

RTM Meeting  
Tuesday, May 5, 2020

**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, 2021, 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, 2021, 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, 2021, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.
4. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance, to adopt a budget for the Wakeman Town Farm Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.
5. To take such action as the meeting may determine, to require that property taxes for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, 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, subject to any applicable tax relief deferral programs, 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, subject to any applicable tax relief deferral programs.
6. 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.

**Minutes**

Moderator Velma Heller:

Good evening. This Representative Town Meeting is now called to order. We welcome those who are joining us from home. My name is Velma Heller and I am the RTM Moderator. I want to review the procedures for this electronic meeting because as you know, pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order, we are using Zoom. It will be live streamed on [westportct.gov](http://westportct.gov) and shown on Optimum Government Access channel 79 or Frontier Channel 6020. I did not mean to imply that the governor ordered us to use Zoom but, rather, we are allowed to conduct our meeting electronically and we are using Zoom. Members of the public who wish to have their comments read during public comment period for each agenda item may email their comments to [rtmcomments@westportct.gov](mailto:rtmcomments@westportct.gov). I would advise you to do that as soon as possible so that we can get your comments in when we are dealing with public comments. We will make every effort to read comments if you state your full name and address and are received during the comment period for each agenda item. We will try to give time as much as possible. Public comments are limited, as always, to three minutes. Please note that meeting materials have been posted and are available at [westportct.gov](http://westportct.gov) along

with the meeting notice that was posted on the meeting list and calendar page. Now for our invocation and Pledge of Allegiance. Tonight's invocation will be presented by one of Westport's valued First Responders, Marc Hartog who is Deputy Director of Westport's Emergency Medical Services. An experienced Emergency Services Administrator, Certified Paramedic with a Masters of Public Administration, he is skilled in disaster medicine, public safety, and preparedness. You may recognize Marc Hartog from his other community involvement. This veteran medic is also a talented actor who you may have seen on stage at the Westport Community Theater. He has also worked in Wilton, New Canaan, Darien, Stamford. He has taken on many roles in everything from murder mysteries to dramas to comedies, a real slice of life, not unlike the experience in EMS. The stage is yours Mark, please go ahead.

Invocation, Marc Hartog, Deputy Director, Westport Emergency Medical Service:  
Good Evening. Thank you so much for that incredible introduction. I didn't know you knew so much about me. I'm so pleased and honored to be with you this evening, and grateful to Jeff Wieser for inviting me to give this invocation. I'm especially honored to be representing the staff and volunteers of Westport Emergency Medical Service. As I'm sure you all know, since you just approved our budget last night, Westport EMS is a division of the Westport Police Department. As Deputy Director of Westport EMS, I am responsible for the operations of our Town's 911-response paramedic service, reporting to Deputy Chief Arciola who also has the title of Director of EMS. We staff three ambulances with seven town employees and almost 100 volunteers; personnel, whether paid or volunteer, work shifts in our headquarters 24 hours per day, 365 day per year. Together, we respond to over 2,400 911 calls each year, treating patients suffering from cardiac arrest and heart attacks to motor vehicle accidents, from strokes to industrial accidents, difficulty breathing to falls, imminent childbirth to sporting accidents, and anything else imaginable, and sometimes unimaginable, in between. Well, the unimaginable has certainly reared its head in full force over the past eight weeks. I have been a career paramedic for 40 years. I worked in the New York City EMS system for 20 years, during the heroin epidemic in the early 80's, the AIDS crisis of the mid-to-late 80's, the first World Trade Center bombing in 1995, and bioterrorism scares of the late 90's. I was hired by the Town as a staff Paramedic for Westport EMS in March 2000, and worked through hurricanes, nor'easters, and blizzards. After becoming Deputy Director 10 years ago, I helped train and plan for responses to mass shootings as they became all too common; I've been the lead instructor on Narcan training for all town first responders to help combat the opioid crises of the past few years; and I lead the Westport EMS Stop the Bleed initiative, training members of the public on tourniquet use. I thought I had seen it all, done it all, that nothing could faze me anymore. But then COVID-19 appeared. At first, reading about the outbreak in China peaked my medical interest. As it spread to Italy and Syria, I began to get nervous. When the outbreak in New Rochelle occurred, I became alarmed, and knew it was only a matter of time until we got hit with it. With the help of senior staff at the Police and Fire Departments, we dusted off infectious disease procedures that hadn't regularly been used or excersized for years. We quickly held refresher training for EMS, police, and fire personnel in the use of Personal Protective Equipment. We regularly reviewed new and updated information from the CDC, and incorporated their recommendations and best practices

into our own guidelines. And so, when the first notifications of the now infamous party came in, we were ready, we didn't have to play catch-up. One day after that notification, Westport EMS responded for our first patient with suspected COVID, prepared and equipped to ensure that we could provide the best possible patient care while protecting our personnel. And it has been non-stop since. Even for this veteran of EMS, the unprecedented nature of this pandemic is frightening. But what has mitigated my fear is the incredible way this town has pulled together to help fight it. Westport EMS personnel, be they paid staff or volunteer, knowing the personal risk they face, continue to work shift after shift and take care of patient after patient in a battle against this virus. They are truly on the front line in this fight, and I am in awe of them. If you ask any EMT or Paramedic, they will tell you they are not heroes, that they are just doing the job they chose. Well, I'm here to tell you they *are* heroes, that none of them, paid or volunteer, ever foresaw the level of risk into which they would be putting themselves to take care of the victims of this disease, and I am just amazed by them and filled with gratitude and respect.

They are not the only ones who have my gratitude and respect. Unlike many town employees, I am a 30-year resident of Westport, and I am so proud of how my home town has responded to this crisis. Residents who are doctors and nurses are battling the virus to the point of exhaustion, despite facing critical shortages of PPE. Other essential workers go to their jobs every day, with lesser PPE than our first responders have, knowing the risk that they take in leaving their homes. Town employees, whether working from home or coming in to their departments, are keeping the operation of the town going. And residents who cannot go to work are supporting those of us who have to be here, emotionally, financially and calorically – I never thought I would say this, but if I never see another slice of pizza it may be too soon. The outpouring of good will and well wishes, the donations of PPE and fundraisers for more, and the donations of meals almost every day, supporting not only us but the restaurants in town, has been truly inspiring. As the Deputy Director of EMS and as a Town resident, I also want to express my sincere gratitude to First Selectman Marpe and Police Chief Koskinas, and not just because they are my bosses - they have been exemplary leaders throughout this crises. In addition to them, the entire team making up the Town's Emergency Operations Center Incident Command Group, comprising EMS, Police, Fire, Human Services, Finance, Public Works, Health District, and Board of Education employees has functioned as well as any similar team I've seen in my 40 years of emergency service. In the midst of this long-duration medical incident, Westport EMS is indeed the frontline response agency handling patient care, but we would not be able to do so without the support and backing of all town departments. I've known for a long time how special the men and women of Westport EMS, as well as the other emergency services, are. I've known for a long time how special the Town of Westport is. I'm not sure I really knew just how special, until the past eight weeks. Unfortunately, this fight is not over. We have to plan and prepare for continuing spikes of patients suffering from this virus; we have to continue purchasing and stockpiling PPE to keep our emergency personnel safe for months and months to come; we have to be prepared to support each other no matter how long it takes to eradicate, or at least control, this virus. But this is an incredible town, filled with hardworking employees and caring residents, who have pulled together during a time of unprecedented crisis, and who will continue doing so

well into the future. I'm so proud to be a part of both groups, and I know that together we will weather this storm no matter how long it lasts. Thank you for allowing me to address you this evening maybe taking a little longer than I had initially planned for but I truly appreciate the opportunity to speak to you. Stay safe everyone!

Dr. Heller:

Thank you. I want you to know how much we appreciate your taking the time to be with us this evening. Also, for us having the opportunity to have an inside view not only you and your background and all of that but what it's like for first responders in your role to carry on on a day-to-day basis, the awesome authenticity of it and understanding your view of this whole situation really reaffirms our gratitude for the first responders and the kind of work you do so thank you, again.

Now we have a pre-recorded presentation of the Pledge of Allegiance produced by Matt Mandell. We are all feeling very proud of Matt for having done that. I was saying to a couple of people, this is part of our hometown feeling and I think it is part of how we feel about our town and our town bodies.

Assuming that the business of our meeting is completed tonight, our next RTM meeting will be on June 2.

### **RTM Announcements**

Matt Mandell, district 1:

Thank you, Velma, and it was a pleasure putting together. It took some doing putting it together technologically but the outcome is excellent. I thank every RTM member who sent in a video to participate in it.

So my announcements are Chamber of Commerce stuff as you can see by the banner behind me, I am setting up my home studio for tomorrow night's live event. As you can see, it is called Zoom Westport Retail as you can see here. Is it is an event where we are going to go live into 12 retail organizations and see what they are doing... What are they selling? How are they selling it? How can you safely retrieve it and pick it up when you do that? We will also have a musical interlude and we'll also have a chef doing a chef demonstration. So, it will be an engrossing one hour period of time from six o'clock to seven o'clock tomorrow night, Wednesday, May 6 and you can sign up either by zoom on the chamber website; you can watch it on Facebook live via front porch and thank you very much first Selectman Jim Marpe for allowing this to be shown on channel 79, as well. So, anybody can see this whether you have technology or you don't. As Mark said, most importantly, this is a health emergency. People are suffering and people are going out of their way to help people out. But also, we have an economic issue and we are trying to help that. But health wise, that should come first but now we are going to try to do the economic side. Tomorrow night, six o'clock, please, everybody join me and see what's going on with our retail with Zoom Westport Retail.

