

RTM Minutes  
May 2, 2011

**The call**

1. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the estimate and recommendation of the Board of Finance, to adopt a budget for the Town of Westport for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.
2. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance, to adopt a budget for the Town Railroad Parking Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.
3. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance, to adopt a budget for the Town Sewer Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.
4. To take such action as the meeting may determine to require that property taxes for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012, shall be due and payable in four quarterly installments, and to designate the dates of the first days of July, October, January, and April as the dates upon which such installments shall be due and payable, and that all taxes in an amount of \$100 or less shall be due and payable in a single installment on the first day of July.
5. To take such action as the meeting may determine to require that the motor vehicle tax shall be due and payable in a single installment.

The following items will also be considered as time permits:

6. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance to approve a request of the First Selectman for an appropriation of \$30,000 to the Historic District Account (Fees & Services) for updating the Historic Resources Inventory which shall be fully reimbursed through the CLG Supplemental Grant at the completion of the project.
7. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance to approve a request of the Parks & Recreation Director for an appropriation of \$26,690 to the Golf Account (Capital Equipment) to fund the purchase of a greens mower which shall be substantially reimbursed through the Department of Environmental Protection LEEF Program.
8. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance to approve a request of the Finance Director for an appropriation of \$1,200,000 to the Pension Budget Account (OPEB Plan Funding) for the remaining fifty percent (50 percent) cost of the Town of Westport's planned contribution to the OPEB Trust Fund for 2010-11 fiscal year.

**Minutes**

Moderator Hadley Rose:

This meeting of Westport's Representative Town Meeting is now called to order. We welcome those who join us tonight in the Town Hall auditorium as well as

those watching us streaming live on [www.westportct.gov](http://www.westportct.gov) watching on cable channel 79. We are on ATT now as well on channel 99. My name is Hadley Rose and I am the RTM Moderator. On my right is our RTM secretary, Jackie Fuchs. Tonight's invocation will be by Mr. Carl Leaman who's got very fancy socks on, by the way.

Invocation, Carl Leaman:

Thank you very much for inviting me here this evening. As you might guess, I have many happy memories of this room and of this building. I have some which aren't so very nice but, nevertheless, I'm very happy to be here. I come tonight to talk a little bit about our forefathers and praising them for establishing the modern type of government that we have in Westport. Back in 1949, faced with no longer a representative town meeting, our forefathers proposed for the electorate a form of government which featured a very strong First Selectman Office, a check and balance through the Board of Finance with minority representation which, of course, all boards and commissions have in Westport, minority representation. Finally, I think their finest effort was a non-partisan RTM. That meant we can all work together to figure out the best way to handle Westport's problems. There really is no Democratic or Republican way to fill potholes. We all know the potholes have to be filled. By having a non-partisan RTM, we can all work together in solving those problems. The people I've worked closest with when I was on the third floor, Shelly Kassen, at that time on the Board of Finance, Gavin Anderson, Alice Shelton, and John Booth. I would tell those four people everything I felt very openly and without any hesitation. I think that's the wonderful part of a non-partisan RTM. Five of the last six First Selectmen and certainly the last two State Representatives have come from this body. So, we might think that two or three of you, at some point in the future, just might find yourself in Hartford or on the third floor. If you're lucky, you might become the Second Selectman. When you go to Hartford or when you go to the third floor, please remember the workings of the RTM on a non-partisan basis and how you easily communicated with each other during various sessions. I think I'm done...Again, I thank you for inviting me. I wish you lots of good luck as you discuss and debate on a non-partisan basis what I think is the most important part of the RTM, the budget sessions.

There were 32 members present.

There were no corrections to the minutes of April 5. Anyone with corrections, please contact Jackie Fuchs, myself or Patty Strauss, Town Clerk.

There are a number of birthday greetings this month: Mr. Rea, Dr. Cunitz, Ms. Starr, Dr. Green and Mr. Joseloff.

### **Announcements**

The next RTM meeting is tomorrow night at 7:30 right here.

Committee meetings:

- Library Museum and the Arts – 7 p.m. on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May in the library board room.
- Long Range Planning – the 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:45 p.m. in room 309.

Town clerk Patty Strauss:

I just want to remind everyone that this Saturday, May 7, we will be having our third annual community shred day. It will take place from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at the Westport/Weston Health District parking lot. This is the third annual shred day. The first and second years were very successful. Something new this year. We will be charging \$5.00 for each car with paper to be shredded. That should cover the cost of the shred truck. We encourage paper in paper bags. We will take up to five paper bags full of paper or three banker boxes filled with paper.

### **RTM Announcements**

Bob Galan, district 3:

There are over 1.5 billion pairs of shoes unused in people's closets in the United States. There are over 300,000,000 children not to mention millions of adults around the world that have no shoes. There is a group called Soles for Souls that collects used shoes and has given away over five years 12 million shoes already. They are currently giving away a pair every seven seconds. Even your old shoes will get recycled. There is a collection box in lobby of Town Hall. There are also collection boxes at Christ and Holy Trinity in the parish hall and William Raveis and the offices of Cohen and Wolf. If you would take a brief moment if they are laced shoes to lace them together or tape them together, it would be appreciated. That way the pairs will stay together. Clean out your closet and do a lot of help for people who don't have shoes.

Bill Meyer and Jeff Wieser:

Wasn't that super last Saturday night at Bedford! We have five Rotarians: Eileen Flug, Linda Bruce, Bob Galan and our newest member, Diane Cady and also two people on the Board of Finance in Sunrise Rotary: Helen Garten and Avi Kanner and Bob Losporcato. We want to thank everybody for their support. It was all for Homes for Hope. Liz Milwe was the choreographer. She put hours in. Here is the President of Homes for Hope, our one and only Jeff Wieser.

Jeff Wieser, district 4:

I just want to thank Sunrise Rotary for putting on a great performance and allowed Westport to laugh at itself and to allow us to laugh at ourselves and have a good time. Thanks to the RTMers who were able to come. Thanks to the other boards that allowed us to laugh at ourselves and be sure we didn't mean that as an anthem but rather just a good chance to laugh at ourselves

Mr. Meyer:

...and Hadley, my neighbor, thanks for his emails promoting this.

Linda Bruce, district 2:

Perhaps you saw many fascinators if you watched the Royal Wedding on Friday. You don't have to go to London this Friday because all the Garden Club ladies

will have on their hats at the Saugatuck Congregational Church. We have our plant sale, Mother's Day booth, tomatoes, perennials, all wonderful things. The proceeds benefit many of our local charities in town. Hope to see you there, Friday, 9-1.

Matthew Mandel, district 1:

Thursday night, it's A Taste of Westport. I know I told you about this last month but I still have another chance to tell you about it. On Thursday night, May 5 at Earthplace will be A Taste of Westport. It will be a benefit for CLASP Homes. Come on out and eat, drink and be merry. It is for a good cause. You can go to [tasteofwesport.com](http://tasteofwesport.com) and buy your tickets. I hope to see you there Thursday night. One more thing, just to let you know, Earthplace is a wonderful venue for your organization to have events. They can come and enjoy Earthplace and learn about the environment while they are experiencing whatever they are doing with your organization. Come on out and use Earthplace for as many things as you can.

Barbara Levy district 5

The Friends of Hall Brooke would like to invite you to the ninth annual Mother's Day Art Show. This year is a special year because we are going to pay tribute to Howard Munce. We have wonderful artists including Miggs Burroughs and 10 or 12 artists. The artists contribute to the Friends of Hall Brooke and the Friends of Hallbrook use this money to help with the children's parties and special events. The mission of the Friends of Hall Brookea is also to demystify mental illness. Please come. It's on Long Lots. The gala is from 6-8 on Saturday evening in the community room.

Liz Milwe, district 1:

We have a great event Saturday night. You can make it both to Hall Brooke and come on over and see our friend Gene Seidman. Think about politics. Talk about politics, town, international. I went to Gene's last show and it was fabulous. Come join us.

[From the audience:] Where?

Ms. Milwe:

At Lily's at the station at 7 o'clock. [Correction: The evening will take place at the Fairfield Art Center, Stafford Street, Fairfield.]

Arthur Ashman, district 7:

I have to report a cancellation. Thursday night jazz at the Westport Arts Center was supposed to be May 19. The Library has asked us to postpone it because they are having their gala that night. So we postponed it until June 9, I believe. We are honoring Max Wilk who just passed away. It's going to be a great crowd. Thank you and I hope you can come.

Mr. Rose:

Before we move on to agenda item #1, I want to quickly lay out the potential

calendar for this meeting and the next few days. We are going to review the Town Budget tonight and the Education Budget tomorrow night. Agenda item #1 is a consolidated item so it will not be voted on tonight until we go through both of those. Agenda items #2 and #3 which are the Railroad Parking Fund and the Sewer Fund will be voted after we complete the Town budget. Agenda items #4 and #5, regarding tax installments, will be held over until the completion of our vote on agenda item #1. After we have completed that segment of the agenda, we will turn to items 6, 7 and 8 but only after we have completed the rest of the agenda. I am hopeful that we can do this all in two nights. If for some reason we cannot, we will reconvene on Wednesday the 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:30. If we are still not done on Wednesday we would then reconvene on Monday the 9<sup>th</sup>. I am sure that it is everyone's fervent hope that this is not the case. If we do not complete the Town side of the budget this evening, we will still start with the Board of Education budget tomorrow at 7:30 PM as planned and then pick up with the Town side after that is completed. Typically, the only committee reports delivered verbally during the budget sessions are the Finance Committee report on the town budget which will be presented tonight and the Finance and Education Committee reports on the education budget which will be presented tomorrow night. Other committee reports have been sent to RTM members in advance. There are additional reports on the table in front. If other committees do wish to report verbally, they may do so, especially if their committee reports include recommendations that differ from those of the Finance or Education Committees. For example, if a committee recommends a decrease or a restoration, they should make that report verbally. To do so, please raise your hand when we turn to that budget section. The RTM may approve a budget item by a simple majority vote. The RTM may decrease a budget item by a simple majority vote. The RTM may restore funds cut by the Board of Finance by a 70 percent majority vote of those present and voting, not the entire body. The RTM may not increase a budget item to an amount greater than the amount originally requested by the First Selectman. If there are motions to restore or reduce a budget item, we will address them, as we have in the past, using the fill-in-the-blank method. That is, I will ask to have all motions on the floor at once, for a particular budget line item. We'll then vote beginning with the largest reduction or restoration and follow in descending order.

As many of you are aware, this year it is probable that there will be a number of requests for restoration. That being the case, I will call out each general budget line in turn. If any RTM member wishes to make a motion or discuss that item, please raise your hand at that time. If no one does, I will consider that that item is approved and move on to the next one. I would ask the Finance Director to keep a running total for us. We will take one vote on the overall budget tomorrow night. If there is a motion to decrease or restore, I will open the floor back to public comment so the public can comment on that specific item. I will ask members of the public to please limit their remarks to three minutes. In the first section, before the RTM gets the item at all, you may address either any individual item or the budget as a whole. If we later have a motion to change things, you will be allowed to get up to address that. I will try to be sensitive to the hour, and if I don't feel that we will finish tonight at a reasonable hour, I will try to

let those departments that we will not get to tonight, go home. If we reach that time and don't finish, we will continue with the other Town items Tuesday night. Hopefully, that will not be necessary.

I'd like to remind everyone of the Town Charter provision on conflicts of interest. Charter Section C38-2 states that "...no town employee or any member whether elected or appointed to any Board, Commission, Agency, Department or of the Representative Town Meeting shall participate in any official capacity in the hearing or decision upon any matter in which such person has directly or indirectly, a personal or financial interest. In the event of such disqualification, such fact shall be entered on the records of the commission or board." Our own RTM Rules of Procedure add the following provision "that all members should be most sensitive to permitting an actual conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest to exist, even though a complete disclosure of all circumstances would show that an actual conflict did not exist in a particular case." I am asking any RTM members who would like to recuse themselves from the vote on any particular department's budget request to make their intentions known at this time. I know Mr. Rubin has already indicated to me that he would recuse himself on the vote on section of the budget that would affect the Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Mandell and Mr. Keenan will do the same on the Earthplace budget. Mr. Wieser will recuse himself from the vote on Health and Human Services. If any other members decide to recuse themselves from particular budgets, please raise your hand and let me know your intentions so I can put them in the record. Mr. Timmins will also recuse himself from Earthplace.

And finally, while at times it may seem we are going through certain segments of the budget without much discussion, you should know that members of the RTM have been working with staff and board members for quite a while now. RTM members have attended Board of Finance meetings, budget workshops and have met and worked with the specific departments and boards over which we have budgetary oversight. In fact, some committees have been working with their counterparts on this budget in one way or another for months. What you see this evening is the culmination of all that effort. Before we go on, I want to extend my personal thanks to all the committee chairs. It has been an incredibly hectic month, particularly with the holiday week, for getting the meetings together and getting the reports done. I really appreciate all the hard work and effort you've made to get that done.

**The secretary read item #1 of the call - To adopt a budget for the Town of Westport for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.**

### **Presentation**

Board of Finance, Chairman, Helen Garten:

I want to thank George for helping me set this up. Members of the RTM, I am here to present the Board of Finance recommended Budget for the 2011-2012 fiscal year. When I was here one year ago, I described the long term financial

challenges that Westport faced and what they meant for Westport's budget. Tonight, I am sorry to report that a year has gone by, but these challenges remain, for the most part, unaddressed. So this year, the Board of Finance adopted a new strategy, one that is bold, courageous and responsible. My job tonight is to explain what we did, why we did it and why we want you to join with us in carrying it through. Let's start with the Board of Finance recommended Budget. Our budget totals \$178,703,110, which is just \$592,250, or .33 percent, less than what was requested. The town side budget is \$66,277,304, a mere \$342,250, or .51 percent, less than the First Selectman's request. This reduction is tiny, compared to last year. The Board of Finance could have done what we did last year. Just like last year, Westport faces an enormous liability, namely OPEB, that was not covered in full in the Selectman's requested budget. To cover that liability, we would have had to reduce the operating budget dramatically, just as we did last year. We didn't do that. Our cuts were minimal. But they were designed to achieve a specific goal. The Board of Finance went into this budget season with the unpleasant feeling that we have been here before. All three budget drivers that we struggled with last year are still with us, unresolved. The first is all too familiar: The escalating price of employee benefits. Next year, we reach a new milestone. Benefits—pension, medical costs and social security—will surpass the \$20 million mark. That's more than Westport will spend on police and fire combined. That's 32 percent of the town budget. Just six years ago, benefits were a mere 18 percent of the budget. For every dollar that we pay employees in salary, we are paying 53 cents in benefits. By way of comparison, in the private sector, benefits amount to 34 cents on the dollar. Recently, on a local blog, a taxpayer wrote that she can't understand why we are still talking about this. Everybody knows that this level of benefits can't be sustained. So why haven't we done anything about it? It's not impossible to reform benefits, even in a town like ours. Look at Fairfield. Fairfield faces pension costs that are only half of ours, but that was enough to persuade the administration and the municipal union to reach an agreement for a defined contribution plan for all new employees, with the town matching contributions up to 5 percent. Municipal employees will pay 10 percent of their medical insurance costs, with new employees paying 11 percent. In exchange, employees are getting a modest but fair wage increase. So it can be done. But the Board of Finance doesn't have the power to do it. We have no authority over labor contracts. We don't even have a say over the appropriation of money to cover salary increases under new labor contracts once they are approved. Our only power is to give you our recommendations on the budget. But we do have the responsibility to figure out how pay for it, to cover that \$20 million, while trying to keep taxes and reserves at responsible levels. The \$20 million figure doesn't even include OPEB, which represents our liability for our current employees' future medical benefits when they retire. As you know, next year's out of pocket medical expenses attributable to current retirees are covered in the medical insurance account (902) of the town budget. The Board of Finance and the RTM Finance Committee wanted our annual OPEB contribution to be included in the budget as well. The First Selectman did so, but budgeted only \$750,000 for next year, less than a third of what we plan to contribute to OPEB this year. That left the Board of Finance with two choices: either cut the operating budget and shift

the money to OPEB, or agree to fund the balance outside of the budget through an appropriation next year. There was another complication: Westport was obligated to recalculate its OPEB liability as of June 30, 2010. When we met in March, we didn't have the new calculation and we still don't have it. We think our liability is going to be bigger, perhaps much bigger, but we don't even have enough information to make an educated guess. So the Board of Finance, faced with bad choices, decided on the following plan of action. Just as last year we pledged to fully fund the pensions, this year we pledged to fully fund the OPEB ARC, whatever it turns out to be. When we set the mill rate, we will tax for OPEB funding, so that we can be sure that the money is there to keep our promise to our employees. But this promise has serious consequences. Every million dollars that we must contribute toward OPEB means increasing the mill rate by at least one tenth of a mill.

The second budget driver that is all too familiar is the impact of economic uncertainty on our town and taxpayers. The town looks to three pools of money to fund expenditures—fees, the bulk of which are real estate related such as conveyance tax and building permits; federal and state assistance; and taxes. What fees and assistance don't cover, taxes have to. This year, fee income is higher than projected, and some fees within Westport's control may go up next year. The town is betting that the housing and construction market will be even stronger next year, an optimistic assumption in view of rising gas and commodity prices. But next year, it is the federal and state assistance that is uncertain. We know that federal stimulus money, which we used in the past to substitute for reductions in state road aid, is gone. As for state money, first we heard that Hartford was going to increase state aid to municipalities and that, improbably, Westport and towns like us were going to be the big winners. Now, we've heard that some of the proposals that would have brought new revenue to Westport, like the property tax on boats, are dead, and that if Hartford can't get billions in union concessions, present levels of aid to municipalities could be slashed. Even if that doesn't happen, increased state aid is a mixed blessing because the state plans to get the money from much higher taxes and fees, and a lot of that burden will fall on working Westporters and other residents of Fairfield County. So what's good for town government is not so good for our residents, and the Board of Finance must remember that when we set the mill rate. But in any event, although we spend a lot of time thinking about fees and other non-tax revenue, they actually fund a very small portion of our total budget. Another way to look at it: The Finance Department's projection of \$19.5 million of total non-tax revenue next year won't even cover the price of employee benefits. We also can't forget the impact of revaluation, which proved to just about all of us that we are a little poorer than we were five years ago. The decline in our grand list means that there will be an automatic increase in next year's mill rate of 14 percent regardless of any increase in budgeted expenditures.

