

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE

The Board of Finance held a public hearing on Thursday, February 15, 2018 in the Council Chambers at the Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT. Chairman Gaston called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**Present:** James Gaston, Roger Cyr, Sandy Roussas, Keith Alexander, Steve Hinden, Mark Boland

**Also Present:** Ron Bienkowski, 4 members of the public and one member of the press.

***Public Comment on the 2018-2019 Town of Newtown Budget and Newtown Board of Education School District Budget***

Cate Gosselin 20 Elana Lane and Lisa Nowak 28 Miles Sill South – They both work with the orchestra parents group which tries to enhance the program in the schools. During the school year they do fund raising and all the money raised is for scholarships and to enhance the program. In the budget they are talking about eliminating an orchestra teacher position at the Reed School. They are concerned that reduction from 2 orchestra teachers to 1 will be detrimental to students. Ms. Gosselin read a letter that will be published in the 2/16/18 issue of the Bee (Attachment A).

Julia Conlin, 11 Old Castle Drive – Supports for BOE budget. Urged the Board of Finance to respect the work done by the BOE.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS - None**

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:12pm

Respectfully Submitted,  
Arlene Miles, Clerk

# Attachment A

Title: Loss of Music Teacher Position is Unwelcomed News  
February 13, 2018

As parents of recently graduated Newtown High School Orchestra students, we were shocked to hear that one of the Orchestra teacher positions is being eliminated at Reed School. This position has been cut from the proposed budget for Reed Intermediate School's upcoming year. The elimination represents a decline in the school population, and the ripple effect is a reduction in the number of students in the Orchestra and Band programs.

On February 1, the Newtown Board of Education approved the 2018-19 budget, thereby approving the loss of this Orchestra Teacher position.

So why should we care and what effect does this have on the quality of the Reed Orchestra program?

- There are only two Orchestra teachers at Reed. By losing one position, it will now be the responsibility of the other teacher to teach ALL of the Orchestra students. Students will lose individualized attention, since there will be little or no time for one teacher to dedicate to students' needs.
- Orchestra teachers usually collaborate before every Orchestra concert, or preparing for events such as "Music Expo Night" and "String Jam Fest". All of this will be a tremendous burden on one Orchestra teacher's shoulders.
- Orchestra programs in surrounding districts begin lessons at an earlier age. Maintaining music staffing at Reed Intermediate School is crucial if we want our students to be competitive when they go to regional, state and college auditions.

What can YOU DO to stop this loss from becoming a reality?

^ Attend upcoming budget meetings to state your concerns.

**There will be a public hearing at the Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street,  
this Thursday, February 15 at 7:00 p.m.**

^ Contact Mrs. Anne Uberti, Reed School's Principal, and share your feelings about this budget cut.

^ Contact Ms. Michelle Hiscavich, Director of Music and Fine Arts for Newtown Schools. Let her know that this loss is unacceptable.

^ Contact Reed School's PTA and let them know your concerns for your child's Orchestra program and the future success of your child's Orchestra instruction.

^ Send your thoughts via The Newtown Bee editorial page and The Danbury News-Times.

Let us speak up NOW and make our voices heard that this is unacceptable in keeping intact the wonderful Orchestra program in the Newtown schools, especially for our youngest musicians in Reed Intermediate School!

Thank you.

Cate Gosselin and Denise Rodriguez  
Coordinators of Newtown Orchestra Parents Group  
20 Elana Lane  
Sandy Hook, CT 06482