The Chamber of Commerce is not done. Everybody knows we have Supper and Soul so why not move it into take out and have Take-Out and Soul Dinner Concert. What we've done is we've hired one of our bands, David Wax Museum who came here a year ago and we are bringing them back. So, for \$35, you can have a takeout meal, from any one of, I think, it's 17 Chamber restaurants and then come home and click and watch the show. What we are saying is the screen may be small but the music is still big so support your local restaurants; support a struggling artist who can't tour and help the Chamber to continue to bring the things that are important to our town. We do not have to stay in stasis. We can find new things to do. So, tomorrow night at six o'clock we've got Zoom Westport Retail and 15 May, we have Stay Home and Soul. Hopefully, you'll join me up both of these things. Back to you, Velma.

Dr. Heller:

Thank you, Matt. I want to remind RTM members, when you speak, please state your name and district.

There were 36 members present.

Additions or corrections to the most recently distributed minutes were requested at the previous meeting but you know if you see any at a future time, you can always contact Patty Strauss or Jackie Fuchs or myself.

Getting on with the business of the agenda, I'd like to emphasize, as I did last night, that although it may seem like we are progressing rather quickly through a large budget, you should know that the RTM Education and Finance Committees, as well as other RTM members, have been meeting about this budget and discussing it with the Board of Education since January and so tonight's meeting is a culmination of all of their hard work.

I'd like to thank the School Administration, the Board of Education, the Board of Finance and both RTM committees for all of their hard work in connection with this budget. Tonight, we will be addressing the remaining resolutions of agenda item #1. So, we'll address two resolutions. One is to approve the Board of Education budget and the second is to approve the town budget as a whole which is both components.

Just a reminder that, in accordance with RTM rules, no new agenda items can be addressed after 11:30 p.m. unless a 2/3 majority of RTM members present agree to continue past that time.

When we turn to the public tonight after we hear from the Education and Finance Committees, members of the Westport electorate may address the Education Budget in an email. Comments received during the public comment period which include your full name and address will be read by RTM Deputy Moderator Jeff Wieser.

When the RTM begins its review of the budget, if there is a motion with respect to the Budget, I will open the floor back up to the public to comment on that specific item.

When we turn to the RTM, any RTM member who wishes to comment, make a motion or discuss the budget will raise their hands to be recognized - comments are limited to 10 minutes.

A reminder about voting: The RTM may approve or decrease a budget line item by a simple majority vote. The RTM may restore an amount requested of, but not recommended by, the Board of Finance by a vote of 70 percent of RTM members present and voting, but in any event, not less than a majority of the RTM, which is 19 votes. The RTM cannot increase any budget item beyond the amount of the request to the Board of Finance. An abstention is not a vote and is not counted as a vote.

I ask the Finance Director Gary Conrad to please keep a running total so that we know where we are when we get to the end. I would like to remind everyone of the conflict of interest provision as stated in last night's meeting

**The secretary read item #1 of the call - 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, 2021, and to make such specific appropriations as appear advisable.**

### **Presentation**

Candace Savin, Chair, Board of Education:

I'm going to do the intro and then I will hand off to members of our Central Office Administration. Thank you very much. It is very nice to see all of you. I kind of like these meetings because now we don't get to see each other at all so at least I can see some of you on zoom. Also, I want to take a moment to brag about my zoom skills. I managed to figure out how to change my background and I managed to put in a picture of our beloved Staples High School where I hope we will return soon. I'm going to give the same presentation that I made to the RTM Finance Committee and Education Committee so I apologize, in advance, for those of you who have already heard it. Needless to say, the world has changed significantly over the last month or two months. One thing remains the same. The Westport schools are a flagship district in academics, and the visual and performing arts, in athletics and in Special Education. Over time and with care and intention, we have built a district that is consistently top-ranked and is a draw for young families across the region. The task for all of us charged with leadership of our outstanding schools is how can we best continue this forward momentum and best position our schools to deliver excellence in an increasingly challenging environment. We live in a community with high expectations that values excellent education for every child. That is the promise of Westport and in order to deliver on that promise, we need to continue to do best. Over the last several years, the Board of Education has delivered budgets with very low annual increases, 1.79 percent last year

and 1.57 percent the year before. But, in each of those years, the Board was able to take advantage of unique cost saving circumstances to meet the fiscal goals of our funding bodies. Unfortunately, we had no such unique circumstances to help us this year but we worked closely and collaboratively with the Board of Finance. We were able to work together to deliver our budget to meet the educational needs and also meets our fiscal goal. This year the Board of Education completed the most rigorous budget review in my memory. This year was not business as usual and we pushed our administrative team to create efficiencies, increase productivity and postpone any non-urgent purchases. So, we come to you today to seek the funding we need to continue to deliver excellent education for every child in Westport. Elio Longo is going to go over the budget in more detail but I would like to take just a moment to frame the discussion and offer some high level perspective on the drivers of our funding needs

In developing the budget this year, we faced unique challenges. First, our planned reentry into CMS as an eighth school building and as a grade six to eight middle school requires the rehiring of 9.0 FTE's along with the replacement of some supplies and technology.

Second, we seek to comprehensively address necessary facilities investments as highlighted in our Master Plan Facility Study commonly known as "The Antinozzi Report", a goal we share with the Board of Finance.

And third, we face a substantial increase in health care costs.

Given these fiscal challenges and the desire of the Board of Education to work in partnership with our funding bodies, the Board was aggressive and preemptively removed \$2,613,601 in expenditures from Dr. Abbey's original proposed budget, exclusive of facilities. For example, despite the added FTE's required to reopen CMS, our budget actually reflects an overall reduction of 5.1 FTE's. Through a rigorous process, we finalized a budget that is fiscally prudent, but that retains the excellence that Westport residents expect of their school district.

And when the Board of Finance asked us to cut more, we worked together to absorb that cut without compromising on education – a combination of guarantees from the Board of Finance to backfill certain shortfalls and an increased reliance on carryover funds encouraged by the Board of Finance has allowed us to forgo any restoration request.

Over the last decade our per-pupil cost has gone up while our enrollment has gradually declined. I would like to take a moment to talk about what is driving this discrepancy. Some of it has to do with evolving student needs and their staffing implications. Staffing increases over the last 10 years are, in part, attributable to the Board of Education's legal and ethical mandate to provide a free and appropriate education to every student. Over the last 10 years the Board has been successfully adjusting FTE's to enrollment in most areas. Regular or General Education Teachers and Encore or Specials Teachers have decreased largely in alignment with decreases in enrollment. Fewer students for

those classes require fewer teachers. But, over the same period of time we have seen an increase in our Special Education staffing. In the past 10 years, we have seen an increase in Special Education diagnoses and a corresponding 17 percent increase in IEP's. Accordingly, we have seen a substantial increase in both Special Education teachers, 15 percent, and in Special Education paraprofessionals, 28 percent. The increases in staffing directly correlate to the increases in student needs. At the same time, the cost of each FTE – regardless of their discipline or specialty -- keeps going up due to our contractual obligations and due to the rapidly rising cost of health care. When you consider that almost 81 percent of our costs are personnel, you can see that these increases have an enormous impact to the cost of delivering education.

Before I turn things over to Mr. Longo, I want to highlight the fact that the Board of Education made a very intentional innovation to its budget request this year. This year, our request was broken down into two parts: an operating budget request and a facilities budget request. And that facilities budget request of \$2,857,274 represents a 32.7 percent increase over the current school year. I know we are all committed to making these necessary facilities investments and now that commitment is showing up in our proposed budget. By presenting the budget in this way, we on the Board hope to highlight the need for comprehensive facilities investment, and the need to do it without irrevocably degrading our educational excellence.

All of this is to say that the Board of Education recognizes the fiscal challenges of delivering excellent education to every student and we have worked hard to deliver a budget that is fiscally responsible. But we must also be educationally responsible and be mindful of the risks to excellent education for every child if we cut too deep. And resources are especially dear heading into this next school year as we work to ameliorate any educational toll the school closures have taken on our students, both educationally and emotionally. If we invest wisely and intentionally in our town's greatest asset, I know that Westport Public Schools will remain a flagship district far into the future. Thank you for your careful and thoughtful consideration of our budget request and I will now turn it over to Elio Longo.