The third driver is the consequence of the first two. If benefits costs continue to grow unchecked, and there are limits to our ability to raise non-tax revenues, then town government must find ways to do more with less. We've talked for years about how we might accomplish this: Consolidate functions between town



and schools. Reorganize and consolidate departments on the town side. Outsource services. Harness our investment in technology to reduce overhead costs. For the most part, nothing has happened. Our taxpayers are sending us a loud and clear message. Stop talking. Start doing.

So it was déjà vu all over again for the Board of Finance. But as we looked at the budget, we realized that the big three departments—police, fire, public works—had shaved so much that there was little left to give. The Board of Finance singled out the Police Department in particular for coming in with a flat budget that covers a contractually mandated three percent salary increase. This was accomplished through a combination of staff reductions, which saves on benefits, consolidations, revenue enhancement and outsourcing. In other words, the Police have done, in their department, what we've been asking the entire town to do. Other departments came in flat as well, but their union contracts are either still open or about to expire, and their budgets do not include the retroactive wage increases that eventually will have to be funded when the contracts are settled next year. Parks & Rec. asked for a 2.19 percent increase, part of which was direct support for Recreation--golf, beach & pool, programs. We were told that additional funding for these activities will be used to improve Recreational opportunities and will be covered by fees. The Board of Finance accepted that rationale and accepted the proposed budgets for those areas. But despite these efforts by department heads, the First Selectman requested a 3.34 percent increase—without fully funding OPEB. The Board of Finance warned last year that we would be in this position if the town didn't begin to make serious structural reforms. We do not want to be in the same place next year. So if the town hasn't reformed employee benefits, and doing business as usual isn't going to yield a lot of savings, there is only one solution: Stop doing business as usual. We on the Board of Finance are not a corporate Board of Directors. We can't change policy on our own. We have the bully pulpit for one brief moment, when we make our budget recommendations. So this year we used our budget recommendations as a catalyst for change. You can call it a nudge. You can call it a challenge. We call it our last best attempt to move town government to take the steps that we all know are needed to preserve and protect Westport's future. We have a narrow window of opportunity to effect this change. An unexpected departure in the Personnel Department gives us a once in 15 year chance to reorganize and rationalize the town's back office functions. And by next year I suspect we will be preoccupied with a new problem: We simply can't postpone maintenance of our infrastructure much longer. If we don't make progress right away toward real savings in operations, I predict that, in next year's budget, maintenance will join benefits as the obligations that will crowd out all other budget priorities, and the reductions in services that we will be forced to make in every department will be far deeper than anything we have seen so far. So what reductions did the Board of Finance suggest and why? There were two categories, the consolidation reductions and the efficiency reductions. Consolidation reductions were to Finance and Personnel, IT and the Medical Insurance consultant line. In each case, the reduction was in the salaries line and roughly corresponded to one position. In IT there was also a reduction to fees and services. The aim was to jump start the process of reorganizing or

reconfiguring these departments with a view to possible consolidation of duplicative functions being performed by town and schools. To persuade the schools to be part of the process, we reduced the Board of Education requested budget by a similar amount. There has been some suggestion that our reductions were based on a secret memo. That is incorrect and unfair. The memo in question is so secret that most Board of Finance members have never seen it. But identifying payroll and purchasing, personnel and IT as possible areas for consolidation is hardly new. These areas were on the agenda of the former Government Efficiencies Committee, as well as many earlier equally well intentioned but equally unsuccessful efforts to achieve town/school consolidation. Let me address the specifics. First, the Finance Department. Both purchasing and payroll are areas where schools and town have some overlapping functions. A year ago, the town's Internal Auditor produced a report that made recommendations for consolidation of the procurement function. There was some pushback on this report, but the Board of Education did agree to think about whether a single purchasing utility might lead to more coordination and greater savings. That was last year. Nothing happened. It is time to revisit this proposal and make it work. With respect to payroll, other towns, notably Madison, CT, have successfully combined town and school functions, permitting personnel reductions. But the Board of Finance also recognized that town/school consolidation is not the only path, and may not be the best path, to efficiency. One of my colleagues, the Board member who made the motion to reduce the Finance Department budget, advocates outsourcing payroll on the town side. This is easy to implement and, based on experience in other government units, it could produce immediate savings for the Finance Department.

More generally, we have been suggesting, for years, that the Finance Department as a whole be reorganized with an eye to increased efficiency. A reorganization plan will enable the town to employ current staff more effectively to alleviate the work pressures that the department now faces and to identify exactly where we need to allocate resources going forward. We are aware that several restructuring proposals exist in draft form, but the Board of Finance has never seen them. It's time to move on the suggestions or come up with better ones. It may sound counterintuitive to cut the Finance Department budget in order to jumpstart a restructuring process that may eventually require us to add more resources. But it is consistent with our strategy to use the cuts as a catalyst for change. Let's face it: We have to accept the reality that going forward there will simply be fewer resources to fund the things that Westport government wants to do and has to do. Something will have to give, and experience tells us that it is less visible departments like Finance that will make the biggest sacrifice. If we really care about maintaining a strong town Finance Department, then the very best thing we can do is to insist that the department takes steps now to position itself to deal with the new reality by adopting the most flexible and efficient organizational structure it can. But the hardest part of change is getting people to take that first step. We've tried everything. Jawboning hasn't worked. Efficiency committees haven't worked. Dire warnings about Westport's financial predicament haven't worked. The private sector knows, and now the public sector, from the Pentagon to the smallest

municipality, is learning: Budget cuts work. They create the urgency that leads to new, innovative and more efficient ways of operating.

The second area where we want to see greater efficiency is the human resources function. We have a vacancy at the top of the town Personnel Department. We can quickly fill the position at the same salary and continue business as usual. Or we can use this opportunity to think about the most efficient way to structure a municipal personnel department. In the past, the HR function was at least nominally centralized in town hall and the premise is that this will continue. But the municipal HR function is actually many different jobs, and some governments have discovered that it is most efficient to deconstruct and decentralize. Some personnel functions are similar for town and schools and could be combined. Other personnel functions overlap with work currently being done by the town finance department. Given technological innovations in the HR area, such as overtime management and benefits administration systems, some personnel functions could be automated, some outsourced and some administered by the individual departments. These efficiencies in turn would affect the skill sets that we may want in HR personnel. We may need a financial expert, or an expert labor negotiator.

Sounds like the Board of Finance is micromanaging again, right? We're not suggesting that we do the analysis. We're suggesting that it should be done before a decision is made that could lock us into an inflexible cost structure for another 15 years.

The last area is IT. Governments that are considering consolidation of town and school functions are now putting IT at the top of the list. The reason: to save money. The private sector has already achieved dramatic savings in IT through consolidation, standardization and outsourcing. Now the public sector is following, as states and municipalities face rising IT costs but shrinking return on investment. Some have taken their own draconian steps to force change: The governor of Massachusetts issued an executive order mandating consolidation of all executive branch IT functions across departments. Thus far, hardware maintenance, IT procurement and desktop help have been successfully consolidated, resulting in measurable savings and improved service. Both the town and schools IT directors are top notch and innovative. Our suggestion: work together, and let's decide once and for all where consolidation will save money. We understand that, since the budget reduction, some discussions have taken place that will result in savings in the town IT budget, which is why the department sought only partial restoration. That's great, but more can be done. So, in sum, the Board of Finance was not trying to dictate any particular organizational outcome. What we wanted was a reexamination of how we provide administrative services in the hope of finding more efficient ways of doing business. We have talked about this for years. What's different now? The Board of Finance has found a way to jump start the process.

The remaining reductions, to Parks & Rec. and Transit, were efficiency plays. In the case of Parks & Rec., the rationale for the reduction to the administration

account was simple: We wanted to see savings in administrative overhead. In the past two years, we've asked the same of every other department in town, and cut budgets accordingly. In Parks & Rec. administration, in our view, there was a place to achieve these savings without any impact on Recreational programs—namely, through leveraging past investment in technology. Three years ago, the Parks & Rec. Department began online registration for recreational passes and beach emblems. The option is so popular that, in March, Westport Now ran a picture of an empty lobby at the Parks & Rec. administration building with the caption “Light Turnout As In-Person Sale of Beach Emblems Begins.” 2800 on line registrations had already been logged. It's logical to assume that if more people register online, fewer people are standing in line. So why doesn't that create an opportunity to reduce overhead costs? Even if efficiency was not the original goal of buying an online registration system, isn't it a welcome byproduct? This is not the first year that the Board of Finance raised this issue. Last year, we asked for savings in administration, offering the same suggestion as to where the savings might be found. We were told that the online registration system was still being implemented, so it was too early to determine the budgetary impact. We accepted that answer, and we allowed the department to transfer funds around so that budget reductions fell in other areas. Now that we are in the third year of operation, it should come as no surprise that we asked again. The answer doesn't have to be to stop all in person service. I saw the new Westport Now pictures. But other Connecticut towns that have introduced online sales of recreational passes have already begun to save on overhead. Glastonbury CT processes 89 percent of its recreational program registration on line, with resulting savings in personnel, postage, paper and processing costs. The personnel savings in Glastonbury came from converting a full time benefits-eligible position to part time non benefits-eligible administrative support. Glastonbury's savings weren't only in Parks & Rec; there were also savings in the Finance Department. It's hard to believe that in Westport there are no savings at all. And there is another point worth considering: Parks & Rec. is not the only department in the business of selling permits to Westport residents. An RTM member had a great idea at the RTM Finance Committee meeting to have a centralized town service office where Westporters can obtain all of their permits and stickers if they want to buy in person. Some people have said that Parks & Rec. doesn't have to be more efficient, because we can always raise fees to cover overhead. But aren't recreational users better off if administration operates as efficiently as possible, so that more of their fees go toward providing what really matters to them—cleaner beaches, better playing fields, more children's programs? The reality is the same for Westport as for Glastonbury and every other town. Resources are limited, and we have to make tough allocation decisions. The Board of Finance thinks that Westporters are better served if we put more of our scarce resources directly into recreational programs and find the savings in overhead. That's what the Board of Finance is recommending to you in next year's budget. We reduced parks administration by \$70,000. But we added over \$160,000 to the golf, beach & pool, parks maintenance and programs accounts.

The reductions to the Transit District were also about efficiency. The Board of Finance wanted a reexamination of a service that not only is incredibly costly to operate, \$14 per rider per trip, but also does not always serve Westporters. Westport subsidizes buses that transport non-Westporters to jobs in Norwalk. Buses that get five miles to the gallon run practically empty on some routes. At a time when virtually every other fee is increasing, bus fares haven't gone up in a decade. We believed that there was room in the Transit District to streamline. I suspect that most people in this room share some or all of these goals. But some may question our method. Reorganization, whether through consolidation, restructuring or overhead reduction, takes time. We don't know exactly what the savings will be. So why cut so deeply, just months before the new fiscal year? I know people are thinking this, because I raised these concerns myself at the Board of Finance meeting. But as I listened to my colleagues, I became convinced that I was wrong. Here's why. Every year for the past six years, I have attended Board of Finance budget workshops at which someone asks "Why do we have two personnel offices and two IT departments?" "When will we see savings from investment in technology?" (That one was mine.) "Why are we subsidizing near empty transit buses?" We ask the questions, and then we approve the budgets as requested, and nothing changes. Another year rolls around, and we ask exactly the same questions.

So why has this year been different? Why, this year, in the short time since the Board of Finance made these budget reductions, have the town and schools finally held a meeting to set an agenda to discuss consolidation? Why is the Finance Department finally looking at outsourcing payroll? Why is the Transit District finally proposing to end Westport's subsidy of Norwalk commuters, refashion routes and reexamine the fare structure? Why are we finally talking about better ways to sell permits and passes? I have to think that the impetus came from our so called "draconian" cuts. The fact is, government doesn't change until it has to. There is a lot of truth in the old saying "necessity is the mother of invention." Our budget reductions are creating the urgency that was missing before. So in the weeks since our vote, the Board of Finance was cautiously optimistic that our strategy was working. The Board of Education did not come back to us for restoration. The Transit District asked for \$60,000 back, but agreed to cover the \$40,000 reduction by adopting the efficiencies I've just described. Not everyone on the Board thought this was enough, but those who voted to restore did so on the assumption that the District understood the need to become more efficient.

The Board of Finance received no other requests for restoration. Parks & Rec. Director Stuart McCarthy, in a memo dated April 5, acknowledged our request for a review of administrative operations specifically in regard to technology. But he asked to return to the Board of Finance in June for an appropriation that would in effect be a restoration of some or all of the \$70,000 reduction. He wrote: "In addition to allowing adequate time to provide greater detail on our administrative options, a delay until June will allow us another full season of assessing the impact of our on-line pass management software...I believe at the conclusion of this sales cycle, we will have a very clear evaluation of the impact of this service

on our staffing requirements.” This memo suggests that, as in Glastonbury, there may be some savings. It is reasonable to withhold judgment until all the evidence is in. At that time, the Board of Finance invites the department to come back to us so we can see where online sales have increased costs and where they have decreased costs. We can talk about shared services, such as the centralized service office. But the Board of Finance has a request that we think is also reasonable. The department promised us an evaluation based on evidence. Please allow us to receive the evaluation so that we, and then you, can make a final decision based on fact, not conjecture or emotion. The First Selectman did not request restoration of the reductions to Finance, Personnel, IT and the medical insurance consultant. He wrote to us that it was too early to evaluate the impact of the cuts, but that he would keep us and you apprised of the outcome of consolidation discussions with the schools. Since April 5, the Board of Finance has received no progress report. We have heard that there has been a meeting between town and schools, and that the Finance Department is looking into other options, such as outsourcing. Now nobody on the Board of Finance thought that miracles would happen and that a reorganization of three departments, whether through consolidation, outsourcing or restructuring, would be complete by the start of the new budget year. We did think that, if everybody went to work, some decisions could be made by July 1. Implementation would take longer, but next year’s budget is \$66 million, which seems enough to cover business as usual. There would need to be funds transfers within departmental accounts or between departments, but we expected that. We transferred a lot of funds around last year, as town departments absorbed last year’s budget reductions. Almost every year, at year end, we transfer funds between departments, but this can happen any time so long as the Board of Finance approves—and we always have. We also expected that there might be new costs associated with reorganization. If functions move from the Finance Department to the Personnel Department, or from schools to town or vice versa, or from an operating department to the IT department, some budgets will go up. But some budgets will also go down, and we can and should capture those savings immediately for our taxpayers through appropriate interdepartmental payments. It might be that reorganization costs more next year with the expectation of savings in future years. The Board of Finance is used to planning for known uncertainties like these. Every year, when we set the mill rate, we have to predict what expenses may arise that are not budgeted for. We have to think about other contingencies that may impact future budgets, taxes and reserves. We think several years ahead, because we don’t want to surprise taxpayers with wild swings in the mill rate. Over the last few years, we and you have faced the challenge of positioning the town to weather the recession, huge spikes in pension costs and the great unknown--OPEB. Compared with that, anticipating the costs of reorganizing three departments with interrelated functions is easy. So we expected to work closely with the administration and the department heads and the relevant RTM study committees to cover budget gaps if they emerged. But we expected something else, namely, that we would see some progress toward reform before our budget reductions were simply reversed. We can’t afford to lose momentum now. We need to maintain the urgency. It’s too easy, once this budget season ends, to put

this on the back burner. Months will pass, next year's budget season will begin, and we'll find that we are exactly where we started. Some of you may think that enough progress has been made already. I can't tell you what the Board of Finance thinks about that, because we were not even given the opportunity to consider any of the restoration requests in front of you. We issued the challenge, but we will have no say as to whether the challenge has been met. That is troubling, as a matter of law, policy and practice. State law requires the Board of Finance to make specific recommendations on every line of the Selectman's budget. Our perspective is unique. We're neither advocates nor watchdogs for individual departments. We look at the overall budget in light of the financial position of the town and we recommend what we think is the appropriate balance among all the competing demands for funding. You can accept or reject our recommendations as you like, but you deserve to have those recommendations. You don't have them tonight. The practice in Westport for as long as I can remember is that budget restoration requests go to the Board of Finance. This gives us a chance to gather more information, to listen to department heads and the public and to deliberate before we make our final recommendations to you. This year of all years, this step has been skipped. If the administration is serious about moving forward with consolidation or restructuring, we will need the talent, cooperation and good will of every employee and every elected board—the Board of Education, the RTM and the Board of Finance. Excluding the Board of Finance from the conversation is not a good start.

I'll close with the mill rate projection. I'm assuming that we will need to invest at least \$2 million more in OPEB, and that may be conservative. It's not pretty, right? This is the consequence of not addressing the long term financial demands that Westport faces. Frankly, if you restore the small amounts that the Board of Finance reduced, it is not going to make that big a difference in the mill rate next year. But I suggest that you ask any town employee, any taxpayer, ask yourself honestly, is business as usual worth a 4.5 percent tax increase? Isn't it time to get out of this hole that we have dug for ourselves and our taxpayers? If you think that the town can't find \$220,000 of savings in a budget of \$66 million, vote accordingly. Alternatively, you can stand with us and do something that costs very little but that could be a game changer in how Westport government operates. We think our strategy needs the opportunity to play out a little longer. This is not for the fainthearted, but nothing worth doing ever is. If we succeed, the payoff for Westport's future will be enormous. Thank you and good luck tonight.

