

## Rochester, Jacqueline

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**From:** Kaelin, Michael  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 9, 2023 3:59 PM  
**To:** Rochester, Jacqueline  
**Subject:** Fw: The level of disinformation being spread on this budget vote is "disturbing" to quote one speaker

Here is the exchange between Sandy and Stewart that should be posted with the agenda. Thanks,

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**From:** Arkell, Sandra  
**Sent:** Monday, May 8, 2023 11:14 AM  
**To:** Koenigsberg, Stewart; boardoffinance  
**Subject:** Re: The level of disinformation being spread on this budget vote is "disturbing" to quote one speaker

Thanks for the update, Stewart. I think most of us have seen the Op-Eds, and understand your good intentions to inform people better.

I saw on the agenda for tomorrow "Discussion of Town Meeting Vote", and I'm sorry I won't be able to attend tomorrow. One thing I'd like to suggest related to these Op-Eds, a topic we covered a few months back with Ira Bloom, is our board taking a position of whether or not we should or should not engage in public discord via the media. Similar to how we agreed to conduct ourselves under Robert's Rules. In that meeting, I understood Ira to suggest it is best for us not to do this, especially given the honor and privilege of our elected positions and the fiduciary responsibility to our voters. In this case Stewart, you're already RIGHT. Your proposed budget was passed and likely as a result of more voters who share your view and potentially also voted you to this office expected of you. I'm not sure I see the incremental benefit here. It seems to only fan the flames. I think the vote stands for itself.

My recommendation is that we refrain from this practice if only to uphold the respect and dignity of the office. I can see where our entire board or our town government could be jeopardized in the future, and we need to think about future candidates. If we want to maintain stable government who works for the best interest of Wilton, then we should be working in a bi-partisan fashion and really deliberate authentically to avoid these virulent public debates. We'll always have differences of opinion and times when public opinion appears misinformed. If we engage in the public debate, it could deter potential future interest in running for these elected positions.

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**From:** Koenigsberg, Stewart  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 6, 2023 11:13:41 AM  
**To:** boardoffinance; Heather Good Morning Wilton Borden Herve  
**Subject:** The level of disinformation being spread on this budget vote is "disturbing" to quote one speaker

I responded to one of the comments quickly this morning in GMW, but there should be more coverage on this than a response to an op Ed.

Fyi, this is what I posted.

I have a much longer, more detailed analysis and discussion which I would like to share with you for comments for our meeting this Tuesday, which is much more comprehensive than the word limits in the press. I realize that we are not all of the same mind on this, and we should encourage honest debate, but we have a responsibility that the town have accurate facts, not false or irrelevant data used to help an argument.

Thank you Peter.

Some people can't accept that surveys were done three times over the past few years, including one ran by a prominent group of Democratic Party members, using a professional surveying organization run by another prominent local democrat. The results were the same as the current survey, no matter how they worked on the wording to get a different result.

Also, some commenters here, who have no financial skills, insist that the CONSUMER price index for 2022 was more relevant than the existing, in place fixed contracts in measuring the inflationary impact on next year's BOE budget. They repeatedly cite CPI at 6.5% for 2022, which was driven significantly by housing costs, which are irrelevant to the BOE budget; oil, which peaked at \$120 per barrel in 2022 and is now at \$69; and food, all irrelevant to the actual price inflation measure of the overwhelming majority of BOE budgets...80% of the Board of Education expenses are compensation and benefits costs primarily fixed by contract, the largest piece being the Teachers' Union contract at 3.82% ( other contracts have smaller increases), while the school population is dropping 1% + each year.... Netting the 2.9% approved by the BOE. Simple math even for some of those who can't understand why we don't use CPI for BOE budgets. Some would suggest that the other costs in the BOE budget will be so much higher than last year, but many of those costs were temporally spiked at budget preparation time...natural gas costs are now down 80% vs. when the budget was put together and utilities are only 2% of the budget, and those rates are expected to decrease given fuel price drops. Those critics have no command of the data, nor do they understand that CPI, which they harp on, is a CONSUMER measure which is irrelevant unless the Teachers' Union contract had allowed for payment in milk, eggs and fuel.

The comments made in Good Morning Wilton by these frequent commenters, who lack financial acumen, is a disservice to the Town of Wilton as the desire is to use misinformation to scare people by using false and irrelevant data as they have done every year. Those same people say that they would happily pay much more to support our already top ranked schools, but those disingenuous comments were made abundantly clear to be false as they publicly, in this publication, stated that they refuse to join the inspirational people in our town who contribute money to the schools, library, and fields, instead of using excuses that they will only pay if it's included in their taxes (even though they say repeatedly and publicly that they would happily pay more).

Those critics have no credibility, and the data and assertions they cite are completely irrelevant to the BOE budget.

Thanks to all who support our excellent schools and town services, and to all who volunteer their valuable time and expertise to assure that Wilton continues to have top ranked schools and services.

Stewart Koenigsberg