Hello,

Please share this with all members of the Board of Finance.

I am a teacher in West Hartford and an East Granby resident.

This is an example of what happens in a town that supports public education with well-funded budgets. Please see this article:  https://www.wfsb.com/news/west-hartford-teens-set-up-business-to-help-elderly-immunocompromised-with-tasks/article_b7ef417a-8e3b-11ea-93ae-c769676e99d0.html

I teach all 3 of the students who founded this group in APCS A. They've never needed to see their teachers go through budget arguments. As a teacher there, I've never felt obliged to involve parents or appeal for help. I know the town supports us and that helps me (and so many others) do our job well.

In supporting our schools, we unite our community and make it better for all citizens.

Your work is crucial and you have power and influence to change the current divisiveness through trusting the professionals in the Board of Education. Please consider this now and in future negotiations.

Be well,
Jackie Corricelli, Spoonville Rd
5/5/2020

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I am in favor of voting yes for this contract for a 2.33% percent increase to the Board of Education. Funding the contract means we will continue to provide an equitable education for the one part of our population not allowed to participate this evening, our children. This funding is an investment into our future. Right now, the education system is working to unite our community – to provide an education to our students no matter what. If our students did not have computers, these were provided. If students do not have someone at home to help them, this help was provided. For all students – this is what equity means. This happened quickly for our students, ahead of many other districts, because of our teachers and their administrative leadership. We should be thanking them.

Our teachers in our public education system are working hard not only to help our students learn about key academic topics, but also to participate in the democratic process. My daughter is a sixth grader and she is old enough that she will remember what we do to her school's funding. She has seen what budget cuts have done already. There are no athletic programs for her to participate in after school, there is no track, and she sees teachers that she adores work hard to offer extracurricular activities like rocket launching and kid's lit quiz for her to have the chance to enhance her learning. Again, teachers are the key. We should be praising them.
On Tuesday, a member of the Board of Finance called on teachers to sacrifice more and to be role models for students through that sacrifice. He brought up the recent Pratt/Hamilton/Raytheon salary modifications as evidence. I worked at Raytheon for 3 years. When I switched to teaching, it took about 10 years for my salary to be equivalent to my salary at Raytheon. I was not working fewer hours. Dollar or percentage comparisons from one industry to the next are not equivalent. Moreover, the vast majority of teachers are women. Salary negotiations are an equity issue. I believe our teachers, particularly our female teachers are being role models to my daughter by not accepting that this 1.5% increase is the best our town can do for our teachers and our education system. We know spending cuts impact achievement. A January 2018 study published by Northwestern Professor Kirabo drove this point home with this key takeaway, "If you cut education spending, student outcomes deteriorate… when you give public schools or districts larger budgets their students tend to do better."

The Union and Board of Education worked hard to negotiate this fair contract. Our schools require our support to continue to grow and develop. Attending the Board of Finance meeting, I was happy to learn that East Granby is doing well financially. Many people in the Board of Finance mentioned that because we are in this time of uncertainty, we should reduce the budget. I agree, we are in a time of uncertainty. Again, teachers and our system of education is uniting our community. Our teachers will continue to work hard and we should, in these difficult times, be there for them, as they are there for our children, and support the teacher contract.

Sincerely,
Jacqueline Corricelli, Spoonville
4/23/2020

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Good evening, I didn’t want to take more air time repeating those who had said so well what I feel. However, if I don’t comment you may think I am indifferent, which is not the case. I know the town is in good financial shape and we do have reserves which we have for exactly these kind of situations. I am in agreement with moving forward cautiously since we do not know and will not know the economic and educational ramifications of this pandemic. I do share Mr. McNally’s concern for education next year. Although my children are doing okay, I know many struggle with at home learning. It can be quite a struggle to make sure the kids are getting a quality education while parents are also trying to work and educate at the same time. These teachers have done an amazing job putting together programs but we won’t know until next year how much the students were actually able to advance. I agree with Mr. Sayles and Mr. Malloy about trying to give any savings back to the school. I think the truth is that there will not be a huge saving because their staff is still working and working hard! If they do have any, I would like to see it go back to the schools. They certainly will need all of their resources available at the start of school. It pains me to think after what will end up being 3 months of home school, the following year, our kids might get a lesser quality of education.