Elio Longo, Schools CFO:

I appreciate the opportunity to present fiscal year '21 proposed budget to the full RTM. It up it pleases me to see that you all appear to be in good health, safe at home and I hope it is true for your families, as well. At this time I would like to share my screen for a PowerPoint presentation. This evening, the Central Office Administration Team will present the Westport Public Schools FY21 proposed budget which was recently revised at the Board of Education meeting of April 13, 2020. The Westport Schools many times as recognized by State and National organizations and one of the many achievements and accomplishments of our tremendous students, staff, and administrators. In the NICHE ratings, Westport is the best school district in Connecticut. It also rates WPS as number 28 in the United States. Just yesterday, Principal Thomas, the Principal of Staples High School, announced to the Board of Education and to Central Office Administration that our students and staff at Staples High School have been recognized as number eight large school district in the country for financial awareness on a



personal investments level. So, again, tremendous achievements and accomplishments by both staff and our students. I would like to step you through the basics for FY21 as we developed it over the course of six to eight months. Dr. Abby serving as the Interim Superintendent of Schools, proposed on 6 January, 2020 to the Board of Education, a budget marked at \$125 million. In dollar terms, it was an increase of approximately \$6.8 million, the equivalent of a 5.7 percent increase. Within 48 hours Dr. Abby with the help of the Central Office team revised the proposal to mark it at \$123.9 million having total reduction of \$1.1 million, having reduced the budget to a 4.8 percent increase year over year. When presented to the Board of Education, there was a request to the Central Office made by the Board of Education to prepare a budget with a target increase of 3.5 percent. Dr. Abbey's Central Administration responded with a budget marked at a 3.41 percent with a view of recommended reductions that were added back at a later meeting of the Board of Education and we settled on a Board of Education proposed budget without the Antinozzi year one improvements of \$122.4 million or 3.53 percent. In order to fulfill our commitment of improving our facilities both the short-term and the long-term, the Board of Education accepted the administration's recommendation to add Antinozzi year one improvements at an operating level of \$834,000. We have a Board of Education proposed budget with the proposed Antinozzi year one improvements marked at \$123.2 million or 4.24 percent increase. When the Central Administration presented the proposed Board of Education budget to the Board of Finance, the Board of Finance response was a reduction of \$1,327,000. The Board of Education accepted the Board of Finance target reduction and the Board of Education is presenting a budget of \$121,936,487, a 3.12 percent increase over the current year operating budget. So, how did we reconcile the Board of Finance \$1.3 million reduction? In Account 102, which is our personnel turnover savings, when I joined the District back in 2013, the Contra Account, as it is better known as, had a target reduction of \$100,000. That \$100,000 is an estimate of the turnover savings in staff either from attrition, retirements, resignations over the course of a year. In recent years, the \$100,000 savings was increased to a level of \$450,000. What the Board of Education is proposing in its current budget, is to increase it to \$550,000 as our target for next year. There will be some risks and challenges, especially given the uncertain economic times, but we are comfortable having made the recommendation to the Board of Education. In Health Insurance, Account 210, Westport Public Schools is a member of the State Partnership Plan offering. When we joined the State Partnership Plan two years ago, there were cost savings of approximately a couple million dollars per year. The initial release of estimate rates for the upcoming year were pushing 10 percent. They were recently revised to 6.5 percent. The makeup of the 6.5 percent was a 3.5 percent year over year increase and a Fairfield County surcharge of seven percent to be split over two fiscal periods. So, basically, three plus 3.5 percent, 6.5 percent. The Board of Finance backstop at 6.5 percent was an arrangement, an offer, by the Board of Finance to the Board of Education to backstop the Board of Education should the actual rate increase at the end of the FY21 exceed 6.5 percent. So, when we built our initial budget, I had factored in a 10 percent increase. The Board of Finance proposed to the Board of Education to reduce the 10 percent to 6.5 percent for a cost offset of \$550,000 with the guarantee that they would backfill the Board of Education should the actual cost exceed 6.5 percent. In Account 413, one of our utilities accounts, our electricity account, it's

approximately a \$2 million line item for the Board of Education, the Board of Education recently approved and we ventured into contracts for virtual net metering and at this time I would like to acknowledge the work of First Selectman Marpe and Mr. Conrad because this is, yet, another example of partnership between the Board of Education and the town where the town helped the Board of Education to basically piggy back its contracts. My estimate of savings for this fiscal year electricity, \$150,000. In Account 435, Building Projects, our Facilities Department oversees approximately half a dozen accounts. Contained within this six accounts, we have Account 435 which is building projects. When the Board of Education commissioned a facilities study report from Antinozzi, Antinozzi returned a 10-year forecast exceeding \$95 or \$96 million. It's not straight linear. It's weighted heavily toward the early years. If memory serves me well, it's \$11 or \$12 million for the first year's recommended improvements. So the task that was assigned Mr. Hunyadi, who is the Director of Facilities, and his team was to prepare an operating budget removing operating related items from the first year recommendation setting aside capital for the capital budget. The total operating recommended from the Antinozzi report for year one comes in at \$833,000. When we presented the budget to the Board of Finance, the Board of Finance felt that the Antinozzi estimates were a little bit on the high side. I would agree that some of their cost estimates were a little bit high so we were asked to mark it at 70 percent for a reduction on paper of \$250,000. Should the actual improvements exceed in total 70 percent estimate, the Board of Finance will back fill the gap for the Board of Education. In Account 736, Equipment for Instructional Improvement, working with our Director of Technology, Ms. Carrigan, she identified \$8,000 of offset for Chromebooks purchased for distanced learning. These were planned for next year. It was a net savings of \$8,000 given the current district learning. In 812, working with our Athletics Director, Student Athletics for rentals, a reduction of \$14,000 to proposed rentals. These were expanded rentals that were originally proposed for the upcoming budget. And the Carryover Account, in order to close the gap and meet the Board of Finance target of \$1.3 million, our budget includes a drawdown of \$254,828 of the Board of Education's Carryover Account. The current balance is \$369,000. It will leave a balance of approximately \$115,000 after the draw. This screen is further detail of the Antinozzi Report for the upcoming year's recommended improvements. Mr. Hunyadi has identified three levels of improvements: Priority 1 to address Life Safety issues; Priority 2 to address the Educational Environment; Priority 3 to address the Building Envelope. The original total was \$834,000. If we net out the Board of Finance backstop of 30 percent, \$250,000, we arrive at a revised budget of Antinozzi improvements in year one of \$583,000. We have a footnote on the slide that the Board of Finance backstop will be based on competitive procurement and a quarterly projects review. For enrollment, working with our demographers, the elementary level, K-5, the increase year to year is 27 students, the middle schools combined, a decrease of 58 students and at Staples High School, a decrease of 12 students. At the Stepping Stones Preschool, one of the gems of our community, at Coley Elementary School, the enrollment proposal for fiscal year 20/21 is 84 students, and increase of 14 students over the current 70, so that is a 20 percent increase. This is in large part to address the ratio between Special Ed. students and typical students to get closer to a one-to-one ratio in the pre-school classrooms. Ms. Savin mentioned earlier that district-wide enrollment has been declining for a number of

years. I wouldn't describe it as being a precipitous decline. We look back to 2014 to the current year, 2019/2020, there appears to be almost a leveling off over the course of the next five to six years and then perhaps a bit of pick up in Fy29/30. This slide dates back to 2013 which was the last year the State Department of Education collected the data of strategic school profiles. What we have here is the percentage enrollment of student population. So, in Westport, the number of eligible students that attend public schools is 90 percent as compared to New Canaan, 84 percent, Greenwich 73 percent and Darien 86 percent. To me, this speaks volumes of the way the public embraces public schools here in Westport with 90 percent of age eligible students enrolled in public schools. The cost composition of combined salaries and benefits is 81 cents on the dollar. If we look at discretionary spending, supplies and equipment, it is approximately 2.5 cents of a dollar. The total percentage composition: When I was asked to prepare a current service budget, which is really a rollover budget, take all of your employees that are in place today, all of the programs in place and simply roll them from year to year. The budget projection from year to year is marked at a 3.9 percent increase. The straight out of the gate salaries contribute 1.6 percent toward the total of 3.9 percent. The original proposed budget was a 4.24 percent increase on the Antinozzi Report. Yes, there was an increase of 3.9 percent to 4.24 but, in terms of our salaries, salaries dropped 1.37 percent and even the benefits had dropped 1.34 percent. The segment that was increased was in the "Others" category due to the Antinozzi recommendations. The revised budget which we are presenting this evening at 3.12 percent shows a further reduction to salaries, benefits and other line items in order to meet the total reduction proposed by the Board of Finance of \$1.3 million. This evening, I am joined by Dr. Abbey, our Interim Superintendent and my fellow colleagues on the Administration Team. At this time, I'd like to turn it over to Mr. Bayers, our Director of HR and General Administration.

John Bayers, Director of Human Resources and General Administration:

Thank you Elio. Good evening everyone. So the slide that before you speaks specifically what was needed to open Coleytown Middle School in terms of staffing. On the left side, we have the certified staff. We are returning one Assistant Principal, a position that we took out of the budget this current school year. That would bring us back to the full complement for the next school year. In addition, six core teachers, the core teachers refers to English, language arts, social studies, science and math teachers. During the current school year, we were able to reduce the number of core teachers due to the fact that the combined schools allowed us to be more efficient with scheduling. When we separate out the two schools now, we need to return six new teachers to run our teaming approach at the middle school level. We also will return the Library Media Specialist, another position that we temporarily removed this past school year. We are reducing a psychologist and a social worker. These were positions that we added this past school year to address the larger middle school to have enough supports in the mental health areas for our students. We are also reducing a half-time support teacher both through this part of the budget with the reopening of CMS and you will see overall in the district so a combined increase to open CMS with certified positions would be 5.5 FTE. On the non-certified side, we are looking to bring back a half-secretary. This brings us back to the full complement we had in the past. One

