamden with the highest enrollments. Ms. Winters said that the state sets the tuition of \$9,687, and that Wallingford is allowed to charge 82.5% of that or \$7,992 per student. Vo-Ag is beyond their control.

Referring to page XVIII. of the yellow book, Mr. Testa asked some detailed questions with regard to tuitions (560- 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> points). Ms. Winters said that they are under budget for the current year and that tuitions for special ed are running approximately \$362,000 in the red for public and private outplacements. She noted that they budget the net amount for those tuitions, so they have a line item for public, private and estimated revenues from the state for the state Agency Placement Grant and for the Excess Cost-Sharing Grant. She referred to the 2<sup>nd</sup> point and said that they budget two additional placeholders because they have little control over when a student moves to town or when a student may be required to be out-placed based on their special needs. She said they also budget for actual out-placements students who are out-placed now. She said that they budget an estimated increase in tuitions of 3%; the 2<sup>nd</sup> point refers to public outplacements where there is an increase of \$301,000, and the private has an increase of \$558,000. She said part of that is because they are under-budget in the current year. She said revenues are a very important line item and that they have very little control over that. In the current year they received reimbursement under two grants –State agency placement grant and Excess Cost Grant, which offsets high cost outplacements, and they estimate that the state will fund 84% of that grant but for next year's budget they have been advised to estimate 70%. She said that costs are up and revenues are down. She said that under the stimulus funds they were fortunate to get funding from the federal government which was earmarked into different line items. She said that they had \$500,000 allocated to tuitions and they are estimating that that funding will be fully expended, or close to it, in the current year so that is another reason that the tuition account is up by \$1.4 million for regular ed tuitions to magnet schools and special ed outplacements Throughout Ms. Winters reported in round numbers.

Mr. Testa said that he wants to understand the 3%. Ms. Winters said that they are not under-budgeted by 3%. They are estimating that the tuitions for the schools that charge Wallingford will increase by 3%, and that is just an estimate. Ms. Winters directed Mr. Testa to page 36 in the yellow book for public outplacements and said that the budget is \$1.7 million, which is an increase of \$301,000, compared to what is budgeted for this year. For private, the line item has increased \$482,000, and the last line item shows that their revenues are down by \$429,000.

Chairman Parisi asked about Ms. Winters said that those are DP Supplies and should read 'Supplies'. With regard to, Ms. Winters responded that Mr. Hennessey made a statement that advertising would go down if they could advertise on their fields.

Ms. Winters responded to a number of inquiries from Chairman Parisi including - Data Processing Services, \$18,000; Other Purchased Property Services - \$214,200 - it is for air quality testing. Dr. Menzo gave some details with regard to airborne substances or mold, etc. It is an ongoing assessment with periodic testing, such as radon, for the state, and that there are funds for events where testing is needed and also for \$8,500 for pest control services; Dues and Fees - for memberships in outside organizations that provide services to teachers, administrators and programming for students and that dues and fee structures vary according to district size, for example, and that some are just flat fees, etc.; Other Expenses – graduation expenses, BOE publications, high school student activities which is an accounting code suggested by the state. Dr. Menzo said that they have made many cuts including graduation expenses, subscriptions for the Board of Education and curtailing of some funding of celebration activities. In addition to those items, Ms. Winters also pointed out that this line has been reduced for next year because the federal stimulus funds will not be present as in the current year.

In response to Ms. Rascati, Ms. Winters said that cleaning services have been eliminated 100% because they are planning on moving their pupil services offices out of 300 Church Street to realize the savings.

In response to Mr. LeTourneau's questions about the Board of Education's comparative staff analysis 2010-2011, (Yellow book, III), Dr. Menzo confirmed that the classroom teachers all belong to the teachers' union. Mr. LeTourneau said he used the financial gap of \$922,795 and divided it by 396.80 classroom teachers with the result of \$2,326. Mr. LeTourneau referred to the union president's statement regarding the acceptance of the contract by the Town Council. He clarified that when the contract was brought forward to the Town Council, the Council was told at that time that if the council did not approve the contract, there was a 99% chance that it would go to arbitration. Mr. LeTourneau said that is how the Council came about approving their contract. In regard to the math he did, Mr. LeTourneau said that if those 396.80 teachers came forward with \$2,326 per teacher, it would fill the gap of \$922,795 and forego any further cuts of personnel. He said that teachers in the public hearing on April 14<sup>th</sup> said that they would be willing to pay more in taxes to have the services and to have things added back in.