First Selectman Gordon Joseloff:

This is the final stop in the 2011/2012 budget. It is my sixth as First Selectman. It is my 20<sup>th</sup> as a member of Town government. And I haven't changed a bit, have I? It is a budget that is responsive to our times. It is a budget that does what we have been hearing repeatedly, to hold the line and don't operate business as usual. We have done both. With exception of Parks and Rec. Department, which is a money-making business, which you'll hear more about later and the pension benefits and health care costs, it is an operating budget that is essentially flat. That's after more than \$3 million in cuts last year. Three million dollars in cuts

last year and we haven't raised the operating budget with few exceptions. This is a remarkable achievement as we continue to deliver top notch services to our residents. I want to take this opportunity, once again, to thank the town department heads, the town employees who are with us tonight in the auditorium and, perhaps, watching on television. You and your efforts are what make Westport so special. I thank you on behalf of the 26,000 residents of the Town of Westport. For years, we have been hearing about increasing cooperation with the Board of Education in a number of areas. Joint implementation of a digital telephone system is perhaps the best and most successful recent venture. We have done other things...joint purchasing where possible, close cooperation in determining maintenance needs with the very able assistance of the First Selectman's Maintenance Committee under the very able recent leadership of Gavin Anderson. Imagine our surprise, however, when we went before the Board of Finance in late March and experienced critical cuts to four important town departments with three of the cuts, explained as you've just heard, as a Board of Finance effort to force additional consolidation with the Board of Education, to force additional consolidation. I understand the frustrations involved in not merging more of our efforts. I get frustrated too. I'm sure you do, as well. But making cuts without much thought behind them and, if you watched the proceedings, you know that is the case, just to send a message is not effective and not sensible government especially when these cuts are not discussed in advance with us, with town department heads. With only two weeks between the initial meeting and the restoration session of the Board of Finance, I made the decision not to go back before the board, before a board that acted seemingly more out of frustration than common sense. I knew that more time would allow us to meet with representatives of the Board of Education to assess what we could do to further consolidate. I knew more time would allow us to assess the impacts of the cuts in the Parks and Rec. budget. I'm pleased to report tonight that we have made progress with the Board of Education in our talks on consolidation of services. Just today, for almost two hours, representatives of both sides discussed information technology, what we might be able to do to consolidate and improve efficiencies. Tonight, I hope this body responds to common sense and restores monies cut from the budgets of the Finance Department, the Personnel Department and the Information Technology Department and the Parks and Rec. Department. In the case of Finance, Personnel and IT, these are critical departments, as you well know, to the operation of the Town. They provide services to all other departments. Making critical cuts to their budgets won't achieve anything except making operating town government much more difficult. That's not something I look forward to. Achieving the necessary 70 percent threshold to restore these funds won't be easy but it is absolutely necessary. It is necessary so our television broadcast of town meetings won't come to an end on July 1. It is necessary so we can have someone in place quickly to create new non-union pension agreements that move people into defined contribution plans from defined benefit plans, to oversee our negotiations. These are not going to happen in a vacuum. Restoring is necessary so we can collect and evaluate the information necessary to calculate properly our pension and OPEB costs in the Finance Department. Restoration is necessary so that the Parks and Rec. supervisors who are well paid are doing



what they are supposed to do, to supervise, rather than answering phone questions from residents and helping part-time teenage summer employees fill out employment forms. The reductions that you are being asked to restore are not, in the scheme of things, large amounts but they are critical. Look at where they have been taken from. They are critical to run the town government in my opinion. After all, it is the people of Westport who elected me to run the government, who elected you to approve budgets and pass ordinances and the Board of Finance to recommend budget requests. At the RTM Finance Committee meeting the other night, someone asked if the town really needed to replace its recently retired personnel director. I said preliminary talks with the Board of Education showed that that board was not fully aware of what the town Personnel Director did and, at first glance, was not fully prepared to undertake all of that positions functions. At one point, the chair of the Board of Finance said, "The role of the Personnel Director is something we have to consider in that we have to understand what it is that we want that person to do". I respectfully submit to you that it is not the role of the Board of Finance to determine the role of Personnel Director but is the job of First Selectman as clearly outlined in our Town Charter. Cutting most of the salary line for the Personnel Director out of the town budget is an unprecedented abuse of budgetary oversight and needs to be reversed. As someone who sat in this body for 14 years, I have great confidence in the ability of RTM members to distinguish between message sending, I'd like to say the Board of Finance seems to be in the Western Union business. They like to send messages...can differentiate between sending messages and the need to responsibly operate town governments. One last word on Parks and Rec. and you'll hear more about this. There is some confusion why I did not initially ask for restoration in this department. That is true but it was only after your Parks and Rec. Committee discussed and evaluated the impacts of the cuts, as outlined by the Parks and Rec. Director, to that department that I agreed that restoration, indeed, is warranted. These are not cuts that I think the populace needs to sustain. Our Parks and Rec. Department virtually pays for itself. It oversees the recreational crown jewels of our town. Along with the schools, these facilities are why people move here and pay up to move here and help preserve the investment in your home and mine. So, I look forward to discussions tonight. Please think carefully about what is being asked of you. Think carefully of the impact of the cuts on these departments and as you hear, they are Draconian. We are making efforts. It's not going to happen over night and even if there are some hard feelings, I think that we must move ahead and the RTM can help us move ahead. We will make efficiencies in the way we operate but to do it without little forethought and advance thinking of what cuts and the amounts of cuts and the impact of cuts. Do we really want to see town television eliminated? Was that even brought up? Was the impact of these cuts discussed that night at the Board of Finance? No. So, I thank you for your attention and I look forward to tonight's discussion.

### **Committee Report**

Finance Committee, Mike Rea, district 8:

Mr. Moderator, I would like to echo what you said earlier in your opening comments about the work and effort that the RTM committees in meeting and

writing their reports and following them into the Finance Committee. I would like to particularly thank John Kondub and his office, the Finance Department, in working with us and providing us with information throughout this process. Most of all, I would like to thank the members of the Finance Committee who attended many, many meetings over many, many hours. Thank you. I will read the report otherwise I'll be up here trying to ad lib it all night. You don't want that.

As stated in the Town Code, the RTM Finance Committee studies Town revenues and financial policies and practices, exclusive of individual department budgets. The Committee works with Town officials to secure adequate reports for the Representative Town Meeting. The Finance Committee further studies the current financial position, the financial aspects of the annual budget, capital requirements and long-term financial planning. While individual department budgets have been reviewed by appropriate RTM study committees, the RTM Finance Committee met with Finance Director John Kondub and First Selectman Gordon Joseloff on April 21st to review the overall budget. The Committee also heard from Board of Finance Chairperson Helen Garten on April 27th to present the Board of Finance's recommended budget which we have before us tonight. This is the first of two budget reports prepared by the Finance Committee. The second report covering the 2011-12 Education Budget will be presented after we vote on the Town Budget.

#### **BUDGET CONSIDERATION:**

Once the final Town of Westport budget is adopted by the RTM at its last budget meeting, the Board of Finance will set the mill rate for the 2011-12 fiscal year based on the Selectman's Budget of \$66,277,304 and an overall Board of Education Budget of \$112,425,806 for a total Town of Westport budget of \$178,703,110. There are several adjustments before the amount needed to be raised by taxes can be determined. There are non-budgeted expenditures estimated at \$2,750,000 consisting of pending labor and litigation settlements, the proposed OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits) contribution, and other unexpected items. These will be somewhat offset by an estimated \$200,000 in turn backs from the current fiscal year. Those are down about \$500,000 from last year. This amount is reduced by \$19,470,211 in non-tax revenue items. You heard earlier, Ms. Garten referred to the state grants, user fees, education revenues and collection of prior years' taxes. This number has increased from last year's budget for two reasons. The first factor is the turnaround effect in the economic areas that generate revenue collection by land use departments, building permits and also real estate conveyance taxes. The second factor is that there is projected to be a conservative use of \$3,000,000 from the General Fund Balance account for this upcoming budget. This will allow the General Fund undesignated fund balance to remain at approximately \$15.9 million or 8.76 percent of the total budget. This level of undesignated fund balance should be looked upon favorably by the credit agencies when the Town of Westport's credit rating will be reviewed. There are still a few more adjustments before we can calculate the tax rate. We next need to add \$3 million for senior tax relief, deferrals and abatements, and another \$300,000 for net Certificates of Errors over Certificates of Additions. Those are the Assessor's corrections. We finally

need to reduce this amount by an estimated \$500,000 for supplemental motor vehicle taxes and \$200,000 projected for additional unscheduled revenue.

What does this imply for taxes in this coming year? After considering all the pluses and minuses, the net amount to be raised by taxation is \$164,382,899. Presuming a tax collection rate of 98.4 percent, which is roughly what we estimated last year, the Board of Assessment Appeals is expected to propose a net collectable Grand List of \$9,390,744,960. This will result in a 2011-2012 tax rate of approximately 17.50 mills which, compared to a current rate of 16.92 mills, adjusted to reflect for revaluation factor, will result in a tax increase of 3.45 percent. One mill in taxes is worth \$9,393,308. The total levy to be raised of \$164,382,899 is divided by 17.50 mill rate. What does that mean to the taxpayer? If we use the example, the difference in tax dollars on an \$700,000 assessed valued home is as follows: Last year in 2010-2011, taxes on that \$700,000 would have been \$11,844.00. For the 2011-2012 proposed tax increase on that same \$700,000 assessed house would be \$12,250.00. That increase is \$406.00 or 3.45 percent. The proposed mill rate and the application of available surplus are still subject to the final approval of the Board of Finance so we are using the \$3 million as a number. It may or may not be that.

**OTHER FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:** Taxes and the increase in the tax rate have been the principle consideration of the RTM Finance Committee at this time of the year. There are other issues which should be addressed as well because of the impact on future taxes and tax rates. A draft of the First Selectman's Five Year Capital Forecast for the 2011-2012 fiscal year has been reviewed by the P&Z Commission as per the Charter on April 29th. Formal approval by the Board of Selectman has occurred on April 27th. The Town of Westport currently has plans to issue bonds in the 2011-2012 fiscal year for sewer projects and education facility projects, the indoor air quality projects, as previously approved by this body, the RTM, as you recall. The proposed Grand List for October 1, 2010 filed on January 31, 2011 was \$9,543,440,000, a decrease of 12.4 percent in value over the October 1, 2009 Grand List. Final deliberations have been completed by the Board of Assessments Appeals (BAA) on March 31, 2011.

The funding for employee pensions is reevaluated every year. The pension funds in the aggregate were reported to be under-funded as of June 30, 2010, but will be impacted by replacement employees who join the program. Retiree medical costs are now funded through the General Fund; however, it is a requirement by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (statement No. 43 and 45) that future retiree medical costs be recorded as an OPEB (Other Post Employee Benefits) fund liability. This will clearly increase future contributions to the OPEB Trust, but at the same time reduce funds currently appropriated for retirees' medical cost in the operating budget. The recommended 2011-2012 budget does reflect an appropriation to be made to the OPEB Trust Fund in order to provide for the proper funding of these obligations. As previously mentioned, consideration for an additional amount to be contributed to OPEB Trust Fund is included in the non-budgeted expenditure amount of \$1,650,000. The RTM, as you recall, adopted an ordinance which established this trust account in

December 2008. In the 2009-10 budget, an amount of \$700,000 was appropriated to the OPEB Trust Fund. This amount was significantly down from the \$2,400,000 that was appropriated in the 2008-2009 budget which was the first year that this municipality fully funded the ARC, Annual Required Contribution. During this current fiscal year, additional appropriations in the amount of \$2,400,000 have been recommended and approved in order to meet the ARC not built into the 2010-2011 budget. The Board of Finance has adopted a "sense of the meeting" to fully fund the ARC for the OPEB Trust Fund for the 2011-2012 budget based on the actuarial valuation that will be completed and dated June 20, 2010. It is anticipated that the ARC will increase based on this latest valuation. I think that you heard Ms. Garten refer to that. They expect it to increase, perhaps significantly.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010, the market value of the pension plans of the Town of Westport was \$163,460,418. As of April 22, 2011 the market value of the pension fund was \$186,991,244. The pension fund values and the benefits that the employees of the Town of Westport receive are two important areas of concern. The recommended budget for the 2011 fiscal year reflects an additional \$1,377,268 in employee contribution as recommended by actuarial firm retained by the Town of Westport. The contributions by the Town of Westport were based on the plan results for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010. The performance of the pension plans during the current fiscal year will continue to have a tremendous impact on the amounts recommended for the 2012-2013 budget and future budgets.

The rising cost of health insurance was noted as a major contributing factor to the overall budget increase. The recommended budget for 2011-2012 fiscal year does not allow for the use of the medical insurance fund to offset an approximate five percent increase in the cost of the health care program. The use of nearly \$1,075,000 in the medical insurance fund balance in the 2010-2011 fiscal year has depleted this reserve and now requires the General Fund budget to cover this gap in 2011-2012.

The question of restoration before the RTM Finance Committee was reviewed and acted on in its meeting of April 27, 2011 after the committee's unanimous recommendation to adopt the Town of Westport Budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 as recommended by the Board of Finance. The total amount of restoration requested by the First Selectman was \$220,000. The Board of Education did not seek any restoration. To restore the grand total of \$220,000 would cost an additional .03 mills in the tax rate for a new grand total of 17.53 mills or a 3.60 percent tax increase over last year's budget. If we use the example previously mentioned on a \$700,000 assessed home, this would mean an additional \$21.00 to the 2011-2012 tax bill ( $700,000 \times .01753 = \$12,271.00$ ) or a tax increase of \$427.00 per household. Once again that assumes the Board of Finance will apply \$3,000,000 from the General Fund to offset any further increases.

| Department           | Restoration Request | Yes | No |          |
|----------------------|---------------------|-----|----|----------|
| Finance Department   | \$70,000            | 7   | 2  | Approved |
| Personnel Department | \$50,000            | 6   | 3  | Approved |

|                        |          |   |   |          |
|------------------------|----------|---|---|----------|
| Information Technology | \$75,000 | 4 | 5 | Defeated |
| Information Technology | \$25,000 | 8 | 1 | Approved |
| Park & Recreation      | \$70,000 | 5 | 4 | Approved |

**BUDGET RECOMMENDATION:** On April 27th, The RTM Finance Committee members present voted to unanimously recommend adoption of the \$66,277,806 Selectman's Budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 as recommended by the Board of Finance and in other actions to restore the amount of \$220,000.00 to the Departments as noted in this report. Respectfully submitted, Michael Rea, Chair & Reporter, Allen Bomes, Linda Bruce, Michael Guthman, Richard Lowenstein, John McCarthy, Lois Schine, Cathy Talmadge and Jeff Wieser. Thank you for your time.

Mr. Rose:

Thank you Mr. Rea and thank you to the Finance Committee for all the work they put in on all these budgets.

We are now going to turn to the Westport electorate. When you come up, please, if you could try to limit your remarks to three minutes. Please spell your last name. It will make it a lot easier for the secretary. Please give your address.

**Members of the Westport electorate**

Ken Bernhard, 146 Kings Hwy North:

It's been quite a while since I've been before this august body and I have to say what a pleasure it is to come back and see so many smiling faces and friends. Also, not having been here in some time, it's been a while since I've seen the work product that comes out of this body and the people who serve our Town and I have to tell you how impressed I was to listen to the Board of Finance report and Mike Rea's report and I trust all the hard work that goes in. I can tell you from a citizen's perspective, thank you all for the hard work that you do. I am here tonight to speak in favor of the restoration of the \$70,000 for the Parks and Recreation Department. I am a long-term citizen of Westport having lived here 37 years. I am a frequent user of our Parks and Recreation facilities and I am recently counsel to the newly formed Friends of the Parks and Recreation Department. I'd like to join the First Selectman, the subcommittee on the RTM in recommending that you restore the \$70,000. There does come a point, I think, in the effort to become fiscally responsible, there comes a tipping point when efforts to become responsible become a bit destructive. I think we are at that point with the Parks and Recreation Department. I know, having worked with Stuart McCarthy, how diligent he is to keep his department running efficiently. We have, over the last few years, eliminated five positions. The cut of \$70,000 will eliminate two more positions. I daresay, speaking as someone who observes what goes on in this town fairly closely, I believe that without the restoration of these funds, our jewel, our parks, our wonderful recreation facilities will begin to take a serious turn to the negative. I think I speak for all of us actually, how much we enjoy our community. It would be a shame to see grass growing where it shouldn't be growing, trash cans that are not emptied when they should be, beaches, dirty when they should not be. Everything I could gather from the

people who service our community in the Parks and Recreation Department that would begin to happen. There will be, I can assure you now that I am more actively involved in Parks and Recreation in my role as counsel to the Friends, that we will be looking at all the efficiencies possible. We will be making recommendations to the extent that we have any role to play and I'd like to recommend tonight to the RTM that you consider restoring \$70,000 to Parks and Recreation Department. Again, thank you for all your good work.

Dick Healy, 11 Eno Lane:

I have lived here for 30 years. I, too, wanted to come and speak on behalf of the Parks and Recreation Department. I've got a few things I wanted to say about it. The Parks and Rec. Department has some uniqueness about it compared to other departments, in my opinion. Is it more important than our police, fire or EMS services? Absolutely not. Is it more important than our schools and quality of education for our kids? Absolutely not. But it's damn important. It's interesting to me when I look around this crowd that I think everybody understands but I want to be exactly clear what Stuart McCarthy is responsible for. They have over 30 different programs. There isn't anybody sitting in this audience that doesn't use what Stuart McCarthy provides between the beaches, pools, marinas, the golf course where 4,000 Westporters buy golf hand passes or our tennis courts they did about 12,000 rounds of tennis last year. He has 5,000 of our youngsters enrolled in the various recreational programs that Stuart and his staff put on. There isn't anybody in Westport that doesn't use his services. I think there's something else that's unique in his particular case that is most important to me. That is that he is really the only functional department that has revenue. He develops a revenue stream. Most everybody else that you assess and the Board of Finance assesses, they assess on the basis of expense. It was interesting to me last fall, there was a meeting going on with the Board of Finance, and I got up and spoke about something, the budget and so forth and I happened to mention about the revenue piece. A distinguished member of the Board of Finance got up and said to me, 'Dick, you don't understand, we have no responsibility for revenue. Our only responsibility is for expense.' I said to them as I say to you, many of you in this room have been or are business people. If you are business people and you have a revenue stream, I doubt you ignore revenue and only look at expense. Obviously, you look at both, the combination of revenue streams and your expense streams in order to develop a profitability at some level. You would tweak and work with both of them, for sure, but all of us hover, as business people, over revenue streams. The only function that you have here that has one is Stuart McCarthy's in the Parks and Rec. Department. So it befuddles me when I hear year after year, budget cycle after budget cycle, they only want to look at Parks and Rec. from the standpoint of expense. To me, it's silly. I'll come back to that at the end. So, let's take a look at the numbers. You all care as well as the difficult job of the Board of Finance, about what's happening to the total bottom line and the affect it has on our taxpayers. His budget packet that you all have is projecting a revenue of \$4.7 million which is \$100,000 or \$200,000 more than last year. \$4.7 million is his revenue budget. His expense is \$4.26 million. He projects that he has \$440,000 excess of revenue over expense. When I say this to Board of Finance people, they'll say to me such things as, 'Dick that doesn't

count other things. It doesn't cover, for example, the capital expense recovery vis a vis the bond expense and so forth. It also doesn't cover the pension and benefit funds and so forth.' My answer is, 'Do you ask that question of any other function? Since I've been here, you haven't but you ask that of McCarthy of Parks and Rec.' Unlike what they've done for any other function that you've seen here in terms of the individual departments, I'll give you what McCarthy's numbers are. He's \$440,000 to the good under a normal budgeting process. His capital expense recovery, annual expense that he has to pay for the bonds is \$581,000 per year. His cost of pension and benefits is \$959,000. That covers everything. The total of that is \$1.54 million. If I take the \$1.54 million which is additional expense and I subtract the \$440,000 of positive revenue that he had, it comes to a net of \$1.1 million. I'll say it to you another way. If you look at any department here and say what is the total cost, bottom line, to the town and what is the affect on the average taxpayer, it's a big number. In the case of McCarthy in Parks and Rec., the \$1.1 million turns out to be .067 percent. So, for a person who is paying \$12,000 to \$15,000 in taxes that comes to \$90/year. So the average taxpayer in this town, fully loaded numbers in Parks and Rec., is \$7.50 a month. That's what you're paying for the services that you get. By the way, that includes the \$70,000 that is recommended to be cut, \$7.50. As a businessman, I would conclude with this. He's got revenue. In running a business, if I had a project manager or program manager come up to me and said that they wanted to do this, I'd say fine, 'You're coming in with \$70,000 more than I recommended to you. You have to come with \$70,000 to \$100,000 to cover it. That's simple. But to continue to hit him on the expense line is silly when he can produce revenue for you. That's what makes his function different, not better but different than all the other functions. So, I'd ask you to strongly consider restoring the \$70,000. Tell him to get you the revenue and he will.