paraprofessional which would be tied to the school library. This is critical when the Library Media Specialist is collaborating throughout the building to make sure that the library is open at all times for students. We are also adding back another position that we temporarily removed this past year and two custodians. We did remove two custodians to address the closing of Coley Middle but we had to maintain a certain number to help with Bedford Middle School as well as one custodian who has been working with the Building Committee this past year. We've also added a Security Aide this past year, an extra one at Bedford, to address the large number of students, the portables and the campus. We are going proposing to reduce that position going into the coming budget. It's something we may have to address on a temporary basis due to the delayed opening of Coley Middle but that is something we will address moving forward. So, overall, to reopen Coleytown Middle School, we need to add nine total FTE to make the building complete as we open. Looking at the numbers from a financial perspective, the overall increase in certified staff would cost just under \$450,000; non-certified staff, \$140,000; benefits associated with those positions, \$240,000; supplies, as Mr. Longo mentioned earlier and Ms. Savin, as well, roughly \$45,000; and the technology, \$117,000. It should be noted that this past year, we removed some of the larger technology pieces from Coleytown Middle School, such as the Smart Boards which met needs in the middle school as well as other schools in the District. The total is just shy of \$1 million for Coleytown Middle School. Now, if we look at staffing at all the other locations in the District, you will see on the Certified side, a reduction of 5.6 Certified staff. This includes one administrator. We currently have two Elementary School Curriculum Coordinators reducing to one Elementary School Curriculum Coordinator. Our principals will be taking on more responsibilities to address the change in leadership. We are also reducing two elementary teachers. This is based on our enrollment numbers. What I think it is interesting and I will show in an upcoming slide that the overall increase of 27 students at the elementary level, if you spread the 27 out across the District, we are still adhering to Board guidelines in terms of class size which is different from K-2 and 3-5. At the K-2, it's 22 students and at the 3-5 level, it's 25 students. Overall, there is a reduction of one section proposed at Saugatuck Elementary School and one at Coleytown Elementary School so, I will speak to that more as we move forward. There is also a half-time support teacher. I referenced this earlier when we were looking at the Coleytown Middle School slide. Together that's one full position. There is a Coordinator of Information Technology, this is a person who works very closely with Natalie Kerrigan. This is a half-time position. We believe we can absorb that with the talent we have in the district. On the non-certified side, we are not replacing a position that is currently vacant in Mr. Longo's office. This is the Operations Manager. We feel we can work out the differences in the department and still maintain our office. We are also reducing a Central Office secretary. This is a half-time position that is currently vacant and we have elected not to fill that position, as well. Again, we feel we can meet the needs. We are further reducing our Special Education Para-professionals by seven and I will allow Ms. Leffert, our Interim Director of Personnel Services to elaborate further but I want to assure everyone that this does not include any paraprofessionals who are directly linked to students requiring one-to-one paraprofessionals through their IEP's, Individualized Education Plans. We are also reducing one regular education paraprofessional in the District and looking at the overall

changes in enrollment, we feel that this is appropriate. We are going to be adding a half-time Security Aide at Staples High School. This is for the evening hours, specifically. We feel it is critical given the nearly 24/7 access to Staples and all the various things that go on and the fact that many of our students are there in the evening for activities. We feel this is a safety measure. We are also adding a half-time Occupational Therapist based on the needs of Special Needs students. I forgot to mention, I apologize, on the Certified side, we are also adding a .4 position of Speech and Language Pathologist based on the needs of students with Special Needs. Overall, looking at the other locations, we are looking at a reduction of 14.1 positions. If we combine the two, the opening of Coleytown Middle School as well as the reductions we are working on across the staff, there is an overall reduction of 5.1 FTE in the District. Looking at some of the trend data when we look at our staffing, if we go back to the '13/'14 school years, teachers, regular education, the 102 Account in our budget books, this refers to the classroom teachers at the elementary level, the core teachers I referred to earlier in the teaming structure at the middle school level and at the high school level, it includes English, language arts, social studies, math and science. It does not include world language, you can see, over time we have had a significant reduction. I think it's important to note, when Mr. Longo spoke earlier about the contra account being at \$100,000, not only was the account previously at \$100,000, we also used to carry three reserve teachers in the budget for many years and that came out of the budget only a few years ago. If you put those three reserve teachers on the top of the changes we've made to the contra account, that's a significant swing addressing how we are dealing with turnover over these past number of years. Although it's not shown here, I referred to world language which would be the 103 Account, when we look at our special area teachers: physical education, STEM, all of those classes that fall in that category, since 2016 to present, we've seen a reduction of nearly 10 positions in that area, as well, all due to enrollment. To further illustrate the point, when I took over as Principal at Greens Farms Elementary in 2008, there were 24 sections of K-5 students in that building. Today, that building currently has 18 sections, a reduction of six over that time period. That further illustrates the fact that the district looks closely at the enrollment numbers and adjusts the staff as needed.

Mr. Longo:

Thank you John. At this time, I would like to call on Ms. Ann Leffert who is our interim Director of Pupil Personnel Services.

Ann Leffert, Interim Director of Pupil Personnel Services:

This slide is in direct opposition to the previous slide in that even with declining enrollment of students in the district, our student needs in the area of Special Education and related services has increased over the years. What you see here is an increase in staffing, a little over five positions over a seven year period. It is in direct relation to the needs of students in our district. This slide takes a look at what is called the prevalence rate, the percentage of students in the district and in the state identified with a disability. The blue bar that you see is the percentage of students in the district identified as needing Special Education and related services. If you look at that blue bar over time, you are going to see an increase in the percentage over the last five years. If

you take a look at the yellow bar, that is the prevalence rate across the State of Connecticut. You'll see that bar also gradually increasing. It's a trend across local and State percentages of disabilities. It is also a national trend. We tend to see the increases of students needing services in a couple of major areas: One is the number of students identified with autism; the second group are students with emotional and mental health issues. We are seeing an increase in identification of students in that area, as well. This chart goes hand in hand with what we see with our teaching staff. This is our paraprofessional staff. We have a number of students in the District identified as needing a paraprofessional with them throughout the day. You'll see the dramatic drop there is where we are proposing reducing seven paraprofessional positions. In looking at the needs of our students, not all students are identified needing a one-to-one paraprofessional. Many special education paraprofessionals work out of resource rooms and support multiple students. What we are looking to do here is to very carefully look at the needs of our students. The worst thing we can do for our students is have them dependent on an adult as they advance in their learning up through middle school and high school. So, we are looking for ways to increase that level of independence in students by pulling back reasonably some of that support that they might be receiving in their classrooms. It's a trend that I've seen in another district where I worked and, of course, any student who is identified as needing a paraprofessional on their Independent Educational Plan, we would provide that support but we think that mostly we will be able to reduce that support mostly in the areas of students to be independent. The last thing a student needs in middle school and high school is an adult sitting next to them while they are trying to communicate with their peers. But again, no student who needs that support will go without that.

Mr. Longo:

Thank you Ann. On this slide, we have more detail on the Health Insurance Account. The State Partnership Plan, the preliminary estimate which was released earlier in the calendar year by the Office of the State Comptroller was an estimated increase year after year of eight percent with a Fairfield County surcharge of four percent to be split over two fiscal years. So, adding the two percent, year one to the eight percent yearly increase, we arrived at 10 percent which was the budgetary number for the original proposal. Year over year with an increase of 10 percent, the Board of Education's cost is approximately \$15 or \$16 million a \$1,585,000 increase or 1.34 percent of the total budget increase. The recent revised estimate from the State Comptroller's office, they lowered the year over year of eight to three percent but they changed the Fairfield County two year adjustment from four to seven percent over two years so, combined, the projection with the Fairfield County rate is 6.5 percent or \$1,030,000. The difference between the \$1.6 million and the \$1,030,000 is the gap the Board of Finance is willing to address should our actual cost exceed 6.5 percent. Detail on facilities and the Antinozzi Report: As I mentioned, the Schools' Facilities Department oversees six accounts. In Account 421, Contracted Services, is \$660,000, Building Maintenance \$472,000, we have Grounds Maintenance, Building Projects, Grounds Projects and Restorative/Preventative Maintenance. The total request for the upcoming fiscal year is marked at \$2,170,000 compared to the current fiscal year of \$2,076,000. Within the operating budget, it is a 4.5 percent increase. When we add the Antinozzi year one, at

the reduced rate, this is reduced by the 30 percent discount, It is \$583,000 to Mr. Antinozzi's cost estimate for building projects which is \$282,000, we arrive at a total of \$866,000 for the upcoming year. So the total facilities budget for the upcoming fiscal year budget is a total of \$2,857,000, as Ms. Savin mentioned in her opening remarks, a 32.7 percent increase year over year. In our final slide, we hope to capture here our budget goals. Our budget goal is to remain and continue to grow as a lighthouse district; a commitment for both the Board of the Education and the community at large for a two middle school system; an expansion of the preschool at Coleytown Elementary School to address the ratio between the Special Education students and their typical classmates; an investment in the safety and security of our staff and students in all of our facilities; we always follow all Federal and State mandates; we believe our budget is very responsive to the Master Plan Facility Study commissioned by the Board. All of this is guided under the watch of producing a fiscally responsible budget. I thank you for this opportunity and I turn it over to Dr. Heller.

Dr. Heller:

Thank you so much to Mr. Longo and all the others who participated. We really value the thoroughness of your presentation.