Mr. Sullivan's questions centered on Pupil Services (Page 65, Town Budget Book, white). - \$754,311 (FY 2008-09) and \$133,126 (1/31/10) and \$791,695 (FY 2010-2011). Ms. Winters identified that line item as outside professionals, and reported the reason that line item has gone up to \$792,000 in the 2010-2011 budget is significant because we had received federal stimulus funding in the amount of \$443,000 which reduced the current year's budget (FY

2009-2010). The services include PT, OT, speech and hearing services. She said that is the reason that the budget for the current year is significantly lower because of the federal stimulus funding. She said that the funding was of significant benefit; however, they are facing the funding cliff in next year's budget, which has an impact on this line item. Mr. Sullivan asked about field trips, which has been reduced by half to \$89,387, and what that amount represents. Ms. Winters noted that it is for bus, admissions for athletics and student activities. The decrease is pay-to-play.

Mr. Economopoulos reported that we have been cited by the New England Accreditations for out lack of diversification in years past. He acknowledged out participation is a program and hopes that for the future diversity increases among students and teachers. He reported that also in the past Wallingford was cited for grass cutting, snow shoveling and checking passes, as an example, by administrators. In the context of the \$922,000 funding gap, Mr. Economopoulos spoke about the identity of the 18 administrators in comparison to how teachers, who are department heads, are viewed by teachers. With Dr. Menzo and Ms. Winters, he reviewed various categories of staff other than the classroom teachers – system administrators, program administrators, PPS and psychologists, guidance counselors, resource teachers. He noted the paras have their won separate category. Mr. Cervoni said that if you add the teachers and all of the categories just named that the total is 754.8 and that divided into \$922,000 results in \$1,222. This is not the result of just dividing classroom teachers into the \$922,000, which results in a higher result.

Mr. Economopoulos asked how many school systems in the state are going to school 190 days this year like Wallingford. Dr. Menzo said that we are going 184 days but the Board just reduced it to 182 because we are not going to makeup snow days. He said that in the contract for teachers are 189 days. Mr. Economopoulos asked if it is possible to go back and have the teachers contracted instead of 189 to 185. He then presented a formula to be proposed to the union. Dr. Menzo said that he is describing furlough days. Mr. Economopoulos said that he means this for all three years. Dr. Menzo sees it as a re-opener of the contract, which would be a side letter like was agreed upon with the administrators. He discussed how the union views side letter. Dr. Menzo said that they have been told that any agreements that are made outside of the contract negotiation period would or could lead to re-opening the contract and what Mr. Economopoulos is talking about is re-opening the contract especially since they are only in the first of a three-year contract. Dr. Menzo said that he has been making offers all along and would be happy to make any additional offers. They discussed what possible savings there might be. Mr. Economopoulos alluded that the savings might be up to \$2 million per year for three years which would close the gap considerably and forego teacher layoffs. Based on current staffing and taking the budget next year for teachers, Ms. Winters calculated the per diem of \$225,523 so that two days is about \$451,000 and four days is about \$1 million.

Mr. Fishbein said that he is stunned that we talk about global economies and preparing our children for the future, and we are thinking of cutting out school year by four days. He then asked about the Data Processing budget line that is quadrupled. Ms. Winters said that it is because of a pre-buy last year.

Mr. Fishbein asked about the Advertising line. Dr. Menzo said that it is a reduction due to the fact that they are consolidating services. Mr. Fishbein asked how they will spend \$56,000, which is another teacher. Dr. Menzo said that it more than just ads. Ms. Winters said that it is used for school-to-career program, adult ed, bids and advertising for the human resource department. Dr. Menzo said that there are a variety of different departments that require advertising.

