

*These minutes have not yet been approved*

**BOARD OF FINANCE**

**Town of Essex  
29 West Avenue  
Essex, CT 06426  
Auditorium – Via Zoom Online Audio**

**March 30, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

In attendance via Zoom: Keith Crehan, Chairman, W. Campbell Hudson, Vice Chair, Mary-Louise Polo, Vin Pacileo III, and Ed Tedeschi, absent Ethan Goller.

Others in attendance: Norman Needleman, First Selectman  
James Francis, Treasurer  
Tracey Celentano, Finance Director  
Kelly Sterner  
Stacia Libby, Selectman

Region 4 Board of Education & Essex Board of Education (in person and via Zoom):

Brian J. White, Superintendent, Reg4  
Robert Grissom, Finance Director, Reg4  
Lon Seidman, Chair, Essex BOE  
Loretta McClusky, Essex BOE  
Jennifer Tousignant, Principal, EES  
Katetlyn Sandmann, BOE Chair Reg4  
Naomi Marinelli, Finance Dept., Reg4  
Nancy Johnston, Essex BOE

Meeting called to order at 7:07 p.m. by Keith Crehan, Chairman, BOF. Keith indicated tonight's meeting will be a discussion and potential motion to submit the BOS' Budget and Essex BOE Budget to the public hearing.

Lon Seidman started the meeting indicating the addition of 31 students this year that have come into Town and there may possibly be more if people can find homes here. Lon reviewed the specific grade level of where these students fall on the grade K-6 level chart (on page 6 of EBOE presentation). Lon added that they were able to comfortably absorb them as not every student was in person. Lon thanked Brian, Jennifer and their team for doing such a great job

with the COVID situation and keeping the staff levels and the doors open with continued learning. The EBOE budget has come in with a 1.98% increase (page 8 of presentation). This increase is due to the fact we had to add a section. On the Essex, CT Projected Enrollment chart (attached) it shows 25% over the next 10 years. Since 2007, we have declined by 11%. This is the last year of the teacher's contract. No step increase, however, a 2.25% salary increase for all teachers in FY21-22. Special Ed increases of \$42k for and out of district placement. Brian discussed the COVID Relief Bill and he indicated that they are working through the ESSER2 funds with the State and all Boards of Education. They do have some spending plans once they get the info back from the State of CT. They will have a better idea of the numbers once they are approved. Surplus is looking better than it has in the past several years.

Campbell inquired about the Capital Reserve Fund (page 11 EES Budget) and last year he asked that it be renamed to "Sinking Fund". The BOF agreed and Lon agreed to change it going forward. Kelly indicated that it is treated as a sinking fund and therefore, Bob Grissom agreed to change it on an updated document.

Vin Pacileo inquired about the enrollment projections during COVID and the new 31 students coming in and shifting to Region 4 may turn out to be only a 5-student increase. Lon indicated the census numbers presented in the budget vary slightly to the NESDEC Projected Enrollment. Vin inquired as to what the possible surplus will be, and Bob Grissom indicated that the surplus is estimated to be \$257,459.

Campbell Hudson asked how much money is currently in the Sinking Fund and it was indicated it is currently at \$221K. Tracey indicated we are still waiting for the payment of the FY20-21 budget allocation totaling \$60k.

Lon went on to review the Equipment Needs Request for EES totaling \$243,147 (attached).

A large tree needs to be removed and new fencing around playground area needs to be updated for safety. This is a ballpark number and Tom is researching more quotes.

Vin inquired about the storage requirement for the Security & Safety system and the response from Jennifer Tousignant was it will have 30 day's storage capability.

Resurfacing of Gymnasium rubber flooring, Grade 2 furniture are also things needing replacement. The Gymnasium door folding partition is in bad shape and will be the most expensive to replace.

Norman inquired if there was sufficient money going into Sinking Fund vs. what is going out. He would like a ballpark of aggregate costs over the next 5 years. We could be looking for another Bond and we would want the right amount of money to be allocated to the long-term costs.

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Campbell's opinion that some of the census studies are not as reliable and yes, more and more people are moving here, however, he doesn't necessarily see that people moving here have school aged children. Lon agreed that could in fact be the picture down the road, especially with a shortage of home inventory as it stands today.

***Campbell Hudson moved to submit for review and discussion at the public hearing the 2021-2022 the Board of Selectmen's budget in the amount of \$8,831,602 and the Essex Board of Education 2021-2022 budget of \$7,861,407. Seconded by Ed Tedeschi. Passed unanimously, motion carried.***

**ADJOURNMENT:**

***Campbell Hudson made a motion to adjourn at 8:05 p.m. seconded by Vin Pacileo. Motion carried. Passed unanimously.***

Respectfully submitted,

Yvonne Roziak

Recording Secretary

Attachments/