**Members of the Westport electorate – no comments**

**Committee reports**

Education Committee, Lauren Karpf, Chair, district 7:

Thank you for a terrific presentation. I will summarize my report in the interest of time. Hopefully, everyone has had a chance to read it. Members of the Board of Education and administration met with the RTM Education Committee on April 29, 2020 via Zoom. Present were David Abbey, Elio Longo, Anthony Buono, Anne Leffert, John Bayers, Candice Savin, all nine members of the Education Committee, Velma Heller, and some members of the public. By way of background, in January 2020, the Superintendent proposed a budget amounting to a 5.74 percent increase over last year's budget. After extensively reviewing and revising the Superintendent's Proposed Budget, the Board of Education presented a proposed budget in the amount of an increase of 4.24 percent over last year's budget. With some real collaboration between the Board of Education and the Board of Finance, the Board of Finance approved a budget of an increase of 3.12 percent over last year's budget. The Board of Education decided not to seek restoration. In an effort to minimize the impact of the Board Of Finance funding cuts and in the spirit of collaboration, the Board of Education and the Board of Finance agreed on reductions as Elio went through in health care costs, in building projects, with backstops included and the Board of Education to utilize \$254,828 from its carryover account to cover one-time expenses (likely supplies and equipment) but not recurring costs. During the meeting, the Committee focused its discussion on both short-term and long-term fiscal challenges, changes to the delivery of education, the reopening of CMS, and the need to maintain our school facilities. In terms of fiscal challenges this budget year, as we heard, salaries and benefits comprise 81 percent of the total budget. When combined with costs of purchased services and contracted maintenance, the total expenditure of 'non-discretionary' funds equates to almost all total spending. Moreover,

the health care costs are projected to increase by approximately \$1,000,000. We heard about the facilities improvements based on the Antinozzi recommendations which total an increase of 4.5 percent over last year's budget. We heard about Special Education costs and staffing also continue to escalate as more students qualify for Special Education services. The reopening of CMS is a fiscal challenge as well. First, as a year over year comparison, we are comparing seven school buildings this year to a budget for 2020-2021 with eight school buildings. Moreover, the Board of Education needs to increase staff to account for the extra school building. Specifically, it needs to add 5.5 certified full time employees and 3.5 non-certified full time employees to CMS to operate the school and support two full teams at each grade level. Those costs amount to \$828,232 in salary and benefits for next year. There are also costs to replace supplies and equipment at CMS, amounting to \$161,888. Thus, total costs for the expected reopening of CMS total approximately \$1,000,000. That said, the overall staffing at all schools excluding CMS decreased in the 2020-2021 budget by 14 full time positions. The reduction is based on declining enrollment, a redesigned approach to noncertified staffing, and a reorganization of Central Office operations. During our meeting, the RTM Education Committee acknowledged the work of the Board of Finance and the Board of Education, especially in light of difficult financial constraints. The Committee, the administration, and the Board of Education discussed the importance of a strategic plan going forward to implement structural changes in order to improve efficiencies and decrease costs. This will take shape as the new Superintendent and the Board of Education work toward a redistricting plan to best utilize our school buildings. While enrollment is declining, it is not enough of a decline to greatly impact the number of classes needed or the budget at large. We also acknowledged that families might move to Westport from New York City due to Covid-19, but that also should not have a true impact on the budget. We discussed Covid-19, in general, and the reopening of school with anticipated changes to the classrooms, and how that might impact the budget. While it is too premature to have an in-depth discussion until the Board of Education learns more from the State, the Board of Education and administration assured us that they are working through various planning scenarios. Similarly, we discussed contingency plans if CMS is not ready by the anticipated October date, and how BMS will operate if they decide not to move students into CMS after a specified date. The Committee acknowledged the continued efforts of the Board of Education to balance quality education and fiscal responsibility. We discussed the fact that the Board of Education removed \$2.6 million from the initial proposed budget, and thanked them for acting proactively and in a fiscally prudent manner, and for their collaboration with the Board of Finance. Moreover, the Committee thanked the administration and the Board of Education for their hard work over the past two months in such challenging circumstances. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend RTM approval of the Board of Education Proposed 2020-2021 Budget.

Finance Committee, Rick Jaffe, district 1:

Before I get started, it's time for a little advertisement. This comes from last night's meeting. It's from my RTM Technology Committee report. The COVID-19 disaster immediately and completely changed the way the town conducts business, closing offices, forcing people to work from home and meetings to go online and yet our town's



computing and communication systems made the transition smoothly and only because of careful planning, groundwork, talented and dedicated staff. That's your local IT Department and now back to our show.

We had a very professional presentation by the education people and a most excellent presentation by the Education Committee. Let's look at a couple of related issues and I'll try not to repeat too much of what you've just heard. On April 23, 2020, the RTM Finance Committee met over Zoom with all the people who were in the education presentation you just heard as well as the Education secretary Elaine Whitney. The entire Finance Committee was present: Jeff Wieser, Jessica Bram, Seth Braunstein, Greg Kraut, Christine Meiers Schatz, Stephen Shackelford, Laurent Soloff, Cathy Talmadge and myself. The total education budget, as we've heard, is 62 percent of the total budget for the town. This percentage of the total budget has remained steady over the last four years. As you can see in the table, the total Education budget is \$131,429,948, up 2.41 percent over the current fiscal year's budget. The vast majority of the total Education budget is the Board of Education's operating budget. So, we've got four budgets in one here. We've got the Board of Education operating budget of \$121,936,487, up 3.12 percent over the current fiscal year. We've got the Revenue Offset budget, also called Program Expense for some reason. It holds the budgeted revenue for the Stepping Stones Preschool, which pays for itself. The third budget is Aid to Private Schools, which includes pupil transportation, and Special Education and health services support. Finally, debt services is the fourth budget. It's a number presented to the Board of Education by the Town, and represents education's fair share of Town debt service. Think of good planning if our total debt goes down, and think of good fortune if our interest rate on that debt goes down. The RTM Finance Committee members present voted unanimously to approve all of the education-related budgets. We have heard the Board of Education's goals; in short, we are determined to maintain a top-notch school district over the long-term with everything that implies. Key points: As we look back in time, we see that the operating budget has been steady for four years, increasing just two percent per year until the 3.12 percent increase for this coming year. We should feel good about this budget which has come to us only after a lot of hard work but there are some asterisks we have to attach to our good feeling. One of those asterisks is that our costs have been rising and continue to rise in the face of the multi-year slow down trend in our student enrollment. The education budget is something of a team effort. It's thanks to the guidance of our Selectman's Office preaching prudence, the stewardship of our Board of Finance, the efforts of our education administrators and the Board of Education, the originally envisioned operating budget of the Board of Education absorbed significant reductions of \$3.1 million before it comes to us tonight. It's worth noting, by the way, that this year the Board of Education made no restoration request for funds cut by the Board of Finance during preliminary debate. We heard that the reality of the education budget is based on people. Eighty-one percent of the cost of our education budget is in salaries and benefits, people costs which is fixed by contract. In our education budget, it is very difficult to cut costs without cutting staff. In this budget, we see the result of a concerted effort by our education planners to hold down on staffing without sacrificing the quality of the education product we offer to the children of our community. We also note that with benefits comprising about one-fifth of

our people costs, any increase in health care costs such as the coming year, it has a big impact on our budget. We heard about unique challenges from the Finance people, a whole list of challenges. Education has their own unique challenges. We heard about health care costs increasing substantially. There is a 6.5 percent increase in health insurance costs, approximately \$1 million built into the proposed budget. While overall enrollment has been decreasing, Special Education needs have been increasing. This is a State-wide trend. It's a little less in Westport than State-wide but we are still suffering from the same trend. Special Education students require more costly services than general. I believe that 13.2 percent of our students this year are classified as being in need of special services. We are doing a good job now addressing facilities. Coley is coming back online. We have our facilities needs assessment, the Antinozzi Report we heard about in the presentation. It's a 10-year, \$96 million plan to repair the town schools. Preventative maintenance and improvement are budgeted this year at \$2.2 million. Health, safety and protection of our very expensive grounds and buildings is of paramount importance. So, the budget is not quite all roses. As we saw on Mr. Longo's slide 4, I believe, the final round of budget cuts requested by the Board of Finance before they saw a budget they liked came to \$1,327,000. The Education folks achieved these reductions across seven budgeting categories, with the biggest cuts coming in three categories: Health Insurance, Building Projects, and the "Carryover" Account. The Carryover Account is a special account. It can hold certain (under budget) savings from one year over to the next year, so that the Education folks don't have first to return unused money to the Town, then ask for the money right back for next budget. Cuts in all three of these categories require a little explaining. The cost of Health Insurance must be estimated because the State has not yet told us what that cost will be. The final round cut in our Health Insurance budget results from a judgement by our Board of Finance that the real cost of health insurance likely will be more in line with the recent "revised estimate" by the State Comptroller, which would be lower than what our Education people estimated originally from the Comptroller's "preliminary estimate". To guide the Board of Education, the Board of Finance uses the word "backstop". A backstop, I believe, is a promise by the Board of Finance that if the Board of Education expense goes over budget in that particular category, the Board of Finance promises that it will approve a Board of Education request for supplemental funding. There's a problem here. The Board of Finance can only approve expenses up to \$20,000. After that, they come to the RTM. So the Board of Finance uses the term backstop. It's a tool used to get the budget in line. It's a very effective tool because it works. It's all good except it is going to work until it doesn't work. The Board of Education will go over budget. They will go to the Board of Finance who will vote to give supplemental assistance and it will come to the RTM where we will be boxed into a corner with the Board of Finance having promised an increase that is really our responsibility to approve. So, perhaps we want to talk to the Board of Finance in the future about the backstop. Similarly, in the Building Projects account, the Board of Finance exercised its collective judgement: first, that the true cost of certain of the budgeted building projects likely will be less than the estimates in the Antinozzi Report. We know how this works. The professional consultants don't want to estimate too low because they will be accused of unprofessional work and the Board of Education doesn't want to budget too low because they don't want to have to come for supplemental funding. The Board of

Finance recognizes this and says ‘We’ll backstop you at 70 percent.’ There is a second reason for the backstop at 70 percent which is the Board of Education hasn’t increased staffing to oversee all these building projects. I think the Board of Finance really thinks it won’t be possible to get all the projects both started and completed in this year without an increase in oversight from our own people. This expense, too, has been “backstopped” by the Board of Finance. Finally, the Board of Finance authorized the Board of Education to pay a certain class of one-time expenses, not by budgeting their expected cost, but by taking the money out of the Carryover Account. This is an allowed use of the Carryover account; however, the use of the Carryover Account to reduce the budget is more of a one-time fix, and not a long-term budget reduction so we’ve got work to do in the future. Motions to recommend to the RTM passage of all four budgets as presented all passed unanimously, 9-0. In summary, as with all our Town budgets, the Education budget has been drawn up in a time of enormous uncertainty. In addition to the life-altering COVID-19 crisis, Education is working with scenarios in which Coleytown Middle School does and does not open for the coming school year. The education planners have dedicated themselves to monitoring, to make planning adjustments as we go, and to keep the lines of communication open with our funding bodies. It’s a good budget but in the future, we’ll have to be doing better. When the uncertainty recedes a bit we should turn our attention to certain budgeting areas we simply could not address at present. Chief among them is leaning on one time rather than recurring reductions. Another is the cost per student. It has been rising noticeably and which at some level seems like it has to be a measure of how efficiently we are educating our young people and relatedly, the cost of education has been rising in our town faster than the cost of “non-education”, the rest of the town budget. The RTM Finance Committee appreciates the assistance of all the people who have helped us along the way.