Fred Hunter, 19 Bulkley Avenue South:

I am also the chairman of the Golf Advisory Committee. I'd like to tag onto the two previous speakers and let you know that I've worked with Stuart and his staff for the better part of 10 years. You folks should really understand that Stuart and staff do yeoman's work in that department taking care, as Mr. Healy said, of thousands of different customers and people who need service from the Parks and Rec. Department. Mr. Healy talked about numbers. I want to talk about service. As has been previously mentioned, the Parks and Rec. Department is a revenue generator, about \$4.6 million. All those dollars go into the town general fund and there's no guarantee, as we're seeing with the \$70,000 proposed cut in administrative fees that any of those moneys will come back to the Parks and Rec. Department. That gets into Mr. Healy's discussion about expenses and revenues. Let's just talk about that \$70,000. What does that represent. If you take a look at the \$4.6 million in revenue, we're talking about 1.5 percent of the revenue, that \$70,000 represents. When you take a look at Parks and Rec, I assume that everybody in the room at one time or another has been into the offices down at the park. It is a business, as I've said before. Parks and Rec. has thousands of customers. Not all those customers, we are talking about service cuts or administrative cuts in the Parks and Rec. Department, even though we have an online registration system, not all those people have computers. Not all

those people want to do online registration. Not everybody wants to call a company or business and get a recorded message. Customers walking into Parks and Rec. want, deserve and expect service. They are paying after tax dollars to the department for the services that they want and expect. It is reasonable to assume that reduced administrative support will result in reduced services. Reduced services equal reduced usage. It turns into a real circular argument. Fee increases were mentioned earlier. They are not the solution. Stuart can increase all the fees he wants but he has not guarantees from the town that any of those funds will come back in terms for support of the operations that he has in his department. I would like to request that the RTM restore the \$70,000 projected cut and let the Parks and Rec. service the customers of Westport like we expect to be serviced.

Ian Goodman, 6 George Street:

Talk about Parks and Rec. in the skate park are important, not just to me and these kids beside me but to a lot of kids at Bedford Middle School, Coleytown Middle School, Staples High School and even the five elementary schools. Kids in those schools come down and even people from out of town, Weston, Fairfield come down to a safe place where they can have fun and skate with all their friends. It's just a fun place we can all hang out and be safe. That's my main point. About Wrecking Crew, that's another part of Parks and Rec. that I went to for three summers. It's just so much fun. A lot of kids go to be safe with field trips. I would hate to see the skate park and Wrecking Crew go for budget cuts.

Janis Collins, 41 Compo Parkway, Chair, Parks and Rec. Commission:

Over the last several years, the Board of Finance has reduced the Parks and Rec. Department budget by over \$220,000 resulting in the elimination of five full-time employees. The proposed 2011-2012 budget cuts of two additional Parks and Rec. employees will bring the total to a 23 percent reduction of full-time employees over the past few years. I don't think any other department has been hit with this kind of budget decrease in the Town of Westport including the Board of Education and it's beginning to show. It's showing in the long grass that we see by the side of the road, by the weeds, as we drive down Compo Road. It's showing in our deteriorating athletic fields at Coleytown Elementary School and at Long Lots and it's showing at the beach as we don't clean it as often as we want to or rake it the way we want to do it. Just a note about this year's cuts, Stuart and I decided to do something a little bit different this year because of last year's sort of contentious way the budget ended up. We decided to meet one-on-one with several Board of Finance members which we did starting in October to try to understand their concerns and also to make sure they were informed about how Parks and Rec. really worked. As a result of some of those meetings, we then put together a presentation that talked about how revenues connected with our expenses and how the fees that we set are depending upon our costs and our expenses for all of our services but what was happening over the past few years was that the town tax subsidy of Parks and Recreation used to be anywhere from 15 to 18 percent of our overall operating expense. That number had started to reduce down to four percent. With this year's, it's actually reduced to 1.9 percent of our operating budget. What that means is that our fees from



beaches, from tennis, from golf, from boating are paying for everything of Parks and Recreation maintenance and operating budget. Those people that are using our parks, they're not paying for it through their taxes. Those people who are using our athletic fields aren't necessarily paying for it through their taxes either. It's actually being paid for by beach fees, by golf, by tennis and other fees from the town. In November, we had this presentation about our revenues to make the connection and in February, we said, being good citizens, we wanted to do full disclosure of our costs that included total pension and benefits. We were the only department that provided the Board of Finance with the full, total cost. I know many of you in this room have actually seen our full, total costs. So, we were quite surprised, after having all of these collaborative meetings, working with the Board of Finance, one-on-one meetings, we also began some creative out of box thinking as they had suggested, we are in the process of evaluating whether or not outsourcing the golf course could really work. We've met with four different companies. We have two viable alternatives. We have looked at outsourcing park maintenance too. At this point, we can't come back to you and say it's definitely going to save us money but at least we are pursuing it. We're going to the next step and we're going to do our due diligence on it. So, needless to say, in March, we were shocked when a number of \$70,000 was thrown out on the table as a cut for Park and Recreation. Mr. Wirfel explained that he was doing that because our expenses had gone up from the previous year. As you know, our expenses have gone up purely because of bringing back some of the programs that the boys just talked about that had been cut from the previous year, Wrecking Crew. So, we brought back those programs, added back the field trips and we added in the additional revenue because we increased the fee for those programs. So, it was offset by our revenue but Mr. Wirfel didn't really acknowledge that piece of it. Helen then jumped on that \$70,000 and said 'Yes, I agree and it should come out of administrative savings from our online system.' I have been on the Parks and Rec. Commission for over four and a half years. I have been chairman for the last almost a year and I don't remember to ever committing to any productivity savings for our Parks and Rec. staff by our online registration system; however, it is a great productivity tool for you and me so that we can go on that system in our pajamas anytime and get our beach emblems, register for programs but the transaction still needs to process at the back end. We can actually change the flow of the processing but it still needs to be done. This year's proposed cut of \$70,000 out of our administration budget which is two employees, a customer service employee and a purchasing and payroll employee, will have an impact on all of Parks and Recreation from the skate park to the beach to the golf course to the tennis courts to Winslow Park because all administration will be almost completely gone from Parks and Recreation, so, our supervisors, as they did this past week when Mr. Rubin was sick, will be answering phones instead of serving the customer and making sure that our beaches are clean, making sure that our parks are maintained and making sure that our athletic fields are not deteriorating. That's the kind of impact that this administration cut is going to have on us. For many residents, attractive parks and recreation facilities are one of the main reasons they moved to Westport and the reason that they stay. With over 200 plus acres of open spaces and parks, many of them near the water and all of them public, we offer a unique set of resources in our community. If we

allow these resources to deteriorate, it will impact all of us, not just the users, but all of us in our real estate values. So, Gordon has asked you for the restoration of the Parks and Rec. budget, the Parks and Rec. RTM Committee has requested the restoration and the RTM Finance Committee has requested the restoration. Tonight I am asking you also to restore our budget. Thank you very much for allowing me to speak.

Avi Kaner, 19 Deerwood Lane, member of the Board of Finance:

The people before me have all spoken about Parks and Rec. I admire what they have to say. Those kids up here were very impressive; however, what I'd like to talk about is the consolidation issue. I fully agree with Helen's presentation on the required consolidation between the town and the schools. I would also like to note that the numbers that Helen put up on the screen were only half the numbers. The numbers that we reduced the town budget by for consolidation were 50 percent of the estimated savings. The other 50 percent was allocated to the schools, to the penny. The schools are not asking for the restoration. The town is asking for the restoration. I also agree with Helen that the Selectman's office should have come to the Board of Finance with the request for restoration prior to coming to the RTM. I am the senior Republican on the Board of Finance. Helen is the senior Democrat on the Board of Finance. We are 100 percent unified on this. Unless we do this, unless we force consolidation, it will never happen. Helen and I were elected to the Board of Finance six years ago the same time Gordon was elected to the First Selectman's office. For the past six years, every year we talk about the need for consolidation. I have personally communicated with hundreds of taxpayers. Each budget season, we get dozens and dozens of letters from our constituents. Almost all of them agree that they would rather see consolidation of services rather than see diminishing town services. We'd rather hire fire fighters. We'd rather pave the streets. We'd rather rake the pebbles on the beach than maintain two silos of administrative overhead. That does not serve the citizens of Westport well. I offer this example. There should be no difference in printing a teacher's paycheck and a policeman's paycheck. As a business owner with multiple locations, we have consolidated overhead. I cannot even imagine what our business would be like if we did not consolidate overhead and if each entity had its own overhead. In general, in the United States, that's why private sector is generally more efficient than government sector. Finally, I'd just like to conclude that I do admire Gordon for advocating for his departments but this is something we must do for all the reasons that Helen articulated, particularly, the benefit issue. If you go to the internet and Google consolidation between schools and towns, you'll see we are not the only ones facing this. Towns all over the United States are dealing with this issue. In fact, one town in Rhode Island put it as a referendum item recently. Seventy-seven percent of that town's population voted in favor of consolidation. This is what the taxpayers want. We represent the taxpayers. I hope you approve the budget as recommended by the Board of Finance.

Ms. Flug read the resolution and it was seconded by Dr. Heller.

RESOLVED: That the First Selectman's budget items recommended by the Board of Finance and approved or amended by the Representative Town

Meeting be adopted, and the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the First Selectman's Budget is hereby appropriated to meet expenditures and such sum shall be added to the amount appropriated for the Board of Education Budget tomorrow night.

Mr. Rose:

Just as a little refresher, I am going to call out a major item code. If you have any items within that code that you want to discuss or questions, that would be the time to do it. If you don't, I will move onto the next one and assume that the one that I just read is approved.

Mr. Rose: Are there any comments on general government, 01.

### **Members of the RTM**

Michael Guthman, district 2:

**I would like to move to restore \$50,000 to account 153, line 1 of the town budget. That is the Personnel Department, the cut of the \$50,000 from the Director of the Personnel Department.** Second Mr. Lowenstein.

Point of information, Dick Lowenstein, district 5:

Three digit code or the whole account?

Mr. Rose: I want the three digit code within the budget section...153, 01.

Mr. Guthman:

No one is against consolidation. How can you be against consolidating functions? But consolidating functions has to be done with a degree of wisdom. The human resource function in the school system is different than the human resource function in the town. The town human resource function has responsibility for pensions, OPEB and other medical benefits. We are faced with a big budget problem. Our big budget problem isn't \$50,000 for the Director of Personnel. Our big budget problem is \$20 million in benefit expenditures. If we ever hope to make a dent in that, we need the kind of leadership in the human resource function that can take charge and can develop a new medical program and a new pension program beginning, of course, with the non-union employees and moving into the pension negotiations we have coming up in 2014. These are really a vital function. That means we need the kind of Human Resource Director that has a different skill set than the director we've had in the past. We need a Human Resource Director who is strategic in outlook and has the kind of financial background that it takes to lead this charge with changing pensions and benefit costs. So we are going to have a real need, if we are going to save \$20 million, to have our horses in place that can drive us to realize that kind of savings. Cutting \$50,000 now when we are faced with need to go after a \$20 million nut seems to me to be just plain foolish. Within that though, there is another aspect of the Personnel Director's role. Because the Personnel Department in the past has not worked as well as we might like it to, various departments within town have had to have their own rump personnel system so we have had policemen doing human resource work, we have had firemen doing human resource work, we

have had Parks and Rec. people doing human resource work. Consolidation would be to get a competent Human Resource Director to consolidate all those human resource functions back into the Human Resource Department and have each department do what they do best. That's consolidation that makes sense. I urge you to restore the \$50,000 because it can lead us to a magnitude of that in savings.

### **Members of the Westport electorate**

Tom Lasersohn, Board of Finance:

With respect, especially, to the Personnel Department, I know that consolidation and change represents an issue when there are individuals involved whose jobs may be at stake or have to be adjusted or reconfigured. In the personnel department, we have an absence of the personnel director. It's an opportunity to reconsider everything that is going on. The last speaker mentioned that because of the way the Personnel Department has been run, a lot of the satellite departments have been doing personnel functions. Rather than just go and hire somebody, let's look at what's possible with respect to the schools. We are not going to inconvenience or change a current employee because the position is vacant. This is the clearest area where we should be waiting to look at the results of consolidation and have a deliberate conversation rather than running ahead to put in place the same old system that we had that resulted in the inefficiencies.

### **Members of the RTM**

Mr. Lowenstein:

We are going to have at least four more restoration requests tonight. I'm going to generalize on this one because we are going to go back to 151 which is finance and 157 is IT. In the last week, we concluded the Passover season and the Easter season. An element of that holiday of Passover is the Seder. In the Seder, there is a part in which four questions are asked by the children. I want to add a fifth question tonight. That is why is this year's budget different than last year's budget? That is an important question for the RTM to consider. Last year, the Board of Finance and the RTM essentially reduced by considerable amounts in order to save the taxpayers money. This year, the changes are very small. In fact, the restoration requests by the First Selectman alone would amount on a \$10,000 assessment, to only \$20/year, \$21.00 in one report, \$20 according to Ms. Garten. At the RTM Finance Committee meeting, I made the comment that last year, as I just said, the objective was to reduce taxes. This year, it was simply to make a statement. Helen took exception to that. It was more than just a statement. I will accept her exception to it. These cuts are so small and so insignificant that they are having no effect on the tax rate at all. They are having a considerable effect on the departments that have been cut. I think this is not the way to run the business. Consider this. The Board of Education got a quarter of a million dollar cut on a budget of approximately \$98 million. That was according to my reckoning .22 percent reduction in their budget. The town budget which is 2/3 of the Board of Education's budget got a .51 percent cut, in other words, more than double the cut for the Board of Education. The 500 pound gorilla in the room right now is not the budget cuts but the fact that we have the pension ARC and the OPEB ARC. Right now, the town, and I hate to talk in

terms of the town and the Board of Education but the town is being asked to absorb the entire ARC appropriation because none of that appropriation for the pension ARC or the OPEB ARC is going into the Board of Education budget where a part of it should belong, approximately 16 percent. So, here it is, the town with an operating budget and a pension budget, as well, is being asked to absorb most of this and the Board of Education is getting away Scot free. Now, I am not here tonight or even tomorrow night to recommend any cuts to the Board of Education. I have no intention of doing that. But I am very concerned that the budget we are looking at will diminish in services to the town. I honestly believe that it is very important that we restore the amounts recommended by the Board of Finance and, in my particular case, I will ask for some additional restoration in the IT Department. I fully support the motion by Mr. Guthman to restore \$50,000 for the Personnel budget and I will do likewise for the remaining ones. This is a philosophical issue you have before you and I urge you consider it in that respect. It is too important to pass all these saying these will effect change. These cuts will not effect change. The shot has been over the bow. Both ships have heard the shot. They are reacting and now is the time to restore the money. I don't think the cuts themselves are going to cause any further action. I want to remind you, by the way, that the Town Charter will be a very important governing factor in how we affect a consolidation between the Board of Education and the town. The Town Charter reserves the First Selectman certain of the functions that are up for grabs in this budget.

Wendy Batteau, district 8:

I want to speak to a similar point as Mr. Lowenstein and also speak to Mr. Guthman's point. I am a big union person. My husband and I belong to four unions. They are all affiliated with the AFL-CIO so I was looking on that web page. They make the point that the pension plans of 80 percent of private industry, businesses and the like, are defined contribution rather than defined benefit plans. Only 20 percent of municipal pension plans are defined contribution rather than defined benefit. I think it is so important. We need to restructure our pension plans. In order to do that, as Mr. Guthman says, we need somebody who has the experience to be able to take us, as Fairfield did, from one place to the other. But more than that, Ms. Garten made a point and Mr. Kaner emphasized the point that, not counting OPEB, next year we'll have a \$20 million ARC for our benefits. Our town budget this year is \$66 million or so. Do we really think we are going to consolidate our way out of a third of our budget? It's just not going to happen. Even if we account for the \$2 million or \$2.5 million that could be ascribed to the Board of Education, it's still \$18 million out of \$66 million. This year the Board of Finance is going to tax for the ARC. I don't know that that is the way to do it either. I would suggest that, as we think about new ways of doing things, it's not that I don't think that consolidation is a good idea, I think, for example, Mr. McCarthy's plan of a town services department is terrific. I was also a little surprised to hear, for example, that our Parks and Recreation Department purchases the same kind of items that Public Works purchases only there are two purchasing departments there. I think we can consolidate among town departments, as well. I do think that trying to fund the ARCs and that \$20 million didn't even include OPEB from our operating budgets is probably not the

way to go or certainly not the only way to go. I think right now we need to commit to absolutely changing the way we fund our pension plans but I think we need to think about how we fund our ARCs, as well.