To answer Mr. Fishbein, Dr. Menzo commented that Instructional Supplies have the pre-buy factor, last year's \$1.9 million which was used to off-set the expenses for this year. He said now that are beginning to restore that money to provide those same services for next year. Ms. Winters said that the base for the current year is reduced, and what was actually expended in 2008-09 was \$1,281,537 which was for consumable supplies and any equipment less than \$1,000.

Regarding security at the high school, Mr. Testa asked for clarification that now security is about keeping people out and less about the students. Dr. Menzo called it safety from without rather than within. Mr. Testa then made a plea to the Board of Education to cease mailing things to him. He would like to receive nothing in the mail but rather via email through the Town Council mail. He noted that we could save a lot of money if it was town-wide. Dr. Menzo said that they are in the process of a new, updated website, which will be interactive with parents and with student information, and including a universal registration form. He said they have reduced their postage costs this year. He reported that in the future they will not have to mail things home because parents will be able to access their child's web-based account.

Mr. LeTourneau remarked that he is not going to propose any drastic cuts.

#### **MOTION**

Mr. Letourneau moved that the Wallingford Town Council accept the Mayor's approved budget of \$86,427,640. Mr. Fishbein seconded.

Mr. Testa asked if this was done like this last year and the year before? Isn't this a little premature for this?

Chairman Parisi said that he doesn't think that it is. Mr. Testa replied that he is in favor of the motion; however, it precludes changes in any form as the Council goes about the town's overall budget, unless we are going to propose changes as we go. He thought that any particular motions on anything related to final budgets would be held until the end. Chairman Parisi said that is not always the way. Mr. Testa said it should be clarified.

Mayor Dickinson stated that the Council can take action tonight but it doesn't mean that the Council can't change it. He remarked that the only time it can't be changed is on a final vote when you adopt the whole budget and set a mill rate. Nothing is permanent until you reach that point.

Chairman Parisi said in fairness to the public and the Board of Education that if there are changes along the way, they can be considered. A motion can be considered at any time, even if something had been passed. If someone voted against it, they can bring it back for reconsideration. He observed that we go on record of what we are thinking right now. He said that the final time is the night that we accept the budget and send it back to the Mayor. We are open to changes, should that occur.

Mr. Testa asked if there would be an opportunity to contemplate the budget as a whole prior to a night when we sit here with the final numbers for an up or down vote. He continued by asking if when the Council is done with the workshops, will there be an opportunity to go back to any of the department budgets and do anything. Chairman Parisi stated that he does not recall doing that but it is usually decisions as we go along while the Comptroller keeps a

running total. Then the comptroller will let us know where we are with what we have done, and then the final changes. He said that he does remember Councilors making motions on the final night. Nothing is shut out.

Mr. Testa indicated that he likes the motion and will support it as long there is an understanding that it may not be the end of it. respond

Mr. Sullivan suggest roll call for the vote.

With that process in mind, Mr. Fishbein said that the Council should trim the budget as we go forward so that the anticipated tax increase can be reduced. Chairman Parisi said that this is a wide open, transparent process and that anyone on the Council is more than welcome to come forward in a budget session and make a motion to do something. He said it takes five votes to win but that four votes is fails.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

Cervoni	Yes	Letourneau	Yes
Economopoulos	No	Rascati	Yes
Farrell	Yes	Sullivan	Yes
Fishbein	Yes	Testa	Yes
		Chairman Parisi	Yes

During the Roll Call vote, Mr. Economopoulos made a statement that because of the cuts of staff, specifically the classroom teachers, and no time to allow any additional funds to possibly be added to this budget, based on what happens tonight, that is will not support the motion. Chairman Parisi reminded him that there will be time all along the way should he come up with something. Mr. Economopoulos said that he presented some things tonight. He said he is not going to vote 'yes' on a budget that he feels can be improved by adding money to it, and he tried to say that. He said that he doesn't misunderstand. He said that he knows that this was never done this way before, and he is ready for it, but he is going to vote no.