Mr. Wieser read the resolution and it was seconded by Mr. Klinge.

**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Education’s budget items as recommended by the Board of Finance and approved or amended by the Representative Town Meeting be adopted and the sum of \$131,429,948 for the Board of Education Budget is hereby appropriated to meet expenditures.

**Members of the RTM**

Lou Mall, district 2:

Before I begin, I would like to thank Dr. Abbey for a great job this year. He reminds me of a gentleman who played first base for the New York Yankees by the name of Lou Gehrig. He certainly has been the Lou Gehrig of Westport Schools so thank you Dr. Abbey for all you have done for us.

David Abbey, Interim Superintendent: Thank you very much.

Mr. Mall:

Since we are lumping everything together, the number that I wanted to point out that struck me this past year was the budget number for private schools, \$484,679. It is a 23 percent increase year over year. As I look at that number, we’re talking about it being

for a Special Ed. teacher, nurses and transportation for schools for Westport kids who go to private schools. Every year, I look at it and I'm told it's mandated by law so to move on and it comes up again the next year. I really want to draw attention to it for the RTM because Andrea Moore yesterday stated that the State of Connecticut has reduced its contribution to the town of Westport from about \$3.5 million to \$1 million since 2013. So, we get the State reducing the amount of money that they give to us but, in the meantime, we are required by law to subsidize private education. As taxpayers in Westport, we are paying for public schools and then an additional subsidy for private schools. Yes, maybe it is required by law but I think we need to push back and say "Take a hard look at this law. It might not be right." and it needs to be scrutinized and addressed by our State Representatives. I asked Mr. Longo how many students were impacted by this and it is 295 students in total who receive this \$484,679 subsidy which is about a \$1,600 per student subsidy. That is a big number. We are talking about half million dollars. It's something that I really want to draw to the Education Committee's attention, to the RTM's attention and I think our State Legislators need to take a hard look at this. We aren't voting on it as a single item, from what I gather [No] but I just want to express my displeasure with that number.

Wendy Batteau, district 8:

My question really has to do with the elephants outside the room. This budget represents a lot of wonderful work done at a time, there was the Coleytown Middle School uncertainty and the effect that was going to have on the town budget but assuming that the COVID pandemic doesn't end tomorrow, or in a month or two, I'm guessing that we will have costs associated with trying to help the students who have been out of school for pretty much a semester, return to school and I'm assuming we will have costs associated with whatever we have to do to adapt the schools when the students and teachers and staff are able to use the schools and I'm also wondering about the effect of the potential closing of the schools for another semester. Although these aren't answers that you can give me now, I'm wondering if you are anticipating somehow working within the constraints of this particular budget or you'll be revisiting the budgeting process or for supplemental appropriations. I'm wondering what you're debating in terms of dealing with an uncertain reality which is bound to have some consequences.

Dr. Abbey:

Last night, Dr. Buono and Mr. Bayers shared with them an approach that we've developed and will continue to work towards with respect to planning for several scenarios like the ones you described. We have a School Reopening Committee. We'll have a steering Committee that's going to be somewhat broad-based including a member of the Westport/Weston Health District, members of the Board of Education, administrators and teachers who will be overseeing an effort that includes four work groups and those work groups will be co-curricular, teaching and learning, facilities and health and safety. So, we have a steering committee. We'll have four work groups and those work groups will be dealing with the issues associated with their titles. We'll be reporting, almost on a weekly basis, to the Board of Education and the public with respect to our progress. Part of that, inevitably will be related to finance. Although I can't

tell you, as we start this effort, where we are going to end up in terms of finance, I can share with you that that was part of the discussion last night and there was talk and direction from the Board of Education to make sure that, as we go along, we keep the Board of Education abreast with all aspects of our work but, in particular, any issues associated with finance. This doesn't help in terms of specifics but I have to believe there will inevitably be costs associated with outfitting schools, purchasing equipment and supplies and working toward teaching and learning, creating a more robust infrastructure to distance learning. Just as you explained that we could be out, perhaps another semester, looking at a scenario where we go back to school in September and if there's a rebound, we could be out, as well. The final thing I'll say is when we look to going back to school, what that design is could be very different. If we're talking about social distancing, we're looking at issues like what do you do about the cafeteria? What do you do about athletics? How many students are going to be in a kindergarten class if we are to maintain social distance? I don't want to get into the scenarios because I don't want to upset people. But the design of schooling based upon this pandemic could be very different so, yes, it's going to inevitably relate to additional expenses. How much, I don't know.

Ms. Batteau:

Could I just make one more little comment? Thank you Dr. Abbey and, by the way, thank you for everything. One comment: I don't know if people know that there is no medical doctor affiliated with the Health District. They had to let their doctor go last year for budgetary reasons. So, if there's any way you could get an infectious disease specialist on your committee, that might be helpful too.

Chris Tait, district 1:

Thank you and thank everyone on the Board of Education as well. Just to be honest, I have two wonderful girls in the school system. You are doing a great job and thank you to all of you. That said, I know we've talked about salaries and it makes pretty much the chunk of our budget, 80 percent or 81 percent. I know Dr. Bayers said we're looking at 14 percent staff reduction. But again, we're looking at Special Education needs increasing by this same amount so you have one arrow going down and one arrow going up. When I speak to my constituents, they see enrollment going down and think we are going to see a ton of savings in salaries. I hear that Special Education needs are going up. Are we looking at a forecast of this budget breaking even? In the next couple of years, will this budget pretty much stay the same when it comes to salaries? So we won't see those savings whatever the economy may be in Westport? The second question I have is, of those Special Education needs, is that mandated by the State? Or do we decide the Special Education needs? If it is by the State, are we being forced to do that? Again, looking down the road, do I tell my constituents that the budget is the budget and we're looking at these numbers for the next three, four or five years even if enrollment goes down so they need to be aware of that. So that's my question on staffing, with regular staff going down and Special Education staff going up, are we pretty much breaking even?

Ms. Leffert:

Special Education Law come into being in 1975. It's a Federal law actually, Public Law 142, on 1974, it's now the IDEA, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act so it's a Federal mandate to provide Special Education services for students. We go through a very rigorous process. I've been here since November filling in in this position and I've been very impressed by our teams. There are State guidelines for most areas of identified disabilities that we have to follow to determine eligibility for services. So, there are voluminous regulations regarding Special Education related services. The State Department of Education interprets the Federal law and gives us specific guidelines. Does that answer your question?

Mr. Tait:

It does. Again, my constituents are saying staffing going down, budget is going down. Again, the needs, which I support, there is going to be that offset so I don't want them to be anxious about the reductions. There's some reality here. There are changes in special needs so looking at our budget going forward, we need to be realistic on our Board of Education budget, what we expect. Last thing I wanted to say, I think David Abbey, our Superintendent, had a great education for us that he didn't need one of the staff members in his office and I think, going forward, on the administration side, yes, enrollment is going down but sometimes there are things we can do without. I think Dr. Abbey has given us a little education on that. But I appreciate what everybody has been doing. Like I said, I have two girls and they have done an amazing job.

Stephen Shackelford, district 8:

First of all, I echo, we all appreciate the very hard work that the School District Administration and the Board of Education have been doing through crisis after crisis including the COVID crisis so thank you very much. I supported this budget in the Finance Committee and I support it here. I do have one question. This budget includes almost \$1 million directly related to the cost of reopening CMS and Candi, I very much appreciated hearing from you at the meeting last night that you believe we need to get kids into CMS whenever we can, given the need to minimize crowding because of the Corona Virus. My understanding, from prior meetings that I have listened to and participated in was to get that done, you guys have to start hiring teachers this month so my question is, is that process underway?

Dr. Abbey:

We were going to wait until the budget passed. The answer is, not specifically for Coleytown Middle School but our plan was, if the budget passed tonight, to seek authorization from the Board of Education starting tomorrow to move that process forward.

Mr. Shackelford: That's great to hear. Thank you Dr. Abbey.