Thank you,
Amanda Thompson-Copper Hill
4/21/2020
These are extremely challenging times. Thankfully the majority of our citizens were not sickened by the virus but the financial effect is devastating. People will be hard pressed to come up with the same tax payment as last year let alone come up with additional money for a tax increase. Your two percent guidance was issued in a far different world. Times have changed and our towns budget must adapt to the new reality.

I serve on both the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education. The Board of Selectmen have made some effort to try to reduce the budget but I feel more can be done. Fuel costs will be down significantly this year and next. Many social programs and training seminars will be cancelled. None of this is reflected in the budget as presented. On the Board of Education side, I do not see any effort made to try to reduce expenses. Fuel oil should come in significantly lower. There should be fewer stipends paid if programs are not in effect. There are plenty of other areas that should be looked at.

This shut-down will have a far reaching effect on all of our citizens beyond one fiscal year. We as town leaders need to adjust to the town’s ability to pay.

John Ziobro-Wyncairne
4/20/2020

I am against ANY increases in the budgets for the BOS or BOE during this time of economic crisis. I find this cruel, and a slap in the face to those residents who are struggling. Just as businesses have had to cut back, lay off and even shut down portions of their operations. So should the town. This is the morally conscious thing to do for people here during this time. In fact, a tax relief fund should be established for residents who have been laid off during this year, or had to close their businesses. That can come out of the rainy day fund, as it is indeed pouring.

The BOS should suspend all non-essential capital projects immediately, and not incur any more debt on projects that could be halted safely and without penalty. This includes road improvement projects such as pavings, and roof replacements. Once the economy has recovered, these can then be looked at again. Until then, NO MORE PURCHASES OR CONTRACTS for Non-Essential items.

The Library should remain closed for an extended period (3-6 months). Costs savings could be gained by keeping this shuttered until after summer. Paid library staff should be laid off, and collect unemployment during this period. They are not an essential service. If volunteers want to run the Library, then that can be an option when the State clears non-essential businesses to open.

The Community Center should remain closed for an extended period (3-6 months) as well. Costs savings could be gained by keeping this shuttered until after summer.

Repairs to ballparks, tennis courts, etc. should be put on HOLD for next year.
A full-time grant writer should be employed immediately to begin submitting requests for the aid being released by the Federal Government, State and other resources.

No pay increases for town staff should be considered for next year. The first selectman should delay his pay increase for one year, as well as any other recently awarded raises to town staff.

The BOE teachers contract should be requested to be reopened. Doling out 2.5-2.7% raises during a time when folks are losing their jobs is NOT APPROPRIATE at this time. If the union can’t come back with a 0% increase, or at least a DELAYED increase, then we should lay off some teachers to get back to a zero increase in personnel costs. We are way above guidelines for teacher to student ratios today. Enrollment continues to decline. We remain one of the highest cost school systems in the State.

The hiring of a new Superintendent should be delayed, and current level of interim pay for the Interim Superintendent should be maintained at current level.

The need to re-evaluate and address special needs services is a continuing and ongoing problem. If these services are being provided by external organizations, then contracts should be renegotiated to a lower amount. I also have believe the CHOICE program may be a money loser for us overall? Can we opt out of this?

We should keep the new A/C at Allgrove OFF for the next year to save $60,000. Not too much to ask at this point in time.

Not sure why BOE is expecting a Utilities increase of so much. Oil prices have been dropping rapidly. See not above about not turning on A/C at Allgrove until next year.

There is not enough line item detail in the BOE presentation to make any other further suggestions. They need to publish the funding level detail for ALL ACCOUNTS! Please have that posted and made available to the public. **I would like an emailed copy before the date the budget is voted on, or be directed to a link where this document can be accessed please.**

Paul Calebaugh – Turkey Hills Road
4/6/2020