8- Aye  
1 – Nay

The motion passed.

**RECESS**

A recess that was called at 9:00P.M. was reconvened at 9:13 P.M.

**CAFETERIA – page 87**

*In attendance:*

*Sharlene Wong, Food Service Director, Board of Education*

*Dr. Salvatore Menzo, Superintendent of Schools*

*Linda Winters, Business Manager, Board of Education*

Ms. Wong said that cash revenues are trending downward by approximately 6.5% from the previous year. She said that Congress has not at this time reauthorized the national school lunch program. She said that in the area of uncertainty, she has tried to be very modest in anticipating their reimbursement for free and reduced meals. She said that they are still in negotiations with their cafeteria employees because their contract was not formally approved

by the Town Council a few months ago and also the food service clerical staff will be in negotiations over the summer. She said that her union will also be in negotiations.

Ms. Wong said that this is the first year that the consumer price index demonstrated a decrease in food cost in the areas of fruit, vegetable and meat categories; however, other categories have increased. She said that their food costs have been decreasing over that last twelve months, which is unusual. This also has been considered in the budget. She noted there is a need to comply with many regulations from the health department and policies. She has developed an equipment maintenance and replacement program to meet or exceed requirements by the federal government.

She explained a small increase in revenues. In the past year with regard to federal and state aid, they have a 20% increase in the number of students who qualify for free lunches. Students who receive a reduced-price lunch had also increased by 9%. Overall, Ms. Wong reported that in Wallingford, we used to find that the percentage of students that qualify for free and reduced meals to be 4% to 5% of the total student enrollment. She noted that this year, they found the increase to be a staggering 10.6% of the student population. She said that it almost doubled this past year, which, to her, is an indicator of the financial climate of the community. In taking that into consideration, she did not recommend that the Board increase the lunch prices.

Ms. Wong addressed Mr. Fishbein's question regarding eligibility for the free lunch and reduced lunch programs and said that they follow the guidelines from the state and the federal government in verifying income with tax returns, pay stubs, and unemployment checks.

Chairman Parisi asked that Ms. Wong be able to finish her presentation.

Ms. Wong continued with Expenditures, page 87. She moderates food costs and tries to keep it between 40% to 42% of the income that is coming in. The Personnel line runs to 50% to 54% of the total revenues. Other operating expenses run at 4% to 5%. With her staff, she tries to maintain a small profit, which can be spent on capital equipment. She said that through fiscal control, they have been able to maintain a fund balance, which is \$497,000 over the last 17 years.

Mr. Fishbein asked about the national free lunch program. Ms. Wong said that the reauthorization occurs every five years and is still being debated with regard to instituting nutrition standards as national or by state. She said because of Michelle Obama's new program 'Let's Move,' she believes that the President will infuse more money into the school nutrition program.

Mr. LeTourneau, page 88, Freight. Ms. Wong said that they are allocated a set amount of food items from USDA commodities. The Board of Education pays per case to have those commodities delivered. She has been negotiating in order to eliminate the middleman and therefore the \$3.20 per case cost to her. She addressed Truck and Auto, which are the two vehicles that she maintains to deliver food, to move supplies from their warehouse storage and to move supplies from school to school. She reported that the vehicles also deliver to the two high school kitchens who do some food preparation for all of the other schools. Mr. Letourneau noted for everyone that she is not increasing her own salary, or price increase.

Mr. Sullivan congratulated Ms. Wong on running such an efficient operation and that, if we had this type of efficiency throughout the entire government, we would be in pretty good shape too. Ms. Wong said that it would not be possible without her incredible staff that they are

incredible women and men, who put their hearts into their jobs. Mr. Sullivan asked about the percentage of students who would be receiving assistance this year. Ms. Wong said currently that 10.6% of the student body receive free or reduced-price meals. He asked about sick days. Ms. Wong said that they do get sick days, and it is billed out into the regular payroll at the recommendation of the auditor.