Lois Schine, district 8:

I want to address the \$50,000 for the Personnel Department. While nobody thinks we should just rush out and hire another head of the Personnel Department, we have to recognize that, right now, we are in arbitration in two union contracts which are costing us lots of dollars and the argument is, of course, the benefit plans. If we don't hire a competent Director of Personnel who can help with the issues, who can take some leadership in dealing with the change in the contribution plans, we'll be further away from the change next year at this time. I think the \$50,000 for the Personnel Department is well spent and may help produce more revenue for us.

Judy Starr, district 1:

I would think that there must be a way to get around this. The objection seems to be that we need a Personnel Director to help with the contract negotiations. I think that we also have attorneys and we have a negotiating attorney. We have a First Selectman. We have a Pension Advisory Board. So, we definitely, I hope we would want to be very careful before we hire a person to do the personnel function. I think that the Board of Finance is looking at opportunities to encourage savings and consolidations and new ways of looking at all town operations when there is an opportunity. I know that Personnel Director is a major position in town but this is an opportunity. I think we are hearing from Board of Finance members who deal with all these things and deal with the pensions as part of their "bread and butter". I think they must have thought about this. The savings we are looking at tonight represent a small percentage of our budget but this and the others taken together could lead us to a larger savings and a change in the way we do business. My concern with this and all the restorations, quite frankly, is what kind of precedent are we setting? Yes, last year we heard one department's request that came to us that didn't go to the Board of Finance for restoration. We heard it. We approved it. Now we are having several departments that have come to us without going to the Board of Finance. I think that this could be a trend and I think this is something we need to approach carefully. Once we start doing this, I don't think it's going to stop whether it's next year, whether it's going to be the schools. I think we are opening up a Pandora's box here. I have thought about this because I know I am disagreeing with a lot of people that I respect a lot but I have a basic philosophical problem with the overall picture of this. I would have looked at it differently had these requests gone to the Board of Finance first and were worked through and the Board of Finance had the opportunity and we had the opportunity to work with them and then it came to our Finance Committee. I think what we are doing is we are undermining the work of another board. This is not the public coming to us when we get a petition to review another board. This is not the public coming to us and saying this is 20 or more of us. It's a new procedure that's going to have ramifications. I don't even think we know what they are. I would like to pose a question. I am philosophically troubled with these restorations and because of that I see it opening problems

bigger than what we are looking at tonight. I'm not inclined to support them. I'd like to raise some questions and I want to ask you please to think about them as you listen to the deliberations tonight because we're looking at a bigger picture. We're not looking at five different lines. We're looking at how the budget process could be affected by a change that could be happening tonight. I want to pose some questions: How would this change, begun recently and maybe being carried through tonight, I don't know. I kind of hope not, how would this change in the usual process that we have, affect the ability of the Board of Finance to do their specialized job?...To come up with the recommendations that they bring to us?...To make the unpopular decisions that we ourselves may not be the ones that have to make but, maybe a few years down the line, we might find the ball in our court to make those or not make those. What effect would such a change, if we get more appeals to come to us before going to the Board of Finance, before being vetted by them, what effect would this have on our already increasing workload? What effect could that then have upon the mill rate which the Board of Finance sets based upon what we approve? How would a new mill rate affect the amount of taxes whose payment would be required of the constituents we serve. It may not make a big difference this year but what about down the line? What about the bigger picture that we are a part of. We respect the departments that we work with. We work with them and we have our relationship with them. It's hard not to admire what they do. It's hard not to appreciate it as citizens. But while we respect their missions, it's not the departments we represent, it's the citizens. It's not just an appeal on a line, it's a process that we are part of. I am going to leave you with those thoughts and I just want to leave you with one last one. If we don't hold the line at some point on taxes, it may not be a big one this year but it was last year and it could be in future years, we will be increasing the tax burden that our constituents will have to bear and they will rightly look to us and say, 'You did not hold the line as much as you could.' Again, I know we're looking at one motion but these are the reasons why I have trouble supporting this motion and I am going to feel similarly about the others that will probably come up later tonight. I ask you to please think about what we are being asked to do because it is bigger than a restoration.

Jack Klinge, district 7: It's still Monday night...

Mr. Rose: It's early Jack.

Mr. Klinge:

I'm ready to go. I'll pull an all nighter here. I've got my red pills and my white pills and my green pills.

Mr. Rose: Jack, meet me during recess, please...

Mr. Klinge:

I was really not going to say much until we got to the Parks and Rec. budget but there is an awful lot of philosophy being spouted up here and I thought I'd throw a few cents in there as well. As far as I'm concerned, every request stands on its own. There is no trend. There is no deep seated concern for the Town of

Westport. It's not a group. It's one by one by one. Remember last year, those days of yesteryear, when the library said we are going to close on Sundays if we don't give them more money. We all rallied to that because it made good sense. Each and every restoration has to defend itself on the good sense that it makes and the net benefit to the Town of Westport. Government is a service business. It doesn't sell products. It sells services. We are asked to decide the value of the services that this town provides whether it's IT or Finance or, in this case, Personnel. It seems to me that we have a lot of issues facing personnel in the Town of Westport. We've all been through the defined contribution versus defined benefit. We know we have to get that out of the way. I'm going to vote to approve this restoration but I am going to challenge the administration to have a job description for that title that is extremely comprehensive so we get people who are actually capable of doing the job we need done and not just filling a slot in the organization chart. So, for your \$50,000, I want to see a very detailed, explicit job description that matches the needs of this Town. Then I think you can go forth with your interviews and seeking your candidate. I feel similarly about all the restorations we are being asked to consider tonight. This is not some trend. It is not a package. It is one at a time. Each one has to survive the scrutiny of 'is it right for Westport now?'

Mr. Mandell:

Dick, thank you for bringing up Passover because it was a good celebration we had. The Seder is an important aspect of it. The word "Seder" means "order". The order of things that have occurred here is not right. How we deal with that in the future, I'm not sure there will be a trend but the order of things as we see it here is broken. The Board of Finance is the one that has given us the budget. That's the white book that we have up here not the black one. As an aside, I would much rather have gotten that white book last week rather than now when I'm about to decide on things. Nonetheless, it's the Board of Finance that gives us that book. If any department wanted a restoration, they should have gone back to the Board of Finance and asked and allowed them to deliberate on it. It's very possible, of these four restorations, all four of them might have been granted or some part of them might have been granted. When Mr. Joseloff says, with IT, we never discussed that television might be cut down, that's because no one from IT went to the Board of Finance and said, 'Hey, if you continue with this cut, you may lose television.' Based on that, they would have made a decision. Why is that important to us? Because we need more information at any particular point to make our decisions. We would have had more time to think about it to make our decision rather than suddenly tonight, hey, we could lose television. I do not want television cut off. That goes without saying. We've already lost our minutes. That's suddenly something that's given to us. The Board of Finance is the one who is supposed to be making that decision first and then giving a recommendation. Will that be enough for me not to vote on all of these tonight and say, 'No, you didn't go to the Board of Finance.' I don't think I am going to be that critical. I think the process needs to be corrected. As Ms. Starr was talking about, if there are going to be restorations by any department that they know about, come to the Board of Finance. No one should be scared to come to the Board of Finance to hear them say no again. There's nothing wrong with a no



because maybe that's the right answer. In terms of the \$50,000, I think Mr. Lasersohn came up here and made an excellent point. There is no person who is going to lose their job and we have a phenomenal opportunity to see what could occur if we follow this through. We can always hire someone six months down the line if we see that it's not working. We can make a transfer of money to make it work. We have an opportunity at this point. No one is going to lose their job. Let's see how it works.

Velma Heller, district 9:

This is really going to be short and sweet. I would like to do what makes sense. I would like to focus on the target issue, personnel. I think as Mike Guthman said and several others have repeated, this is a critical time to have somebody who has great expertise in personnel and giving that person a very clear assignment. This is a "fix it" assignment. It's a very big fix that we are talking about. It's not a time to mess around and see if this one can do it or that one can do it. You need a person who is a professional, who understands how to go about making the kinds of transformational changes that we are talking about. I do not think that this is the time to say we are going to save money on this personnel guy because there is nobody there who is going to lose a job. You really need to think a bigger picture than that right now. I really don't want to talk about all the other issues. Let's focus on this one. I think this is the time to be sure that you put somebody in place who really can make a difference in the way the whole personnel function operates in the interest of saving much larger money than we are talking about in any of these restorations.

Mr. Rea:

I guess I do want to address the general picture and not just specifically the personnel. In general, the economy isn't much better than what we've seen before. In general, the taxes that we are talking about today are going to be tough for a lot of Westporters. A \$427 increase. I don't know whether that strikes you as a little or a lot. Speaker after speaker could get up and we could dissect. We could justify each and every item, not only on this restoration, but some of the ones that we could have. But \$427 is a lot. In general, I don't think our economy can support it. I don't think where we are billions of dollars short in the state of making things meet when we know we are going to be asked to give more on the federal and we refuse to recognize the debt that is building on the national, state and, yes, even here, in Westport, on the local level. You think that's not a 500 lb. gorilla? It's a lot bigger than that and we just won't recognize it. When we start to and when the Board of Finance holds our feet to the fire to recognize that liability, the pain is going to be awful. You won't be talking about \$220,000. So, yes. We could sit here and we could talk about each and every item. It's painful. It's painful to me to deal with cutting in Parks and Rec. when I know the cuts that are specifically proposed. I don't agree where they propose to make the cuts. It can be done in other areas. It's tough for me because of a lifetime of being involved in Parks and Rec. and building fields and seeing the value of the programs and what the golf course and the beaches mean. I understand that. We have been dealt this hand. I have said previously in meetings that the Board of Finance didn't cut enough. If we start restoring, I will

certainly walk out of this room feeling this way. The reason I'm going along with this and the reason I am going to be voting against restorations tonight, and I'm sure it doesn't come as a surprise to you. It kills me. In the Finance meeting, someone said, 'Oh, it's Dr. No.' I don't enjoy playing Dr. No but I think it's important with the hand we were dealt with that we not fold...that we not fold on the homeowners and the taxpayers...that we not fold on ourselves. We have an opportunity to hold the feet to the fire. I have been on the RTM quite a few terms. I have heard speaker after speaker get up to this mike and challenge the department head, challenge the First Selectman to come back next year and give us the results we want. Well, guess what. The year goes by and, once again, we are looking at the same questions. I have asked one public official, year after year, on the Finance Committee, 'Have you looked at outsourcing? Have you looked at consolidating?' I get this, 'Oh, we looked at that a dozen years ago. It doesn't really work.' My goodness, how much has changed during that time. It seemed an oddity a dozen years ago. Now it's a way of doing business, not only in business but in government. I don't expect that there will be a majority of the RTM voting the way I will tonight but I hope and pray there are enough of you to draw the line.

Amy Ancel, district 3:

I'm reminded of that saying, that cliché, about the definition of insanity doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. I agree with Mike Rea and, once again, it's the economy stupid. I think the recovery has been minimal. There are a lot of people still without jobs. Most people, I don't think, won't be getting a three or four or five percent increase. A lot of people are on fixed incomes in this Town. A lot of people have declining incomes. I believe the Board of Finance knows far better, what's going on, line by line, their analysis, all the workshops that they've had, all of the meetings that they've had, all of the discussions and change is hard. I believe it is human nature to resist change. It's sometimes painful but unless there is a group of people who are really innovative and always looking to do things better, to do things more efficiently and more economically, we tend to maintain the status quo. That's often true in the private sector and it's especially true in the public sector and with government. Usually, change only comes about by what's forced upon us. There's a lot of room for improvement in our town's operations and my hat is off to the Board of Finance for taking the lead in pushing those changes. I tend to wholeheartedly support the recommended budget. I'm going to be joining Mike and voting against any restorations. Things have to be done differently. Unfortunately, I believe our leadership has done very little in the past year, in the past many years to move in that direction. Both the RTM and the Board of Finance have said year after year after year that we have to do things differently. The resistance has been significant. I think that \$427, on average, comes to a lot especially when it takes somebody \$60 to fill their car; In some cases, a lot more than that on a weekly basis. The cost of everything is going up: food, transportation, gasoline. Things are really not much different this year than they were for people last year. I also want to echo what Judy Starr said. I do have a very big problem that the First Selectman and the department heads did not go to Board of Finance with their requests for restoration before they came to us. I think that it sort of subverted

the process. I'm a very big process person. That's where I stand on the personnel restoration and all the others.

Mr. Galan:

On the specific of the Personnel Department and many of the other cuts, if you look at it, it is precisely sending a signal. In the case of the Personnel Department, there are three salaries on the salary line, any one of which is more than \$50,000. If you really want to cut something, either cut a position and cut the full amount of money out or don't cut anything. Let's not just go and take an arbitrary amount of money to force an issue. If we are really looking to push to do a specific cut, determine what that cut is and cut that amount of money.

Ms. Batteau:

I would like to clarify a little bit. My remarks about the restoration were aimed at this particular position. I think that Helen Garten's presentation was compelling and accurate, as was Mr. Rea's and the other members of the Board of Finance. Obviously, we have to do something. I don't disagree with Amy Ancel; however, I would like to point out that of that \$427, if all restorations are made, it only accounts for \$21. If none of the restorations were made, it would be \$406 in tax increase. So, what we are talking about is something symbolic rather than something works as a practical matter and as a practical matter, I take Mr. Guthman, who has had a good deal of experience with personnel negotiations, at his word and at his experience and see this restoration as an investment in saving money in negotiating the pension changes rather than as an actual increase.

**Motion to restore \$50,000 to account 153-01 of the town budget. This requires 70 percent of RTM members which is 24 votes required to carry. The Motion fails: 19 in favor 16 opposed. In favor: Guthman, Galan, Meyer, Seidman, Wieser, Levy, Lowenstein, Colburn, Lebowitz, Talmadge, Klinge, Rubin, Batteau, Schine, Flug, Heller, Milwe, Bruce, Rose. Opposed: Keenan, Timmins, Ancel, Cunitz, Rossi, Suggs, Urist, Ashman, Bomes, Rea, Cherry, Green, McCarthy, Cady, Mandell, Starr,**

Jonathan Cunitz, district 4:

I make a **motion to restore \$41,000 to IT budget #157.** Seconded by Mr. Lowenstein.

Point of information, Mr. Klinge:

Is that \$41,000 of the \$100,000 or the \$75,000? [It is out of the \$75,000 that was cut.]

Dr. Cunitz read the IT Committee report:

This is a report of the RTM IT Committee Meeting of April 28, 2011. The RTM IT Committee met at 7:30 p.m. on April 28, 2011, at Town Hall, Room 309. Committee members present were Paul Rossi (chair), Joyce Colburn, Jonathan Cunitz and Chris Urist. The meeting included a presentation by Eileen Zhang of the accomplishments of the Office of Information Technology during the past

year, its future goals and the 2011-2012 fiscal year budget. Carrie Makover provided a demonstration of the new Town website (WestportCT.gov) and explained its operational improvements compared to the prior version.

**New Website – Discussion highlights:**

- Eileen and Carrie are very pleased with the technology selected and the site offers many improvements for both the constituents and those who maintain the site and its content.
- It was recommended that the IT department “toot its horn” more often to educate the public on the resources available through the town website. It was further discussed that Eileen Zhang should contact westportnow.com and westport.patch.com to establish prominent links on their home pages to WestportCT.gov.

**Town IT Budget Review – Discussion highlights:**

The Board of Finance has recommended a reduction of \$75,000 from the town IT budget as follows: \$50,000 to come from Salaries with the elimination of one of the three IT employees and \$25,000 to come from Fees and Services. A lengthy discussion ensued and the committee heard testimony about the impact the reduction would have on the delivery of critical support and help desk services now provided by this individual. In January of this year, the IT department took on the additional burden of IT, email and telephone support for the library and in May it is taking over the IT support for the Police Department. This became necessary due to IT staffing reductions in those departments and a shifting of responsibilities to the IT Department. Eileen Zhang indicated that her department receives over 5,000 requests per year for help from town departments, for hardware support, software support and the increasing prevalence of computer viruses. The demand for assistance from the IT Department is expected to increase even more with the added support to the Library and Police Departments. The position being eliminated has a Salaries budget amount of \$69,010. The individual presently occupying this position spends about 50 percent of his time on town mail. This function is being removed from the IT Department. About \$35,000 of this individual's time is devoted to IT support. After the proposed \$50,000 reduction, the balance of \$19,010 in this account would be shifted to the Fees and Services for part-time consulting support, resulting in a net reduction of approximately \$16,000 in funds for IT support at a time when the essential services of the IT Department are increasing. A reduction of \$25,000 for fees and services would result in the elimination of streaming video of important town meetings. After a lengthy discussion with Eileen Zhang, the committee concluded that the town should not eliminate the streaming video as this has become a popular and useful offering for the public and provides a vital public record. The committee debated the impact of the proposed reductions and agreed to recommend partial restoration of funds to the IT Department budget. Eileen Zhang agreed that she could find a way to operate using a part-time consultant to provide IT support and mentioned that the Board of Education has indicated a willingness, but not a commitment, to assist by providing resources. A motion was made by Jonathan Cunitz and seconded by Joyce Colburn to restore \$41,000 to the IT budget by adding it to

the Fees and Services Account. The Motion was approved unanimously by the four Committee members present, although this was not a quorum. It was estimated that the elimination of a \$69,010 salaried position and the transfer of the support function to a consultant will result in savings of fringe benefits to the Town of at least \$36,000 based upon a rate of 53 percent provided by the Finance Director. The committee adjourned at 9:30 p.m. Respectfully submitted, Jonathan Cunitz, reporter

Before I get to my other comments, I would like to say that I was watching the presentation of Parks and Rec. and the support from the Commission and the support from the advisory groups. There are a lot of advocates for Parks and Rec. in this town. Everyone in this town uses IT, every department, practically every employee. There are not advocates in this town for IT. There is no advisory group, no commission that is saying, "Let's go, IT." But it is essential. I'd like to give you one anecdote. Earlier this year, the RTM had a very critical meeting on the P&Z text amendment. I was very sorry that I was unable to be at the meeting. I was down in Florida. I stayed up until 1:30 in the morning watching this group on streaming video on all the deliberations, all the comments. Although, I was not allowed to vote, I had someone read something on my behalf but I could easily have made an arrangement with any number of you who had your computers here to send you a message in real time and have you deliver that message for me. This is what our technology does.