Mr. Mandell:

I want to thank the Board of Education. I have not seen a body in this town be more under fire and stand up and take care of business better than this body has over the last year. We are talking about CMS, dealing with remote learning and the closures of the

schools, finding a new Superintendent. I congratulate you for the wonderful job and how you did it under fire. But I do have to say that there is still one issue that is remaining and it's an issue that I have brought before you for a number of years and it needs to be resolved at this point. I realize we have the COVID situation that makes it difficult but the law firm that represents the Board of Education is taking care of one side and stabbing the town in the back with the other. They are representing the Board of Education but also, at the same time, are aggressively and actively attacking the town. They are in the process of suing us in no less than six different law suits. Even during this crisis, they are pressuring the Planning and Zoning Commission to continue to react to their needs and not to the needs of the community. Shipman and Goodman needs to be replaced by the Board of Education. If what occurs in Planning and Zoning at the end of this month or early June comes to pass, it will be seven lawsuits filed against this town. This is an unacceptable situation for an organization that we are paying good money for to represent us at the same time they are taking money out of us. How can this be exemplified? Last month, the RTM was asked to pay another \$170,000 for extra payments to Bircham Moses for legal counsel. The lion's share of that was to defend against cases that Shipman and Goodman has brought against us. Mathematically, it can really no longer work for our town. Months ago, we had a hearing and the Board of Education agreed that they would seek an RFP for new legal representation. I understand this is during the COVID crisis but, since Shipman and Goodwin doesn't seem to care, we should be aggressive as well and bring out the RFP.

Point of order, Kristan Hamlin, district 4:

This issue that Mr. Mandell is bringing was not noticed and this is not part of this budget. I move to strike what he's saying and I ask that we move on to the actual vote.

Mr. Mandell:

Kristan, this is about the expenditure of our money. This is a budget hearing. If this is not the time to bring this up, there is no other time.

Dr. Heller:

Your point of order is recorded Ms. Hamlin. Mr. Mandell, please wrap up your remarks.

Mr. Mandell:

Shipman and Goodwin controls the marketplace for our Board of Education. They represent so many different communities around us that when they represent us, they are representing themselves more than they are representing us. They control it all. It is time to put out an RFP and we need to see if there is better representation. I am hoping that the new Superintendent will help out in this search for a new firm. I've brought this forward for many years. There are other RTM members who have in the past and I hope that the Board of Education will finally, once and for all, put out the RFP and let me again thank you for the work that you have done but, as I have said, there is one more issue that needs to be done by your body and please, let's find a new law firm to represent our town.

Ms. Savin:

First of all, if only it were true that we had only one more issue to deal with! Having said that, I just want to take the opportunity to quickly update the RTM since Mr. Mandell raised this question. As I'm sure you all recall, the Board of Education did vote to do an RFP for legal services at some point in January. I don't remember the exact date. Our discussion was very clear at the time that our plan was to initiate that work on the RFP after our budget process was complete. So, we're not behind schedule on it in terms of when we said we would be doing that work. I will add that before the COVID closure, we had started having conversations in Central Office about getting out the RFP. I used my own judgment when schools closed and we had to shift to remote learning that that was absolutely top priority and many other things had to go to the side and I wanted the Central Office team to really focus on that and that continues to be the case. We have made a commitment to do the RFP. We will do the RFP. We'll let you know the status but we'll have to ask you for your patience given the situation. But, we made the commitment and we will be putting it out.

Mr. Mandell:

Madam Moderator, I want to thank Candice Savin for saying they will continue on this. I never said they were shirking this. I just said it was the time to do it. Thank you Board of Education for taking care of this. I appreciate it.

Peter Gold, district 5:

First of all, like everybody else, I want to thank the Board of Education and the school staff for all their hard work on the budget. It is certainly appreciated. I also do want to reiterate what Mr. Jaffe said about the Board of Finance's backstop. They can only backstop up to \$20,000. It really is up to us to approve anything so I urge you to keep us involved and informed. I also agree with Mr. Jaffe when he said that going forward, we need to find creative ways to do things. This can be done in small ways and in large ways. One example of a small way is that we get our account budget books from Patty Strauss, sent by email. You can get them online or you can pick them up. I went to pick up my town budget book in Town Hall and then I went up to the Board of Education Office to get my Board of Education budget book and I was told, 'Oh, we mailed them to you.' I said, 'Why didn't you just have us pick them up when we picked up our town budget books?' 'We didn't think of it.' That was the response I was given. Not a lot of money in postage but small things add up. On the bigger side, are there any lessons we can learn from the distance learning that we have been doing to perhaps reduce staffing costs going forward? Perhaps along the line of some of the smaller, elective classes in Staples sharing a teacher with some other school such as Wilton or New Canaan; having a teacher teach at one school two days a week and the other school three days a week and all the students participate via distance learning...or some other lesson we might have learned. [No response.] No lessons learned, okay.

Dr. Abbey:

That's part of what we're engaged in with respect to this committee. We'll be looking at teaching and learning and absolutely, we're looking at distance learning; what went well; what we'll be needing for the future. There's no question we will begin to talk about the design of education going forward. This has to impact what we do so, generally, yes we



will be looking at that. We are looking at lessons learned for our students, for our teachers; lessons learned in terms of what works well and what doesn't work well in the environment of distance learning and we'll certainly look at efficiencies as well. Absolutely. I didn't know that I was supposed to answer your question.

Mr. Gold:

No problem. But, again, given that salaries are such a large portion of the budget, if some of the salaries could be shared by districts through distance learning, that would be something I think you should probably look at.

Christine Meiers Schatz, district 2:

I wanted to add one more thanks to Dr. Abbey among the chorus. He has been absolutely extraordinary in leading the district. Thank you. Also, thank you to my colleagues for being patient regarding the legal RFP. I know we have been patient with all other departments in the town and I'm glad we are going to be patient and understanding here, as well. I just wanted to add a little color to what Lou pointed out with respect to the account for private schools. I have no personal opinion as to whether the State should mandate this but, just to provide some background information on how this works in our town, at least based on my understanding, I think that the \$1,600 per student may be skewed a little bit by some of the Special Education transportation costs in there. These are private school students whose families live in Westport and also pay Westport tax dollars just like you and me and some of these students are riding buses for an hour to go to a school that is 10 minutes away. Some of the students who go to Greens Farms Academy share buses with students who go to Pierpont on the other side of town. These are families that are paying taxes and tuition and, in addition, it's possible that your taxes are lower because their students aren't going to public school. It's possible that class sizes in Westport are smaller because they're not at the Westport Public Schools so I just wanted to add that color. Like I said, I'm not a big fan of the State mandating things that we have to pay for either. I hear the same comment every year about this account and there's a little bit more information behind that than has been recognized in discussion.

Noah Hammond, district 4:

On the backstops with the results of the Antinozzi Report, is there a reason we went with backstops as opposed to looking at the costs there and just coming up with a reduction in the budget and not using the backstops to not put the RTM in the position of having to approve appropriations down the line that we won't have much choice on?

Mr. Longo:

As far as the backstops, the 30 percent, we are anticipating that a number of the projects will come in lower than the original estimate and we will not know that number until after the competitive bid process. We feel, I feel, the arrangement with the Board of Finance does offer protection to the Board of Education that, should we exceed the 70 percent of all the total projects that we have, the Board of Finance will look favorably on a request if submitted by the Board of Education for a supplemental appropriation.

Mr. Hammond:

That comes as an aggregate of all the projects, not project by project as laid out in the Antinozzi Report? So, if wooden stairs come in at \$10,000 not \$50,000, that \$40,000 is not savings; it's going to be an aggregate of all of the projects.

Mr. Longo:

Yes. It's based on the aggregate and for that very reason the arrangement with the Board of Finance is for a quarterly review of the projects to date for all projects.

Harris Falk, district 2:

So, COVID-19 has shown some weaknesses with our schools with the distance learning. We have things like Schoology, Google Classroom and PowerSchool which overlap. Even the teachers don't seem to have had the training with it. You are supposed to be assigned the work through Schoology then do the work in Google Classroom and then the grades get entered into PowerSchool and one or two of those systems seem to work well, but I have a son who is currently very confused because just today he was assigned something in Google Classroom which should have been in Schoology. What I'm saying is we need some extra training especially if this will continue on into next year. I worry that in the past we have been throwing money at technology just to say that we have the technology. It's good that we had the technology so we can do this but I hope we get better in the future with this because it's not an insignificant amount of money that we are spending on this. A question: Are we having a plan for using it better if we don't/aren't able open the schools?

Dr. Abbey:

We've done an increasing amount of professional learning as we've moved into distance learning. For example, at the elementary level, where we have made tremendous progress with the quality and the breadth of distance learning and the amount of what we call synchronous, or real time learning. Wednesday afternoon is devoted to professional learning. At the middle school, Friday afternoons are devoted to professional learning. I'm really appreciative of our parent community who have allowed us to do this and supported us. So, yes, we are continuing to provide professional learning. We know we have to do more of it. We have to get better at it. Our teaching staff and administrative staff have one tremendous work and have learned a tremendous amount and have increased their skill level in technology but we realize we need to keep improving and we are going to work in that area as well. That will be something that will be part of our Teaching and Learning Work Group as we move forward. We're very mindful of the fact that for periods of time, this might be the future using technology in effective ways for instruction and on the managerial side as well. Yes, we are mindful of that and appreciate your thought.

Seth Braunstein, district 6:

I wanted to echo some of the sentiments, the gratitude that we all should have for the efforts that Dr. Abbey made along with the Board of Education to adjust to a very fluid, dynamic situation. As we look forward to the fall, I'm not an Epidemiologist but I have certainly been reading about the potential for a second round of COVID infection. Are

we being thoughtful about how we might pivot back to this distance learning if, in fact, there is a reemergence of infection at some point in the fall? Do we have a codified plan maybe that just echoes, frankly, what we've done already this time around but perhaps with even greater efficiency?

