

Board of Finance / Board of Education
Budget Work Session # 2
2/23/10 Approved Minutes

Attending:

BoF Members: Andy Pforzheimer, Al Alper, Warren Serenbetz, Lynne Vanderslice, Gail Lavielle and Jim Meinhold

BoE Members: Gil Bray, Karen Birck, Barbara Myers, Richard Dubow, and Bruce Likely and Jim Saxe

Wilton Public Schools Reps: Gary Richards, Ken Post, Ellen Andrews, Arlene Gottesman, Ann Paul, Mathew Hepfer and Sean O'Toole

School Administrators: Kevin Welch, Jory Higgins, Nancy Hasenauer, Julia Harris, Thomas Ford, Catherine O'Keefe, Ginny Rico, Cheryl Jensen Gerner, Sheelah Brown, Lynn Tinacci, Timothy Canty, Bob O'Donnell, and Maria Coleman

Wilton Citizens: Heather Scully, Yvonne Fielden, Amy Harris, Sibylle Kinley and Tiffany Tecce

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Warren Serenbetz at 7:45pm.

Discussion:

Gil Bray opened discussion by stating the questions the BoE received via e-mail were all answered with the exception of the last round of questions received on Sunday, which will be answered later.

Each member of the BoF asked some follow-up questions on topics including the SRBI mandate, bus schedules / appropriations, testing reports and other measurements for success.

Lynne expressed caution in reading too much into the 2009 State report of schools where Wilton is ranked # 25 on a cost / student ratio. Many schools in this report can't be compared equally resulting in a misrepresentation of

the numbers. This is a statistic that makes parents nervous but taken straight off this report is inaccurate. The best comparison is by using the DRG group just above and just below Wilton for a fair indication.

Warren questioned why at the last work session meeting when Lynne proposed a group of BoE and BoF representatives work together for communication and cost efficiencies the idea was rejected by the BoE.

Gil responded while the BoE believes the open communication is a good idea the large amount of time required by school administration to go the next level for a detailed cost analysis would require too much time. Karen commented the scope of the proposed Tri-Board has already expanded looking for cost efficiencies. However, Al reminded her it was only for shared services between boards, not a specific BoE / BoF group.

Lynne clarified the apparent misunderstanding by saying the purpose of the proposed group was for education, it was never intended to include a line item budget analysis. She likened the group to a BoE version of the Wilton Answer Book and called for ideas like a Superintendent's column in the newspaper, a "did you know" blurb in PTA mailings, etc. She expressed most of the work would be done by herself and other volunteers, some from the community. Once the group was educated then it would be appropriate to ask if there are opportunities for cost efficiencies. The main idea is to get the information out where it is accessible to people and the right judgments can be made.

Warren expressed a group like this would help any friction that comes about at budget time and if work was done in the non-budget season he can't understand why the idea wouldn't be embraced by the BoE.

In the end, Dick Dubow and Bruce Likely voiced their agreement how this idea would help people understand both the process and constraints faced when putting the budget together without going into a line item analysis.

Warren communicated the mill rate model was updated at the BoF meeting held earlier in the evening using the most recent, available information which resulted in a projected 4.1% mill rate increase. He stated the BoF judges this number is still too high.

The remaining time schedule regarding the budget is March 5th the BoS budget is due and March 24-25 are the public hearings. The first week of April will be the deliberations.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Roberts
Recording Secretary