Now to my comments: Eileen Zhang is an excellent IT manager but very modest when it comes to telling people about what she had accomplished for the town and how she has saved the town a lot of money. In addition to all of her past responsibilities, as of January 2011, the office of IT finished the following tasks and will continue to provide the tech support for the public library now, handling all that work-related tech support calls including a voice over the internet protocol phone system, completed a full migration of the library's computer network from it's old physical server to the Town Hall virtual server environment. This relieves the library from having to pay for outside technical support on an ongoing annual basis, so that is saving the department money, through this consolidation; moved all library personnel to the Town's email system and retired the library's email server, eliminating some equipment. This saved the library the cost of one physical server, Windows server licensing and technical support; moved all library blackberry users to the town's blackberry server. This saved the library the cost of one physical server and blackberry licensing, Windows server licensing and technical support; provided support and training for library IT staff in a newly deployed virtualized system and will continue to support them; installed the video camera in the library McManus room and connected the cameras to the Town Hall TV control room through the fiber network. This enables the Town to carry library events to Cablevision channel 79 and AT&T, channel 99. Westport could have it's own book TV channel when it is ready. IT staff will continue to support this function. As of May 2011, the office of IT is taking over IT support for the Police Department and the marina office. The office of IT will take over primary care of the entire network infrastructure for the Police headquarters since the Police Department's computer analyst is retiring saving them money. All of the

end user technical software and user support calls for the Police Department will now add to the demands on the staff of the office of IT. IT will be supplying standby support of the Police Department on 24 hour/day notice every day of the year. All the Police Department service will be consolidated into the town's system. Town IT staff will now maintain the marina office network infrastructure which includes wifi. The Board of Finance is saying, 'We are going to encourage consolidation by some arbitrary cuts to budgets.' The IT office has been doing it for quite a number of years using everything they can to save this town money at a time when their responsibilities are increasing. So far, the Board of Education who is supposed to be doing the same thing has not signed in. Hopefully, they will. In which case, if there are specific proposals that are presented during the year to save money, then the IT department will take the necessary steps to do so and adjust its budget accordingly. The town IT staff supports all town departments, the public library and, now, the Police Department. They handle at least 5,000 support phone calls a year including weekends, nights and holidays. Since the Police and Fire Department are open 24 hours/day, every day of the year, the town's IT staff must be able to provide standby support to them on the same schedule. Here, we are talking two full-time employees remaining and some consulting help. Nowadays, we expect our computer system never to go down because we use email and the internet all the time. The town's network system supporters cannot take time off, not even on holidays. This can only be accomplished by and with sufficient IT resources. This year it was proposed to cut \$75,000 from a department budget request of only \$743,980 but more than 10 percent from its budget. The cut means that one of the three full-time IT employees must go and the town must provide more part-time consultants to provide support. During the same time period, when the town's IT staff is busy consolidating the town's Police Department and library functions in addition to its normal functions, there is a proposal to cut staff support. When you watch live meetings on the TV or from your personal computer anywhere in the world, there is a town IT staff person at work providing the service. When you use your notebook or smart phone in Town Hall or even at Compo Beach, there is a town IT person at work or on call maintaining or supporting your access. When you conveniently sit in your home buying beach vehicle parking emblems or performing other town functions online from the town's new website, have you noticed this wonderful technology bringing great things to our lives. These services are the result of hardworking town employees. Cutting the town's IT budget will reduce the public service and have direct impact on the daily work in every town department. Any down-time or delays of IT support to a town department will adversely affect that department's productivity. During our meeting with the town IT director, we asked many detailed questions about the town IT functions and responsibilities. We strongly feel a \$41,000 restoration is necessary to maintain just the basic IT service in all town departments including the public library. Of the \$41,000, \$25,000 would be to make sure we continue all of our streaming video and live town support and the remaining \$16,000 would go to the fees and services account so that the one full-time position would be replaced with a half time consultant just to maintain the status quo. I hope that you will support this motion.

Point of information, Allen Bomes, district 7:

If there is another restoration request to the same line, do you want to get them all on the table at once?

Mr. Rose:

Yes. I'd like to get all the numbers on the table at once. Then we can go to the public.

Mr. Bomes:

**I propose that we restore what the Finance Committee recommended, \$25,000.** Seconded by Mr. Wieser.

Point of information, Mr. Lowenstein:

If I make a motion to amend Jonathan's motion to restore \$75,000, then you'll vote \$75,000, \$41,000, \$25,000 in that order? [Yes.] I so move. **I move to restore \$75,000 to 157-01.** Seconded by Ms. Colburn.

**Members of the Westport electorate** (can address any or all of those numbers.)

David Royce, 387 Main street:

I am a stingy former Republican but I don't feel stingy tonight. I will speak in general terms and say that about half of you are old enough that you were into your work lives and your personal lives as adults when computing came in and took over. You can remember that after you got plugged in, the change was amazing. The quantity of your work doubled. The quality of your work doubled. When the your work was extremely technical, it quintupled. When you were dealing with huge stacks of paper and hundreds of people, your computing increased by the 20's and 50's and 100's, not your computing, your total work output. Then again, I guess about half of you were part of computing when you entered your work lives and your personal lives and were used to it but even you noticed that, when you didn't have the hardware or software, that you finally figured out you needed to change to, that you would get nearly as much output as you needed and then you got it. I would say as a summary of this that if you spend a dollar for computing in the Town of Westport government for computing, you are getting five to 10 dollars of equivalent work of the personal work of town employees. I think you can hit that number in your own mind. I think you can agree on the ball park. I'm not rich but my computers at home make the town's computers look sick. I'm sure your computers also, if you have done any comparison, make the town's computers look sick. I get myself a new computer once a year. They are my toys as well as my tools. The town, you would expect with our size of staff, would get 400-500 new computers a year. Then I am told that the town has not bought a new computer in three years, that the town is working from an attic and putting together computers, when they break, with paper clips and chewing gum. The results they get are again far worse than your computers at home. I'll just give you one final example of a difference in computing power. I researched today the best computer monitors in town hall. I am appalled at the little windows that people are peering into throughout their working days. How can you get much work done if you don't have 25 lines on

your screen? I looked up the best monitors in Town Hall. Not surprisingly, they were all foreign engineering. I also counted the pixels in those computers, the little colored dots. All together, those four computers had eight million pixels. All of my monitors have nine million pixels. All of my monitors have more pixels than the best four monitors in Town Hall. I'm not going to go into the guts of my computer because we don't have time but Town Hall computers look sick next to mine and sick next to yours. They can do a lot more to improve Town services and, I hate to say it, get rid of town employees. Eventually, a century from now, they are just going to build a round kiosk. There is going to be somebody who visits the kiosk once a year and digs out the guts and puts in another one and he's gone in five minutes. We are heading that way. Let's allow our Computer Department to head in that direction. Let's allow them to give us \$5 and \$10 for every dollar that you spend. I'm not suggesting that you restore \$25,000 or \$41,000 or \$75,000. I won't be satisfied until you give the computer department an extra \$75,000. You're not allowed to but I can want it anyway.

Steve Edwards, Director, Department of Public Works:

When you turn those computers in each year, if you drop them off in the Engineering Department, we will recycle it. To that point though, it is important to recognize that we live in a community that recycles almost four tons of electronic a month. My transfer station is taking four tons of electronics a month. That tells me that I've got a very active community that is into computers, that is into the whole IT scenario. Keep that in the back of your mind. We are talking about a public that is demanding of these kind of resources to the tune of four tons a month. The cost factor that you may not be aware of is that we are not seeing a direct budget line decrease with the IT that my department is using. My general account ledger is not going down. What I am being able to do with the GIS, with the varying AutoCAD programs, I am now doing engineering services in house that I have contracted out in the past. I got \$900,000 of projects going out in the next six months. We have saved about \$90,000 of engineering fees just by the fact of using our own in-house engineering capabilities. That's \$90,000. Now, granted, that's not a man I've lost. I've still got that man. As I told you last year, I am using that manpower but I am able to take those tools that are being provided through the IT Department, use that in-house and save money. So the town, on the capital side, where I am looking at capital and non-recurring, I am looking at the \$5 million. I am looking at \$10 million, those areas are where I am able to take some of those funds and use them internally and save money. We are relying on a day to day basis on those IT components. It's amazing what happens in our office when it goes down. I've got everyone scratching their heads and wondering what do we do next? It really affects the overall production. On the other side of it, from a general population point of view, we have walk ins regularly on a daily basis and they want to know about their own personal property. With the GIS system we have now, I can pull it up and I can show you where you can put that fence. I can show you whether that tree is on town property or not. These are issues on a day to day taxpayer basis that's able to save money. They don't have to go out and get a surveyor. They come in my office. They do it at home. They pull it up on a screen and, bingo, they've saved



\$500 in surveyor fees right like that. So, it is being used. It's a great help and, again, I support it.

Larry Bradley, Planning and Zoning Director:

Dr. Cunitz mentioned the streaming. That's very important to my department. Two years ago when my budget was cut, they cut \$18,000 out of my budget for the secretaries to take minutes of my meetings. They also tried to take the secretary from the RTM which you restored. We have never restored that position to our budget so we are very, very dependent on the streaming and the video recording that goes on at our meetings. That's really our only record of what goes on at the meetings. So, if that gets cut out of the budget, we have no way of recording what actually happens at our meetings. Statutorily, we are only required to take action minutes but we really need the minutes. As Dr. Cunitz said, when the RTM reviews our activities, you were dependent on those meetings to be put up on the website. That was all done by the IT Department. So, the RTM itself, is very dependent on that staff for your own activities. That's my first point. Second point is if any of you have come into my office in the last month to get a permit, you will know there is something different. We are now on a computerized permit system. All our permits are now entered into the computer and they are available on the website. You can go to the GIS and click on land use permits and you can see all the permits that we've issued in the last month. As we go forward in time, you will see decades and decades of permits like you do for the Building Department on the website, another thing that we depend on the IT Department for. The last part is the support and the projects that we'd like to do. We'd like to do imaging. We'd like to be able to take all of those documents that office full of paper that sits outside of my office and scan that, image that. We need IT staff to prepare that project and to get that project rolling. Then there is just the day to day activities. Everyone in Town Hall depends on the IT Department for day to day support. We have constant attack from computer viruses and emails that go down every so often. They do a great job in getting us back up as soon as possible. So, please, everyone in town hall is very dependent on the IT Department. I would ask that you restore as much as you can to the IT Department.

Maxine Bleiweis, Library Director:

So, tonight I'm speaking on behalf of the IT budget as it relates to the library budget. As you know, many aspects of the library world are becoming electronic. By being able to outsource as much as we can, it's really meant a lot in terms of moving our resources so that we can pay attention to what are specific to libraries and be able to use resources of others like our town to help in all of our basic computer services. We have the ability and chose to outsource to the Town. I would hate to take what we have gained in money from our budget so that we could meet a relatively flat budget and bring to you and have to go back out to outsource because the IT Department here isn't able to meet our needs. I would urge your serious consideration of restoration for this budget.

Chris Ackley, Fire Chief:

As you decide to make a decision on whether to restore this money or not, I ask you to include one thought in your process. The emergency services area, we rely heavily on the people who work with our computerized dispatch, our servers, our mobile data terminals and the information we rely on to do our job and deliver emergency services. As the Police Department is soon going to find out with the IT Department taking over that function, on call 24/7, I don't have to tell you when things break. It's not between eight and four or nine to five. We have a very good service from them. They understand our servers and our operations. They are efficient and responsive to the needs of the emergency service. If the position is cut, my question to you is who is going to fix our stuff on Christmas eve, on a holiday, at midnight, 4:30 in the afternoon? Who is going to come and do that? What person is going to have that knowledge ready to go? So, as we are saving money, the other end of the delivery of emergency services, there is a very real liability. There is the possibility it can cost us a lot more than saving a position. So, consider that in your request tonight.

Al Fiore, Police Chief:

I won't go through all the comments Chief Ackley made because you just heard them but I echo his comments. I couldn't agree with him more. The Police Department is very reliant on computer services. Everything we do now from writing reports to now issuing parking tickets relies upon a computer or a computer program. We had the luxury of having someone in house for the past 30 years and he did a lot of the work for us on a daily basis. He just retired recently and he hasn't been gone but a few days and we have already been calling on Eileen and really depending upon her and her staff to come over and to fix our problems. As Chief Ackley says, these are the problems that spring up at 3 a.m. or 6 a.m. and it's really not something that can wait for the next day or for a technician who might arrive who might be on-call through a contract service. It shuts down our business so we do have to rely upon them. We had this retirement. We did not fill this position. That's one less body here in town so there is a savings there and, quite frankly, to have a police officer doing IT work, it makes more sense to have someone from Eileen's Department to do that. We budgeted considering that she would be able to help us out with the information technology and we are really relying on her to provide those services for us. If she doesn't have personnel, then we certainly will suffer and, as a result, all the residents in this town will suffer. So, I strongly urge you to support for the restoration of funds.

Eileen Zhang, IT Director:

Our building officer Steve Smith had another meeting but he wrote something. I will read it on his behalf.

To the Board of Finance and RTM:

Since 1990, the Building Department has been using a computer automated permit processing system to issue tracking permits as well as processing fees. Since that time, the software was expanded to included to transmit information to the Tax Assessor's Office and the Tax Collector's Office. Over the years, the IT Department has offered assistance that is crucial to keeping our system up and running. I am

concerned that a reduction in their budget will adversely affect their ability to respond to calls from my office when our system is down. I strongly recommend that the IT Department be given enough operating funds to continue assisting us in a timely manner as they have in the past. From Steve Smith.

I just want to make one quick comment. In today's everyday life, individuals at work or at home, almost everyone with a few exceptions of seniors has a computer. The computer world gives you some problems, sometimes, and you experience viruses too. That is the function of IT in every organization. The impact of this is not just our department. The testimony of every department can tell you how heavily dependent they are on the computer support staff as well as their equipment to conduct their business. The IT function is like the electricity in the basement of your house. Without them, your house will not light up and similarly, your computer will not function. The public may not necessarily see us at work. They can support asking for more police officers, more fire fighters or ask for more recreation because this directly impacts the quality of their life. Our job is their back up to support their front line to support Westport residents. The only way Westporters will see us is through the website. At least now, we have a window of opportunity to show Westport. IT people manage the website, too. This is the first time people have the opportunity to see that IT people are serving them directly in some manner. But indirect service has a huge impact for all the major other departments. I do not have a commission to stand and support me but all the major department heads are speaking. I hope you can put this into consideration.

Paul Friia, Tax Assessor:

I wanted to reiterate what Steve Smith was saying about the connectivity between the Assessor's Office and the Building Department. IT was instrumental in getting us connected so that we can pretty much automatically download all the building permits into the system. We know how important it is to track the building permits to get out there and see all the construction that is going on. IT has made it possible to do that. Revaluation, hopefully the success of the revaluation was certainly in part because of the IT Department. I can't tell you the amount of times that I called Eileen during the whole process. She allowed us to have connectivity directly into Vision's data base in Massachusetts so that I could actually make changes in their data base when I felt necessary. There was one time back in December when we were looking for the 2005 data base and Vision had inadvertently erased it. I asked Eileen if she could find the data base for me and she went back and looked back and came up with this data base and we restored the entire data base. It's incredible. When there is a problem, I don't understand computers, I'm not a computer person as far as fixing them and understanding how the programs really work but when there is a problem and I call her, it's fixed. It allows me to continue on to do what I have to do. When we finish the revaluation, on the website, thousands of Westporters were able to go in and view their properties, do whatever research they needed to so when they had a problem or they had questions, they came in and they had the information right there. I would urge you to restore the money involved with the IT Department. It is money that is very well spent.

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Alicia Mozian, Conservation Director:

I, too, would like to speak in support of restoring the IT department's full budget for several reasons. One, I would say that no less than 200 inquiries a month come into my office for GIS information. Since it's now available online, I probably say that there's another 200 people who don't come into the office but probably access it from home. Two, I, as you have heard me over the years, say that I probably service no less than 10 boards, commissions and committees in this town with dozens of volunteers. I am not able to juggle all the balls in the air that I have to without my computer in being able to communicate with all these board members and provide them with the information that they need. To echo what Chief Ackley said about emergency preparedness, as you might also know, we are in the community rating system of the National Flood Insurance Program. Part of the residents of this town, almost 3,000 have flood insurance. They get a 10 percent reduction in their flood insurance rates based on what we do to as a community to prepare for flooding. Part of that is our mapping and our public outreach which is also dependent on the computer system. Finally, as an example, we just applied for approximately \$200,000 of grant money from different foundations which now require grant applications to be done online. Those are the kind of uses that my department has on a regular basis. Without the IT Department to have a well functioning system, we are up a creek.

John Kondub, Finance Director and, presently, Acting Personnel Director:

I am not here to talk about any of those specific departments right now. I am here to talk about the IT Department. You have just heard from eight of my professional colleagues here talk what a lifeline information technology is here. I go back to working when there was a main frame up there. It was antiquated. It was like working in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Eileen has brought us to working in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a lot of her innovations, different programs, her support staff. One anecdote. I could talk to you about what Paul just said about the reval. I could tell you about Peggy Klein, the Tax Collector with the links we have now that Eileen was instrumental in working with to get a link directly to our general ledger, a merge between the Munisystem and the tax-based system. I believe we filed for the reimbursements for the storm of 2010. FEMA had a specific excel format that we did not have here. It took the guys in the Fire Department a day to figure it out and I was with them a little bit when that happened. They called Eileen and Jamie and her department. It got turned around in 24 hours. We received \$340,000 faster than any other municipality in the State of Connecticut. That's all I have to say. I appreciate your support for Eileen's budget.