Dr. Abbey:

That's what the School Reopening Committee and the work groups are working on as we speak. We always want to get better but certainly with respect to distance learning. That's a focus for us and we are mindful of what you spoke to and that is we might have to close after school is open if there is a rebound effect. We're looking at that carefully and working towards that. I appreciate the fact that several of you have made reference to the challenges we faced this year; however, next year, in my mind, (I won't be here), it's going to be every bit as complicated, if not more so until we have a vaccine or an approved medical intervention for COVID-19. So, we're mindful of how complicated it is and we're working very hard on it but we don't have a specific plan in place. That's what we're working on.

Amy Kaplan, district 3:

Thank you everyone for this discussion. It's apparent a lot of hard work and a lot of thought has gone into this already. Harkening back to Mr. Jaffe's comments on the issue of the Finance Board's backstopping, this is a term that is unknown to me and I guess it makes me a little uncomfortable to hear the RTM be put into a position where in the future, we will have very little discretion about those decisions that may come before us in terms of the needed remediation and facilities repairs recommended by Antinozzi. I think the community has been pretty loud and vocal about their desire for us to address these issues which suffer from a lot of negligence over the years. I am questioning why the Board of Finance feels that they have some kind of special knowledge that things that Antinozzi recommends, why we would assume only a 70 percent cost necessity. I guess I would prefer that the Board of Finance allow the Board of Education make their request for what they feel is necessary to actually achieve the goals set out in the report that we've all agreed is a good report and a roadmap to follow rather than inserting themselves. We're kind of playing a numbers game for appearances when we may, in fact, in the end, end up having to spend that money only it puts us in a position of this back door way of handling it, or backstop, instead of owning up to the fact that we are actually going to have to make these expenses right in the beginning. I am not interested in holding up the vote on the budget but I think this is a point to push back to the Finance Board that this is not really an appropriate avenue that they are taking in my opinion.

Mr. Tait:

Candace, I think you answered. I was at that meeting about the RFP so all I wanted to say is it is from the same pot so after 30 years you have to do a "come to Jesus" with this and we all come from the same outfit so thank you for letting us know that it is still going forward.

Jeff Wieser, district 4:

If I could just make one comment. Rick Jaffe referred to the Carryover Account and for a lot of you new members, since the Carryover Account was initiated about four or five years ago, I just wanted to point out that I did point out in the Finance Committee that the Carryover Account was initially established by the Board of Finance and the Board of Education in full allowance through State law to allow the Board of Education to carry over money that they don't use in a given year and they sort of agreed that it would be up to a certain amount and that it would be used for maintenance things or things that had to get done on a pretty quick basis so they didn't have time to wait for the RTM to approve and that is why we were not allowed to be part of or we were cut out of those specific approvals. I pointed out that it really wasn't meant to take out part of an annual budget if you give some back and then the next year you can take some out of the budget. So, I think the way the carryover account is being used this year is a little outside the spirit of how it was initially established. I just want to tell people that I really don't have an objection to it. It helps the budget this year and that's all okay but it's really not the spirit and I don't think it's a very good practice for us to continue. If that continues to be the practice, it's something that I just don't think is a good thing. Ultimately, it takes the RTM out of the approvals for the budgeting process. That's just one little comment. Otherwise, the Board of Education has been great this year. We've got an enormously stable environment in a very unstable environment. They've done a great job and the budget has gone very well. I'm all in favor of it.

Kristin Schneeman, district 9:

I will just quickly offer my thanks as well to all of you in the school district administration and the Board of Education for the remarkable work that you have been doing the last few months on Coleytown and in the current crisis. I certainly see my friends in other places struggling with their kids' online education who are fairly far behind the curve that we're leading on. So, thank you so much. I apologize that I did not think to ask this question in the RTM Education Committee meeting but I just wondered---the change in school start times, assuming we get to school in the fall, I assume that it will go forward. I seem to remember that the plan was intended to be cost neutral so I assume that there are no budgetary impacts from it. There are two questions. The third question is: Are you aware whether there will be any financial aid available for families who might need it for the before school program that is being put into place?

Dr. Abbey:

The school start time, which is moving the time back a half hour, we are starting school a half-hour later in each building, is cost neutral. Dr. Buono has been working with the YMCA on before-school programs at each of the elementary schools. At this point, I'm not aware of whether there would be any aid for parents. We don't have a specific fund for that but it is certainly something that is worth considering and being concerned about.

Ms. Schneeman:

Thank you. I will say, in terms of school start times, if I could get my middle schooler out of bed before 9:00 a.m. at this point, I'd be very happy. I don't know what will happen when she has to go back to school in the fall. I think the before school program is to be

run by the YMCA. [That's correct.] Maybe there is some financial assistance that they could help intermediate somehow.

Jimmy Izzo, district 5:

First off, I want to thank Candi Savin for showing some great leadership this year. Candi, you steered a tough ship. Thank you for coming in and doing that. I want to thank our RTM Finance and Education Committees for doing a lot of heavy work. Thank you guys. You guys did a tremendous job. Just a few things for the future. I'd like to see the Board work on Lou's suggestion. What's the State going to do, fine us? Let's get rid of that money for out of town. It's ridiculous. We shouldn't have to do it. For Special Needs, yes, but kids to go to Greens Farms Academy or some other school, we have a topnotch school district. If that's their parental position, get your kid there. Let's get down to 180 days. We could save some money. Let's get into these contract. Let's get a new attorney who hopefully is going to work with us and not work against us in comparisons to all of our peer towns. So, I want to see that move forward and that's it. Thank you.

Sal Liccione, district 9:

Dr. Abbey, thank you for all your service. I have a question for Candi, Dr. Abbey and Elio. We have a parking problem with the buses. There are a lot of complaints about it. I'm wondering if you will redo the committee in the fall and I'm hoping that we get a move on it to look at other places. I know Senator Haskell will look at it but can we try to look at it in the fall to try to get it out of the downtown area and look at other places. That's a question, too.

Ms. Savin:

Elio, I don't know if you have any specific operational response. We've been looking at that for years and most recently Sheri Gordon on the Board of Finance took a look at it so if there were an easy answer, I'm very confident we'd find it. Elio, do you have anything to add over the years of searching for a different spot?

Mr. Longo:

Just to echo, we've looked at it for a number of years, partnered with the town administration and most recently with the Board of Finance who is taking the lead on it to identify properties in the vicinity that are available, could become available. But, to this date, I have not heard of any properties.

Dr. Heller:

Mr. Longo, I had a question from one of our members about your presentation, where they might find this.

Mr. Longo:

Earlier this evening, I sent by email to the RTM a link to the District website; however, if you visit the district website at [westportps.org](http://westportps.org) on the Board of Education subpage, you will find not only the proposed budget as well as an "e copy" of tonight's presentation.

Dr. Heller:

I have a question for Mr. Wieser about the figure that you put into the resolution.

Mr. Wieser:

I put in the Board of Education budget including the program expenses.

Dr. Heller: I've got it. \$131,429,948.

**By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously, 36-0.**

Mr. Wieser read the second resolution and it was seconded.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Town of Westport General Fund Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, as recommended by the Board of Finance and approved or amended by the Representative Town Meeting, be adopted and the sum of the Board of Education Budget, the First Selectman's Budget, and the Other Agencies and Organizations Budget in the amount of \$212,772,828 is hereby appropriated to meet expenditures and that for the purpose of raising a tax on the Grand List of 2019, the sum of \$212,772,828 is hereby appropriated.

**Members of the Westport electorate – no comments**

**Members of the RTM – no comments**

**By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously.**

Dr. Heller:

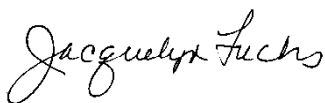
The vote is unanimous. Once again, I want to say thank you to the Board of Education, the Board of Finance who came before, to the First Selectman and all of his Department Heads and all of the people who have worked so hard on these budgets in a very trying time. You've done a great job. And, to the RTM, I thank you again for your very positive approach; your in depth thoughtful questions. This is a tough time and a time when asking hard questions is very important. And you have done just that. I thank the Board of Education for responding in detail with authenticity and sincerity and let's hope for the best. Thank you again. Stay healthy everybody. Farewell.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia H. Strauss

Town Clerk



by Jacquelyn Fuchs

**ATTENDANCE: May 5, 2020**

<b>DIST.</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>	<b>NOTIFIED MODERATOR</b>	<b>LATE/ LEFT EARLY</b>
1	Richard Jaffe	X			
	Matthew Mandell	X			
	Kristin M. Purcell	X			
	Chris Tait	X			
2	Harris Falk	X			
	Jay Keenan	X			
	Louis M. Mall	X			
	Christine Meiers Schatz	X			
3	Mark Friedman	X			
	Arline Gertzoff	X			
	Jimmy Izzo	X			
	Amy Kaplan	X			
4	Andrew J. Colabella	X			
	Kristan Hamlin	X			
	Noah Hammond	X			
	Jeff Wieser	X			
5	Peter Gold	X			
	Dick Lowenstein	X			
	Karen Kramer	X			
	Greg Kraut	X			
6	Candace Banks	X			
	Jessica Bram	X			
	Seth Braunstein	X			
	Cathy Talmadge	X			
7	Brandi Briggs	X			
	Lauren Karpf	X			
	Jack Klinge	X			
	Ellen Lautenberg	X			
8	Wendy Batteau	X			
	Lisa Newman	X			
	Carla Rea	X			
	Stephen Shackelford	X			
9	Velma Heller	X			
	Sal Liccione	X			
	Kristin Schneeman	X			
	Lauren Soloff	X			
<b>Total</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>		