

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 3 PRIMROSE STREET, NEWTOWN, CT
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2024**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Jordana Bloom, Laura Miller, Keith Alexander, Tom Long, Ben Ruben, Derek Pisani, Jennifer Nicoletti, John Zachos, Chris Gardner, Heather Dean, Eric Paradis, Jill Soderholm
ALSO PRESENT: First Selectman Jeff Capeci, Phil Carroll, Steve Goodridge, Barney Molloy, David Schill, John Madzula and 4 members of the public

CALL TO ORDER: K. Alexander called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:03pm.

2024-2025 BOS and BOE Budget

Phil Carroll, Field Stone Drive – This is a large increase in the budget. He asked them to take into consideration the seniors and younger generation that cannot afford this increase. There is also misrepresentation of the BOF reducing the BOE budget by 1 million. They took out \$500,000 and it is being funded elsewhere. Everyone can't afford this big of a tax increase.

Jay Birden, 26 Buttonshop Road – Concerned about the truancy level that apparently that has been part of the budget concern. Instead of throwing money on it maybe do an analysis to the root cause. Are we doing something wrong that isn't attracting kids to school. What bothered him is that Newtown has a 59% proficiency in Math and 69% in reading.

John Madzula, 40 Main Street – Thanked the LC for their time, effort and public servant. The voters kept the BOF as an advisory board and strongly suggests they look at what they did as they make their informative decision. The proposed increase starts the bench mark being too high for next year. If you can find things in the budget that are not necessary right now and if it isn't taking away from students, you are not doing anything wrong with potential reductions.

Bob Hall, 5 Nettletown Avenue – He thinks there needs to be a different approach to how we do a budget. In the charter the LC the BOF and the BOE are supposed to get together in late fall to discuss the upcoming budget. That meeting should be centered on what the town can afford. He would like to put a figure on it. BOS you need you come in at X and the BOE has to come in with a budget of Y. Give them the number and let them allocate it.

Don Lococo, 27 Hi Barlow Road – Reminded the LC about the last time the BOE budget came up for a vote in Newtown, there was a large turnout of voters, they voted in favor of the BOE budget. Newtowners are interested in our school system and wants to make sure they have what they need.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:19pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
Arlene Miles, Clerk*