Patty Strauss, Town Clerk:

I wasn't going to say anything but I have to let you know the importance in my department since everyone else has. When I first came here 13 years ago, a lot of the records in my office had very nice and neat card file. They were great, alphabetized by street and by name, all in card files. Take a card, put it in alphabetical order and everyone who wants to come in can find the book page and go right to the other source and find it. Using Eileen, she lets me do my thing. She lets me go out and find my vendor, lets me decide what's best for the

town in getting these records on line. Like other department heads, I know what I want, the end result for the user but I don't know how to get there. She lets me find the vendor and then I say 'Hey Eileen, I'm ready. Please now talk to this vendor. We are ready to make this happen and connect it all together and make it electronically happen.' My department runs indexing software, we order records online. I have software for dog licenses. I am connected to the state DEP system for hunting and fishing licenses and I recently invited Eileen with me. I sit an advisory board for the state as we get ready to accept e-recordings for land records. I have offered Westport to be a test town on that. The only reason I am doing that is because I have the support of the IT Department that is ready and willing to promote e-reporting in this Town and make it a lot easier for lawyers, searchers, etc. to do their land records in this town. I can't live without her. I hope you will support full restoration, whatever she is asking for.

Mr. Rose:

After the RTM members have had a chance to speak, we are going to take sequential votes starting with the highest restoration amount. If that doesn't pass we will go to the next amount without further discussion and, if that doesn't pass to the least.

Point of information, Mr. Rea:

The finance committee was presented a request by the administration for \$25,000. That was the request that we acted on. Other motions are certainly in order but that was what the administration asked us for.

### **Members of the RTM**

Mr. Mandell:

Thank you Mike. That was the first question I was going to ask was what the administration asked for, so \$25,000 was what the administration asked for. I would be hopeful that, if the administration had come to the Board of Finance and made a presentation about losing the television service that the Board of Finance would have at least handed back an argument for restoring or not. We are without that. I have some questions that I have to ask about television service. Why is it important? First of all, this body uses them tremendously. Over the last couple of years, that is the only way we know what the other boards and commissions have said. By the budget cuts that have been done over the last couple of years, there are no minutes and Mr. Bradley got up and said that succinctly. We don't know what P&Z says unless we can watch it on television or are there. Mr. Cunitz said that he was out of town and actually got to watch something and was able to come back and utilize it properly. So, it's important for us to have it. Let me ask Ms. Zhang, the \$25,000 that we are talking about, is that totally for the television? How are we losing it and why are we losing it?

Ms. Zhang:

The \$25,000 is very clearly indicated in the budget attached to the detailed report. The estimated costs, based on previous year's record is around \$20,000. The \$25,000 cut in fees and services is translated because I did not ask for a full body restoration. I need a help desk at least to cover immediate needs. The

\$5,000 is partial. I intend to go to the Board of Finance after you adopt the budget to transfer the rest of the \$19,000 remaining from the salary line. The reason I didn't go to the Board of Finance was because the cut was unexpected. It took me a while to think about it because the meeting only gave me one week time to restore. It took me a while to be creative to think how I am not going to ask for restoration. I had to talk about it. We casually talked to the Board of Education too. That is part of the result of the talking, a memo indicated that they would give me some help. We don't have an official written commitment to anything but, in the meantime, I have to keep IT service running to support all the departments who depend on us.

Mr. Mandell:

The question is, of this money that is being removed, you have chosen to remove the television service out of that money. Could you have chosen something else.

Ms. Zhang:

During the Board of Finance meeting, I said if you cut \$25,000 in my fees and services, I might be able to find some savings. If the voter registration office can't retire software, we can find something else but this is all if, nothing is happening yet at this point. I'm talking to a company, Xerox, regarding a copy machine contract. These things are all in process. The bill comes in June. If we don't pay, we lose the software. An election is happening very fast, in November. In the meantime, I still have to continue to guarantee the necessary service and to continue to look for some possible savings. Restore necessary funding for the TV that was part of the same budget [line]. Now it is being cut. I was not prepared to find some other way but to cut some of the contract. I have not been able to fulfill that at this point. The Town Attorney is still talking to them. I even brought their manager to town and showed them the Board of Finance minutes. We are trying to do everything to bring costs down but in the meantime, if this \$20,000 is not restored, this TV broadcasting is part of that budget.

Mr. Mandell:

I have to say I am impressed by all of the other heads of the departments coming out and speaking in favor of IT and, also, thank all of you for staying so late and sitting through this. For me, personally, I can't see us losing the television service. I'm in for the \$25,000. It's up to the rest of you to convince me to go to the \$41,000 or the \$75,000. I'm not sold always on those things. There is no doubt that our residents need to see what we're doing, when they choose to do it either through a stream, archive or watching it live. For \$25,000, I don't think that's a consolidation issue. I do believe that it is something that we should restore. It is a small amount of money for something that is good for our community.

Dr. Ashman:

I come from the slide rule generation. I think this is a ludicrous conversation. We are in the IT generation. What are we IT generation. Why are we even questioning this? I don't understand at all. If I had my way personally, I would go to Eileen and say, 'How much money do you need? What do you need? How can

we improve?' Let's get to it. This is one place we cannot cut. We should give more. It's interesting. Think of your lives. How would we survive without our computers? I had trouble with my slide rule! Two suggestions, I'd like to make if I may. My son who is graduating Staples is an IT bug. He's pretty good. He got a job this summer with a very big local corporation. Have you considered getting interns in? Both at night and during the summer. These people are good and some of them are great. One suggestion. A second suggestion is I think you must get together with the Board of Education. This has to be one group. I think your department should expand. I understand you have three people. You could answer. This to me is not a discussion. You should go on to the next.

Mr. Galan:

I have a question for Mike Rea just to clarify. In your minutes, there are two lines for information technology. One was for \$75,000 which was defeated in committee but it was apparently requested.

Mr. Rea: It was requested by Mr. Lowenstein but not by the administration.

Paul Rossi, district 5:

First off, I'd like to thank John and the rest of the committee for a very articulate report. John picked it up. I was somewhat indisposed and he put fine points on the committee report, so, thank you. I am a card carrying member of the geek squad. I will stand here before you and tell you that I am biased in favor of IT. I am also stingy and will be stingy but not on this particular point. I agree with everything that has been said tonight. Let me give you a slightly different perspective and then I'll get off. I was amazed to learn from Eileen that she, as IT Director, personally gets involved in help desk support. She personally goes out and fixes PC's on people's desks as the IT Director. I come from that world. That's unheard of. We need people like Eileen setting policy, setting direction, managing the people. The perspective I'll give you that is I believe we are talking tonight about consolidation. Turn off and use is IT as a utility. That's the current buzz word. It should be a utility for both Board of Education and the Town for anything we need. There is tremendous opportunity for consolidation there. IT is the enabler of consolidation. If Eileen's time is spent doing help desk support, she cannot help facilitate consolidation. I'll leave you with that thought.

Gene Seidman, district 4:

I am in full support of full restoration for IT for many of the reasons you have heard but also I have personally worked with Eileen. I think she is amazing. You hear it from all of the department heads. Just two points: If things go down and we don't have the support of the IT function, then if, Al Fiore and the police, it's three in the morning and they need something fixed, they will have to hire someone at a very high rate to get that fixed on the spot to continue their work. If we don't have the function in house, you are going to spend more money going out of house. It will end up costing a tremendous amount more. Lastly, right now we are talking about computing and desk computers. Where everything is going is mobile technology. This is not the time to hold back here. Everything that is on our desk will be in our hands. The things that are happening right now are so

amazing and futuristic. The future has arrived and we want to be ahead of the curve. We don't want to be cutting this department. I hope that we restore fully.

John McCarthy, district 9:

I am going to support as I did in the Finance Committee meeting the full \$75,000. This is not the area to cut. If we could give Eileen more money, I would give her more money. She may not be able to fully articulate on a project by project basis exactly how the money is going to be spent. It probably will be spent wisely if projects are gated properly. That's why I am going to support the full \$75,000 although it wasn't asked for. There is just so much that can be done and should be done. She just needs the resources and the push to get the work done. I am going to say I'm happy to see that her colleagues in the town departments value what she does. I was disappointed to hear that as people are retiring, work is being taken out of departments and put onto her plate. It is disappointing that it takes a retirement before someone says 'I'm not going to do it myself anymore. I'm going to push it off to someone else.' I'd like to see leadership that comes forward and says 'You know what? My department is not the best place for this to be handled. There are other people in town government who can handle this in a more efficient and appropriate manner.' That would be true leadership, stepping up and saying, 'I've got the head count but this isn't the right place for this work to be done. I'll give the head count up to someone that might be able to handle this work more efficiently.' That's true leadership. That's the type of thing that this town needs, not waiting for someone to retire and then say, 'Hey, I guess I'm not going to do that anymore. I'll hand it off to someone else.' I fully support giving Eileen, her department, the \$75,000 back in the budget.

Joyce Colburn, district 6:

I'd like to ask Eileen to come up and just talk briefly about the state of our computers that all our departments have to use every day which is just one little part of this.

Ms. Zhang:

In my budget report, I have detailed out all the computers throughout the town. We have some virtual computers but the majority are physical computers, the box you can see and touch. We are slowly moving to a virtualizing environment which is nearly happening in the server now. The town, at this point, we have about 514 computers including the public library. More than half of that, 260 computers, are more than five years old which means they don't have a warrantee. The manufacturer only sells a warrantee up to five years. After that, it becomes a pure burden to them. It does not make any business sense to them so they no longer sell the warrantee. That means if a computer breaks down, we have nobody to call. We have to replace the hardware. What we are doing is we consolidate. We make two computers out of three. That's what we have been doing in the past three years. The only department to get new computers in the past three years is the Police Department. We have gotten some computers from the Police Department and used them for parts. That's what we're doing now. I just want to clarify, the decision not to replace the police officer was a discussion between me and the Chief and the Deputy Chief. We had a plan not to replace



that full-time person and try to find savings. Usually, IT does a lot of work but the savings is translated to other departments. It does not translate into here so we look like we are pure cost. We do a lot of work to help other departments do the savings. Tonight, other departments have testified whenever we helped them how it resulted in their department's savings. To cut their department flat including the retirement pension was the goal of the Police Department and the Library. They already said that so I will not repeat it.

Ms. Colburn:

Consolidation is another issue which people are talking about. Eileen just explained that she has been willing and able to consolidate. Can you explain how many people work for you and how many calls you get from your help desk and how you do this all? I don't know.

Ms. Zhang:

We have three full-time staff members at this point. We get more than 5,000 calls from all over town. Sometimes, I get calls from board members, commissioners and even the public. I don't reject any calls. If it is a question, I do answer them. I never to refuse to answer questions. It's just my nature. It's not my job. This has never happened to me. I don't know how to say it's not part of my job. Help desk, administrator, IT Director, I don't care about title or hats that I wear. This is my job. My job is to help people do their jobs. I usually don't define whatever because I think I am not the only person here. I heard so many complements to the Assistant to the Library Director when he retired. People put up all the Power Point presentation. George Wagner wears so many hats. We don't define ourselves by job titles. We do whatever it takes to get the job done.

Ms. Colburn: How many people do you have working for you?

Ms. Zhang: Three

Ms. Colburn:

You've heard from all the department heads. They think it is critical. There is an emergency management service that depend on Eileen. Our town depends on what she does. I think that we should restore the full amount. If we can't restore the full amount, the priority should be the technical help.

Ms. Ancel:

I may have foot in mouth disease in this one. I have a question. The outsourcing of the library's IT to Eileen's department is news to me. I wanted to ask Maxine, are you paying for that?

Ms. Bleiweis:

Yes. It is much less than \$285,000. We are paying an outside vendor to host some of our servers. That's what's been migrated over to the town. We will save somewhere between \$6,000 and \$10,000 by coming to the town.

Ms. Ancel:

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This is a good example of why department heads should go to the Board of Finance and ask for restoration. There are some major gaps in information without that part of the process. I agree that IT is not the area to skimp on. So, I will support restoration of some amount and I will surprise you..

Mr. Wieser:

Kind of singing the song I sang last year and sang in Finance Committee, just to state some of the obvious that's on the budget summary for comparison, we talk a lot, the Board of Finance has talked a lot about consolidation as a great thing. When you see all the department heads talking one department, you get the sense that consolidation can happen. In the Finance Committee, we talked about IT and Finance and Personnel being three areas, if you are going to consolidate, those are three areas to consolidate. It is interesting, in information technology, from 2010 to last year, the Information Technology budget was cut 16 percent and the request was to raise it one percent this year. With the cut, it was down 10 percent. When you cut a budget 16 percent one year and 10 percent one year, the place that you are going to consolidate, it seems like the formula is to consolidate and let the Board of Education do IT. If you cut 16 percent one year and 10 percent one year and keep on going, you don't have an IT Department in the town. You have a Board of Education which is cut .02 percent, a tiny part of their \$112 million budget. I don't know what went on in the thinking and how all that happened and really comment because that's all proceeding but we're heading in a different direction here. We talked a little bit about this in the Finance Committee, sort of joked about it but it's not really a joke when it comes to IT and Finance and HR is a little different because we don't have a spot there to fill. This is a theme I'll come back to in Finance as well. From a straight financial point of view, this is a great opportunity. I voted in Finance Committee to support the Selectman's request for \$25,000 and I voted against the \$75,000. Seeing all the support from the department heads who were willing to stay here to 11:45, I think they do a good job and they do what they can do and they tell us they need \$75,000. I think I'm going to go for \$75,000.

Mr. Rose:

We have now had eight people in a row speaking to one degree or another in support of restoring something. Does anybody want to speak against this? Does anybody feel compelled to speak in favor of it again. Mr. Lowenstein does.

Mr. Lowenstein:

Earlier in this discussion, Mr. Mandell said that he wants to be convinced that it should go above \$25,000. I want to try to do some of that right now. I made the analogy in my previous comments about the fifth question at Passover and so forth. Mr. Mandell talked about the Seder and the definition of Seder is order. One of the things about order that Seder asks of us is that it gets analyzed and one of the words that we use in Yiddish to describe the analysis is a "pippel". A *pippel* is basically splitting hairs, getting down to such a precise definition of something that it loses some of its meaning. I feel that we should not hang up over the question of whether this went to the Board of Finance or didn't go to the Board of Finance. I know to some of you people here, that is an important issue.

I'd like you to put that aside and consider this on its own merits. We've heard it in various ways. I think this is the engine of consolidation. The problem we've had is that consolidation has been described as the BoE and the town get together but actually this is consolidation. We have seen it in spades here with the IT Department. Let me tell you, consolidation doesn't come easy. I have been working in the library as a volunteer for a long time. I know that as much as they have tried, there are still problems getting the library system working in a seamless fashion with the town systems. It takes a lot of time and a lot of effort by the IT Department to make this happen. They want it to happen. The library wants it to happen. It will happen but it will not happen without a lot of work. We ourselves cannot ask for more money than the First Selectman requested but, believe it or not, the Board of Finance could have since they already asked for \$250 more than the First Selectman asked for in the Registrars budget. History can't be repeated. Maybe next year, if they don't like the way the First Selectman has budgeted IT, the Board of Finance will increase it. Tonight, I urge you to vote for the \$25,000. Jeff, you were one of five negatives on the Finance Committee. If we had the meeting tonight, it would have been at least five-four in favor. I'm hoping it will be at least 70 percent in favor of restoring \$75,000 tonight.

Ms. Batteau:

Just a quick idea based on hearing Eileen's Zhang's response to Joyce's question about the age of the computers, hearing that we have five and six year old computers and are trying to find parts. Let's remember that the Board of Education turns over a few hundred computers a year that are three years old or younger. You can find them out by the Bedford loading dock if no where else. Maybe we could use those for spare parts.

Mr. Bomes:

I support the administration request and Eileen's request of restoration of \$25,000. If the whole process, whether its with the Board of Education or some other town department and Eileen finds that she needs for more money, the process is she goes back to the Board of Finance and asks for more money. I don't see any reason why the Board of Finance wouldn't give it to her because as someone said, this is what's driving the engine. If more money has to go to IT, it will help the whole Town because some other area will end up with a smaller budget. I just think it's very silly that we are going to try to give somebody more money than they decided they'd need. That's just me.

Ms. Starr:

Just very briefly, I believe that the process is if the consolidation would take place, Eileen with the Board of Education, and Eileen's department would, hopefully, be the one consolidated into so Eileen would be in charge, that there would be some kind of recognition in the budgeting process so that the money that would go into IT in the Board of Education would either be saved for the general fund or go into IT "town side". The other thing is I agree with Allen Bomes that if you want to vote to restore, it would start with the smallest increment and see if anything more would be needed. I do think there is a bigger picture to this although a very strong case has been made. I will not restore the restoration for

some of the reasons which I do think, despite what some of the people who I do respect have said, there still is a larger context.

Stephen Rubin, district 7:

Eileen, just one very quick question, if you receive the \$25,000, which is the amount that was originally projected tonight, would you maintain your staff of three that you currently have? [No.] If you receive the \$41,000, would you maintain your staff of three. [No. Again.] So, for you to maintain your staff, you must receive \$75,000. Is that correct? [Yes.]

Mr. Rose:

We are ready for the resolution. Here is how we are going to do this. We will read the resolution with \$75,000 and take a vote on that. There is no more discussion. If that gets defeated, we are then going to go to the resolution for \$41,000, etc. \$75,000, \$41,000 and \$25,000.

**A motion to restore \$75,000 to account 157-01 of the town budget. The vote fails 22-13. In favor: Lowenstein, Suggs, Colburn, Urist, Ashman, Klinge, Rubin, Batteau, Schine, Flug, Heller, McCarthy, Milwe, Bruce, Guthman, Timmins, Galan, Meyer, Cunitz, Seidman, Wieser, Levy, Opposed: Rossi, Lebowitz, Talmadge, Bomes, Cherry, Rea, Green, Cady, Mandell, Starr, Keenan, Ancel, Rose.**

**A motion to restore \$41,000 to account 157-01 of the town budget. The motion passes 30-5. In favor: Cunitz, Seidman, Wieser, Levy, Lowenstein, Rossi, Suggs, Colburn, Lebowitz, Talmadge, Urist, Ashman, Klinge, Rubin, Batteau, Schine, Flug, Green, Heller, McCarthy, Cady, Mandell, Milwe, Bruce, Guthman, Timmins, Ancel, Galan, Meyer, Rose. Opposed: Bomes, Rea, Cherry, Starr, Keenan.**

Mr. Rose:

How many more motions for restoration will there be tonight? I am trying to determine whether to send Parks and Rec. home. Are you willing to stay to 1:15 a.m.? Stuart, you can go home. You will be right after the Board of Education. In sequence, we must finish the town budget before we go on to anything else. I think we can wrap things up without bringing people back.