Mr. Fishbein noted that we charge a lower price for school lunches in our school system than any other school system. Ms. Wong said correct. He said that he sees this as an opportunity to perhaps raise some revenue. He remarked that according to her report she currently has a fund balance of approximately \$500,000. He asked if that could be used for the Board of Education. She said that it could not because the *Federal Registry* which clearly states this. She read the pertinent part of the *Federal Registry* as follows:

*Section 210.14 7(c)(f)(r)(2) that non-profit school food service- School Food authorities shall maintain a non-profit school food service. Revenues received by the non-profit school food service are to be used only for the operations or improvement of such food service.*

Mr. Fishbein commended Ms Wong and pointed out that the Wallingford School Food Service Program is the only food service program that is making money. She affirmed that statement. He said that he feels that is incumbent upon the Board of Education to do what it can to get this regulation changed. He said that there is \$500,000 just sitting there that is accumulating and certainly could be used to hire some teachers. Ms. Wong said but then you would be punishing me for being fiscally responsible all of these years, when she could have been frivolously spending money. Mr. Fishbein said he is not looking to punish her but rather he is looking for the team atmosphere here.

Mr. Economopoulos said that he recently attended a function where he met the Food Service Directors from West Haven, Bridgeport and Wolcott, and when they found out he was from Wallingford, they told him that we have the Albert Pujols of cafeteria directors. Dr. Menzo said they refer to her as Derek Jeter. He paid her a compliment for the nice work.

Mr. Cervoni asked if she has an idea of what strings might be attached to the federal funding under the First Lady's program. She thinks that there will be lots more educational requirements in terms of physical fitness and physical activity, and stricter regulations on the à la carte food items, and finally that she will be asking schools across the country to present a more clear-cut message throughout the school building during the school day that healthy nutritious snacks be served. She said that there will potentially be a negative fiscal impact but not in her budget, since they are already offering snacks that comply with the very stringent State of Connecticut healthy snack regulations. She thinks it will more likely effect the booster clubs who sell less healthy snacks during the day.

Dr. Menzo added that the YMCA is involved in the Robert Wood Johnson Grant, a community grant that helps plan community wellness. He said that the school district will be working very closely with them, so that as the federal government changes its guidelines, they are in a good position. They are part of this group to plan with the school district and Ms. Wong and the Mayor are part of these discussions. Ms. Wong said that they have always been ahead on the curve and added that they stopped serving whole milk in the late 1990s, which was unheard of at that time. She said they added whole grains to their menu about 8 years ago.

Mayor Dickinson said with regard to the money that is there that he knows that the cafeteria services uses those funds for replacement of equipment over the years and that you can read what it has been on. He observed that an interesting thing came up. He reported that there are

dramas that occur, and he recalled that Ms. Wong saw to it that we had adequate supplies and was able to acquire adequate supplies of cheese, and suddenly the state thought that we had too much cheese and threatened to come and take our cheese. He asked what happened with that?

Ms. Wong said that the state wanted to come and seize her USDA commodity cheese that she had set aside for pizza and other items. So she bought hundreds and hundreds of cases of pizza before they could come and seize her cheese. She said that the problem was that the price of cheese went up because she was watching the dairy prices. She had the foresight to bank it and save it, and then other school districts did not do that, and they had no cheese but they knew that Wallingford did. Comments were that she 'moved the cheese.'

Mr. Testa made a motion to approve the cafeteria budget as presented. Mr. Sullivan seconded.

Chairman Parisi invited Ms. Wong that she should come to the table more often. He said that it was an excellent report.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Cervoni	Yes	LeTourneau	Yes
Economopoulos	Yes	Rascati	Yes
Farrell	Yes	Sullivan	Yes
Fishbein	Yes	Testa	Yes
		Chairman Parisi	Yes

Mr. Farrell moved to adjourn. Mr. Cervoni seconded. All Councilors present (9) voted Aye. The meeting adjourned at 9:34 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra R. Weekes  
Town Council Secretary  
Meeting digitally recorded by Town Clerk Barbara Thompson.

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Robert F. Parisi, Town Council Chairman Date

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Barbara Thompson, Town Clerk Date