



INSTR # M2020000086  
DATE FILED 01/31/2020 09:52:54 AM  
CHRISTINE HALLORAN  
TOWN CLERK  
EASTON CT

*File subject to approval*

**Budget Workshop**  
Helen Keller Middle School-Learning Commons  
Thursday, January 23, 2020  
7:30 p.m.

Minutes

ATTENDANCE: Parker, Chieda, Goldstein, Reed, Stinson

Absent: Hicks

Administration: McMorran, Reiss, Pierson Ugol, Fox Santora, Kaplan, Mohr, Brownstein, Del Conte, DiBartolo

Others: 15 members of the public

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Parker called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Carolyn Oppenheim, Hunting Ridge Road, Easton: spoke about how the lack of a media specialist at HKMS is a detriment to all students. She asked the board to please consider hiring a media specialist for HKMS for the 20-21 school year.

Nikki Kaldawy, Staples Road, Easton: said that moving teachers to different classes year to year is very disruptive for the students and teachers. In addition, the PTO will not be able to continue funding extracurricular activities at HKMS going forward.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

None.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: CONSIDERATION OF 2020-2021 PROPOSED BUDGET

Mr. Parker asked board members to look at the Easton Budget Development book for 2020-2021. There is a 4.20% increase proposed. There have been some changes. Mr. Reiss pointed out some changes regarding line item numbers. This would take the 4.20% proposed increase down to 4.05%. The second set of changes for the Central Office budget passed at the joint meeting of the Easton, Redding, and Region 9 Boards of Education on January 21, 2020.

The first change: In the 1200 line 42,075.00 for SSES and in the 1200 line 42,075.00 for HKMS will be a Central Office Budget item. The end result of this will be a 3.97% increase in the proposed budget.

Dr. McMorran spoke about how 25% of the budget is to support special education. Special education is mandated by law and the district is required to provide service hours to each student based on need. Dr. McMorran said that he believes the budget includes everything needed, including a library media specialist and extracurricular activities.

Mr. Parker spoke about the Budget Object Summary, highlighting the certified and non-certified salary increases due to replacement of some items from last year's budget. Mr. Parker questioned the increase in the electric bill when there are many solar panels at the schools.

Mr. Reiss used the Object Detail section to assist members in clarification of costs. Mr. Parker spoke about the Levels of Funding and the amounts of increases for new and reinstated programs totaling \$227,657.00. Ms. Kaplan spoke about student activities in place now, and the percent of students participating in the activities. Mr. Parker asked about special education and its effect on the number of staff needed. Ms. Del Conte explained the ways in which some students benefit either from paraprofessional or behavioral support. Dr. McMorran said that the budget is not static due to the movement of students in and out of the district and students changing needs. Mr. Parker asked about the possibility of hiring a consultant in lieu of additional staff. Ms. Del Conte did not think that it would be cost effective to hire a consultant for a short time. Mr. Reiss spoke about cyber security and additional programs. Dr. McMorran spoke about the "Start Time Study" and that it would take a small amount of funding to begin research. Mr. Parker asked about the Window Security Improvement and General Instruction addition of a media specialist at \$72,000.00. Also, there is an increase of \$25,000.00 in Other Payments due to longevity and staff returns from leaves of absence. In summary, Mr. Parker said what we are adding are a library media specialist, a kindergarten teacher, and extracurricular activities. Ms. Chieda proposed adding a physical education paraprofessional at HKMS. Mr. Parker said we should carefully consider any additional staff to the budget. Mr. Parker said decisions did not have to be made tonight and we must collectively work with the Board of Finance, giving examples of the potential outcome of some budget cuts. He said that it is a balancing act between what we can afford and what we need. Mr. Parker asked board members to review the Easton Budget Development book and ask questions.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Anne Manusky, Morning Glory Drive, Easton: spoke about her belief that only children five years old and up will have the best experience in kindergarten. Also she voiced her concerns regarding health and wellness education as part of the school curriculum.

Nikki Kaldawy, Staples Road, Easton: spoke about her child's benefit from the health and wellness education curriculum topics.

Carolyn Oppenheim, Hunting Ridge Road, Easton: said she is always notified when sexual health topics will be introduced in her child's classes. She thanked the board for their support regarding these classes.

Tara Donnelly Gottlieb, Delaware Road, Easton: asked about the Start Time Study and the cost. Christine Calvert, North Street, Easton: voiced her appreciation for all the hard work from board members and encouraged everyone to attend Board of Finance meeting as well.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Ms. Reed said it is important for the Board of Finance to know how the public feels about the proposed budget. Mr. Stinson thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting. He feels that the proposed budget is barely enough to sustain Easton's needs. Ms. Chieda said that we need to maintain and improve programs for both present and future students. Mr. Parker said the next meeting will be held on February 11, 2020.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education Budget Workshop Meeting be adjourned. Stinson, Goldstein. Approved. Unanimous.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:57 p.m.

Recorded by Deborah DeLorenzo

Submitted by Jenny Chieda, Easton Board of Education Secretary