Mr. Wieser:

**Back to finance, I move to restore \$75,000 to line 151-01 of the town budget, Finance Department.**

I'll be very quick because a lot has been said. We talked about this in Finance Committee. It is in the Finance Committee report. We talked at some length about the Finance Department and the fact that the Finance Department is a consolidating department, another department that is very active in all the aspects of consolidation that is trying to be accomplished through the Board of Finance and through all the difference of town departments. Rather than go through the litany of everything the Town Finance Department has done and

continues to do for all of us in all the different departments, I go back to the theme of my previous comments. Last year, the Finance Department budget was cut five percent. This year with the proposed budget cut, without restoration, the Finance Department is cut 11.5 percent. You look at the base line and you talk about where there is waste and where there is an opportunity to consolidate in the future but if you are looking to cut a wasteful department, you cut 10 percent out of a wasteful department. It's just hard to conceive that the Finance Department which does so much for all of our departments has 11.5 percent of fluff. Again, where we are increasing the town's budget by two percent, to take 11.5 percent out of such an integral department, I find it hard to support. Cutting 11.5 percent out of the budget is a great challenge. With the restoration, we will have cut five percent out of the Finance budget last year and a little over one percent this year which is in most cases doing its part. Eleven and a half percent for a department that is efficiently running and doing its job for all of us seems very excessive.

Point of information, Mr. Galan:

Was it \$70,000 or \$75,000 taken out of Finance? The minutes say \$70,000.

Mr. Kondub: The amount in question is \$75,000

**Members of the Westport electorate** - No comment

**Members of the RTM**

Mr. Guthman:

Now that John, in addition to being Director of Finance, is Acting Director of Personnel, it seems particularly inappropriate to now be cutting one more person out of his department. I talked earlier about the need to move forward on pension and medical. With no Director of Personnel, that's going to fall to the Department of Finance. It seems incredibly inappropriate to be cutting a person from the Department of Finance when we are asking him to take on additional work. Also, a point was made when we talked about the Director of Personnel that we weren't hiring anyone. It was an empty job. It was easy to cut the job because we weren't hurting anyone. In this case, we would be hurting someone. We would be eliminating a position. That's the only way to save that \$75,000. I think that's inappropriate at this time.

Ms. Colburn:

I'd like Ms. Garten to come up and explain the rationale for why she feels it important that we eliminate that \$75,000 from the Finance Department budget.

Ms. Garten:

I am not speaking for myself. I am speaking for the decision made by the entire Board of Finance. It was not a unanimous vote but it was a majority vote. I believe I stated the reasons earlier in terms of the Finance Department. The jobs of purchasing and payroll are two areas that we've talked about for a very long time in terms of consolidation with the Board of Education. There are examples of other towns who have consolidated the payroll function into one person and

one department. That's one possibility. In addition, another member of the Board of Finance raised the possibility of outsourcing payroll as an alternative way to save money. Those were the specifics. More general, we talked about looking at the Finance Department carefully and reorganizing the Finance Department.

Mr. Lowenstein:

I don't know if he was watching TV tonight but Ed Devlin was a familiar sight, certainly at our Finance Committee meeting, and often at the RTM meetings. I understand he has some health problems. But I mention Ed's name for one reason only and that is when we had meetings on the budget Ed would always say, 'We need more people in the Finance Department.' It's the place where you have all your controls. As I echo what Mike Guthman said, this cut should be restored 100 percent. I don't see the rationale for cutting it at all. Where are we headed? If you draw a straight line for the last two years, in seven years, we won't even have a Finance Department.

Mr. Rossi:

A question for the Finance Director: I agree this moves us in the direction of one entity to do purchasing. Does Parks and Rec. do their own purchasing in addition to the town and in addition to the Board of Education or does the town do purchasing for equipment? In other words, are there three purchasing entities?

Mr. Kondub:

Your question is how many different purchasing people are there within different departments? We have the one purchasing officer in our department, Mr. Kotcho works in our department. We have department heads who do do purchasing on their own. There are certain purchasing thresholds. Within different departments like Stuart McCarthy's, they have an account clerk who takes care of the paper work, the initiation of putting a requisition into the system. Basically, Tim Burke goes and buys a leaf blower. Somebody goes and puts a requisition in and it gets approved through the system. Those are all reviewed by our department. Every requisition is reviewed by our department, every requisition up to a certain dollar amount. Then I review anything over \$5,000. I know Chief Fiore has a person that handles basic department bills. We do allow certain latitude to do what they have to do to conduct business for the town.

Mr. Wieser:

To follow up on Helen's comments, you have one individual who handles payroll?

Mr. Kondub:

Yes. We have one person who handles payroll, like a coordinator of all the information, like a centralized system of reporting hours worked. Chief Fiore's staff will send approved payments for overtime and stuff like that. It transfers directly to our office after proper department approvals. That happens through this whole building and through the whole process. Chief Ackley, Stuart is not here, his person that has been mentioned about handling payroll, she gathers all that material and forwards it to our person. She does the function of making sure

people get properly paid, reviews the expenditures that are in question. Just one person.

Mr. Wieser:

If you were to get rid of that person and outsource that process, do you have any idea if you would save money?

Mr. Kondub:

That situation is under review by members of my staff. We haven't fully gathered all the answers yet. We have looked at Paychex and ADP. I would rather not get into specifics.

Mr. Wieser: It will cost to outsource.

Mr. Kondub:

It is going to cost to outsource. Then, you need somebody. Paychecks is not going to be sitting there gathering the hours and putting it into a form. You would have to have somebody there to coordinate what 15 other departments put into the system. That's it in a nutshell.

Ms. Batteau:

I have a question and I'm not sure who it is to. Maybe John, maybe Gordon. Why in the middle of budget season is our top financial officer, a professional, being asked to be Personnel Director? Is it contemplated that the job assignment will continue?

Mr. Rose: You can answer. If you don't have the answer, don't answer it.

Mr. Kondub:

I will answer for the Finance Department and as Acting Personnel Director. Our Personnel Director retired. Someone has to administer what is going on regarding pushing through a potential defined contribution plan, a possible rewrite of the non-union supervisory plan and the non-union non-supervisory plan. Someone has to supervise the staff that works there regarding updates on the various functions they do. I know we're having two Pension Board meetings. Someone has to look over that. I guess I'm best qualified based on my 35 years experience. That's the best way to say it plus I volunteered.

Ms. Batteau:

I get it but it seems quite an inappropriate overburden of your time particularly in the middle of budget season. Maybe that can be somehow offloaded.

**A resolution to restore \$75,000 to account #151-01. The motion fails, 20-15. In favor: Wieser, Levy, Lowenstein, Colburn, Talmadge, Urist, Bomes, Klinge, Rubin, Schine, Flug, Heller, Milwe, Bruce, Guthman, Timmins, Galan, Meyer, Cunitz, Rose. Opposed: Rossi, Suggs, Lebowitz, Ashman, Batteau, Rea, Cherry, Green, McCarthy, Cady, Mandell, Starr, Keenan, Ancel, Seidman.**

No other revisions in all sections up to Parks and Rec. #800's. Parks and Rec. will be taken up tomorrow night after education.

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Patricia H. Strauss  
Town Clerk

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jacquelyn Fuchs".

by Jacquelyn Fuchs  
Secretary



**ATTENDANCE: May 2, 2011 Budget meeting #1**

| <b>DIST.</b> | <b>NAME</b>           | <b>PRESENT</b> | <b>ABSENT</b> | <b>NOTIFIED<br/>MODERATOR</b> | <b>LATE/<br/>LEFT EARLY</b> |
|--------------|-----------------------|----------------|---------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1            | Diane Cady            | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Matthew Mandell       | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Elizabeth Milwe       | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Judith Starr          | X              |               |                               |                             |
| 2            | Linda Bruce           | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Michael Guthman       | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Jay Keenan            | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Sean Timmins          | X              |               | X                             | Arr. 7:45 p.m.              |
| 3            | Amy Ancel             | X              |               |                               | Arr. 7:35 p.m.              |
|              | Robert Galan          | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Bill Meyer            | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Hadley Rose           | X              |               |                               |                             |
| 4            | Jonathan Cunitz, DBA  | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Gene Seidman          | X              |               |                               | Arr. 8:00 p.m.              |
|              | George Underhill      |                | X             | X                             |                             |
|              | Jeffrey Wieser        | X              |               |                               |                             |
| 5            | Barbara Levy          | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Richard Lowenstein    | X              |               |                               | .                           |
|              | Paul Rossi            | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | John Suggs            | X              |               |                               |                             |
| 6            | Joyce Colburn         | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Paul Lebowitz         | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Catherine Talmadge    | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Christopher Urist     | X              |               |                               |                             |
| 7            | Arthur Ashman, D.D.S. | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Allen Bomes           | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Jack Klinge           | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Stephen Rubin         | X              |               |                               |                             |
| 8            | Wendy Batteau         | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Heather Cherry        | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Michael Rea           | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Lois Schine           | X              |               |                               |                             |
| 9            | Eileen Flug           | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Kevin Green, Ph. D.   | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | Velma Heller, Ed. D.  | X              |               |                               |                             |
|              | John McCarthy         | X              |               |                               |                             |
| <b>Total</b> |                       | <b>35</b>      | <b>1</b>      |                               |                             |

**Attachment 1****Roll Call Vote: Account #153-01 Restore \$50,000 to Personnel Budget**

| <b>DIST.</b> | <b>NAME</b>           | <b>ABSENT</b> | <b>YEA</b> | <b>NAY</b> | <b>ABSTAIN</b> |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| 1            | Diane Cady            |               |            | <b>X</b>   |                |
|              | Matthew Mandell       |               |            | <b>X</b>   |                |
|              | Elizabeth Milwe       |               | <b>X</b>   |            |                |
|              | Judith Starr          |               |            | <b>X</b>   |                |
| 2            | Linda Bruce           |               | <b>X</b>   |            |                |
|              | Michael Guthman       |               | <b>X</b>   |            |                |
|              | Jay Keenan            |               |            | <b>X</b>   |                |
|              | Sean Timmins          |               |            | <b>X</b>   |                |
| 3            | Amy Ancel             |               |            | <b>X</b>   |                |
|              | Robert Galan          |               | <b>X</b>   |            |                |
|              | Bill Meyer            |               | <b>X</b>   |            |                |
|              | Hadley Rose           |               | <b>X</b>   |            |                |
| 4            | Jonathan Cunitz, DBA  |               |            | <b>X</b>   |                |
|              | Gene Seidman          |               | <b>X</b>   |            |                |
|              | George Underhill      | <b>X</b>      |            |            |                |
|              | Jeffrey Wieser        |               | <b>X</b>   |            |                |
| 5            | Barbara Levy          |               | <b>X</b>   |            |                |
|              | Richard Lowenstein    |               | <b>X</b>   |            |                |
|              | Paul Rossi            |               |            | <b>X</b>   |                |
|              | John Suggs            |               |            | <b>X</b>   |                |
| 6            | Joyce Colburn         |               | <b>X</b>   |            |                |
|              | Paul Lebowitz         |               | <b>X</b>   |            |                |
|              | Catherine Talmadge    |               | <b>X</b>   |            |                |
|              | Christopher Urist     |               |            | <b>X</b>   |                |
| 7            | Arthur Ashman, D.D.S. |               |            | <b>X</b>   |                |
|              | Allen Bomes           |               |            | <b>X</b>   |                |
|              | Jack Klinge           |               | <b>X</b>   |            |                |
|              | Stephen Rubin         |               | <b>X</b>   |            |                |
| 8            | Wendy Batteau         |               | <b>X</b>   |            |                |
|              | Heather Cherry        |               |            | <b>X</b>   |                |
|              | Michael Rea           |               |            | <b>X</b>   |                |
|              | Lois Schine           |               | <b>X</b>   |            |                |
| 9            | Eileen Flug           |               | <b>X</b>   |            |                |
|              | Kevin Green, Ph. D.   |               |            | <b>X</b>   |                |
|              | Velma Heller, Ed. D.  |               | <b>X</b>   |            |                |
|              | John McCarthy         |               |            | <b>X</b>   |                |
| <b>Total</b> |                       |               | <b>19</b>  | <b>16</b>  |                |

FAILED

Attachment 2

**Roll Call Vote: Account #157-01 Restore \$75,000 to IT budget**

| <b>DIST.</b> | <b>NAME</b>           | <b>ABSENT</b> | <b>YEA</b> | <b>NAY</b> | <b>ABSTAIN</b> |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| 1            | Diane Cady            |               |            | X          |                |
|              | Matthew Mandell       |               |            | X          |                |
|              | Elizabeth Milwe       |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Judith Starr          |               |            | X          |                |
| 2            | Linda Bruce           |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Michael Guthman       |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Jay Keenan            |               |            | X          |                |
|              | Sean Timmins          |               | X          |            |                |
| 3            | Amy Ancel             |               |            | X          |                |
|              | Robert Galan          |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Bill Meyer            |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Hadley Rose           |               |            | X          |                |
| 4            | Jonathan Cunitz, DBA  |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Gene Seidman          |               | X          |            |                |
|              | George Underhill      | X             |            |            |                |
|              | Jeffrey Wieser        |               | X          |            |                |
| 5            | Barbara Levy          |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Richard Lowenstein    |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Paul Rossi            |               |            | X          |                |
|              | John Suggs            |               | X          |            |                |
| 6            | Joyce Colburn         |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Paul Lebowitz         |               |            | X          |                |
|              | Catherine Talmadge    |               |            | X          |                |
|              | Christopher Urist     |               | X          |            |                |
| 7            | Arthur Ashman, D.D.S. |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Allen Bomes           |               |            | X          |                |
|              | Jack Klinge           |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Stephen Rubin         |               | X          |            |                |
| 8            | Wendy Batteau         |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Heather Cherry        |               |            | X          |                |
|              | Michael Rea           |               |            | X          |                |
|              | Lois Schine           |               | X          |            |                |
| 9            | Eileen Flug           |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Kevin Green, Ph. D.   |               |            | X          |                |
|              | Velma Heller, Ed. D.  |               | X          |            |                |
|              | John McCarthy         |               | X          |            |                |
| <b>Total</b> |                       |               | <b>22</b>  | <b>13</b>  |                |

FAILED

**Attachment 3****Roll Call Vote: Account #157-01 Restore \$41,000 to the IT budget**

| <b>DIST.</b> | <b>NAME</b>           | <b>ABSENT</b> | <b>YEA</b> | <b>NAY</b> | <b>ABSTAIN</b> |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| 1            | Diane Cady            |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Matthew Mandell       |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Elizabeth Milwe       |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Judith Starr          |               |            | X          |                |
| 2            | Linda Bruce           |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Michael Guthman       |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Jay Keenan            |               |            | X          |                |
|              | Sean Timmins          |               | X          |            |                |
| 3            | Amy Ancel             |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Robert Galan          |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Bill Meyer            |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Hadley Rose           |               | X          |            |                |
| 4            | Jonathan Cunitz, DBA  |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Gene Seidman          |               | X          |            |                |
|              | George Underhill      | X             |            |            |                |
|              | Jeffrey Wieser        |               | X          |            |                |
| 5            | Barbara Levy          |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Richard Lowenstein    |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Paul Rossi            |               | X          |            |                |
|              | John Suggs            |               | X          |            |                |
| 6            | Joyce Colburn         |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Paul Lebowitz         |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Catherine Talmadge    |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Christopher Urist     |               | X          |            |                |
| 7            | Arthur Ashman, D.D.S. |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Allen Bomes           |               |            | X          |                |
|              | Jack Klinge           |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Stephen Rubin         |               | X          |            |                |
| 8            | Wendy Batteau         |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Heather Cherry        |               |            | X          |                |
|              | Michael Rea           |               |            | X          |                |
|              | Lois Schine           |               | X          |            |                |
| 9            | Eileen Flug           |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Kevin Green, Ph. D.   |               | X          |            |                |
|              | Velma Heller, Ed. D.  |               | X          |            |                |
|              | John McCarthy         |               | X          |            |                |
| <b>Total</b> |                       |               | <b>30</b>  | <b>5</b>   |                |

PASSED

## Attachment 4

**Roll Call Vote: Account # 151-01. Restore \$75,000 to the Finance Department**

| DIST.        | NAME                  | ABSENT | YEA       | NAY       | ABSTAIN |
|--------------|-----------------------|--------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| 1            | Diane Cady            |        |           | X         |         |
|              | Matthew Mandell       |        |           | X         |         |
|              | Elizabeth Milwe       |        | X         |           |         |
|              | Judith Starr          |        |           | X         |         |
| 2            | Linda Bruce           |        | X         |           |         |
|              | Michael Guthman       |        | X         |           |         |
|              | Jay Keenan            |        |           | X         |         |
|              | Sean Timmins          |        | X         |           |         |
| 3            | Amy Ancel             |        |           | X         |         |
|              | Robert Galan          |        | X         |           |         |
|              | Bill Meyer            |        | X         |           |         |
|              | Hadley Rose           |        | X         |           |         |
| 4            | Jonathan Cunitz, DBA  |        | X         |           |         |
|              | Gene Seidman          |        |           | X         |         |
|              | George Underhill      | X      |           |           |         |
|              | Jeffrey Wieser        |        | X         |           |         |
| 5            | Barbara Levy          |        | X         |           |         |
|              | Richard Lowenstein    |        | X         |           |         |
|              | Paul Rossi            |        |           | X         |         |
|              | John Suggs            |        |           | X         |         |
| 6            | Joyce Colburn         |        | X         |           |         |
|              | Paul Lebowitz         |        |           | X         |         |
|              | Catherine Talmadge    |        | X         |           |         |
|              | Christopher Urist     |        | X         |           |         |
| 7            | Arthur Ashman, D.D.S. |        |           | X         |         |
|              | Allen Bomes           |        | X         |           |         |
|              | Jack Klinge           |        | X         |           |         |
|              | Stephen Rubin         |        | X         |           |         |
| 8            | Wendy Batteau         |        |           | X         |         |
|              | Heather Cherry        |        |           | X         |         |
|              | Michael Rea           |        |           | X         |         |
|              | Lois Schine           |        | X         |           |         |
| 9            | Eileen Flug           |        | X         |           |         |
|              | Kevin Green, Ph. D.   |        |           | X         |         |
|              | Velma Heller, Ed. D.  |        | X         |           |         |
|              | John McCarthy         |        |           | X         |         |
| <b>Total</b> |                       |        | <b>20</b> | <b>15</b> |         |

FAILED