

Good evening,

My name is Tammy McInerney. I reside at 33 Sterling Drive and am the vice-chair of the New Milford Board of Education. I am here to speak on behalf of the Board to address the task you have in setting a second referendum date and amount this evening.

The Board has been working collaboratively with the Town for the past six months to close the gap in this year's town budget. We are happy to have been able to achieve this goal and are grateful for the good working relationship we have with the Town.

As everyone here no doubt knows, the education budget at last week's referendum failed by only 149 votes. The margin was very close considering the weather challenges that many in our town faced that afternoon and evening and many residents are frustrated that they couldn't get out to vote. Nevertheless, here we are. So what do we do now.

The Board of Education appreciates the task the Town Council had in addressing the cuts from Hartford in establishing next year's budget. That being said, since the last Town Council meeting on the budget, things have changed.

Originally, the two main cuts came in the form of reductions to the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Grant and the PILOT Grant. Since last week's referendum, the state has signed into law a new budget for next year restoring \$1.5 million in funding to New Milford. That breaks down to \$1.1 million more than what was budgeted for the ECS funding and an additional \$400,000 in the PILOT Grant.

In light of these changes, we would like to continue our collaboration with the town and work together to solve the issues facing the community and set forth a budget that voters can rally behind and approve. With the restored state funds, we believe that keeping the cuts to the education budget at the level of the May 15<sup>th</sup> referendum will produce a budget that is fiscally responsible, provide the necessary services required to maintain the quality of our schools, and reduce the financial burden on the taxpayers of our town.

Should the Town Council keep the reductions as set at last referendum, the Board of Education is still faced with more than \$950,000 in cuts. This will be an arduous task and will most likely include cuts to programs and staff. We urge you to not cut any deeper and we again extend an invitation to all members of Town Council to visit our schools and see firsthand the resources the budget provides to our students, our schools and our community.

We thank you for your consideration and continued partnership in educating the children of New Milford.

As you have heard from the Vice Chair and has been signed into legislation 1.5 million dollars has been restored to the town of New Milford since the referendum numbers were established. This is fantastic news for the town of New Milford; we are in a much better place. I would like to take an opportunity to specify some very important facts as you face the task of setting a new referendum date.

The legislators recognized the burden towns faced when mid-year holdbacks were imposed on municipalities. Bill 5171 was passed into law preventing Governors from holding back any funds allocated to towns during the fiscal year.

The original Town Council proposed budget, included \$492,000 from the undesignated fund. We heard from the Town Council concerns about using any more than this amount. There is a way to protect the undesignated fund, provide a fiscally responsible budget, and protect the services provided in both the Town and Education budgets by accounting for **\$2,544,623** in adjustments in the following manner:

1. Set the BOE budget to a 0.8% increase (\$500,000) instead of the 2.34% increase (\$1,468,084), a difference of **\$968,084**. This step holds the school budget set by the BOF.
2. Budgeting an increase of **\$1,576,539** of in additional state revenue. (\$1,158,641 ECS, \$417,898 PILOT)

A budget with an increase of 3.87% that included using over 1 million in savings lost by only 149 votes. A budget that is net budget reduction from last year should be more than acceptable to the community.

Restore the state funds, reduce or eliminate the offsets from savings, and offer the voters a zero to low mill rate increase without any further damage to the funds required to run our schools. A budget that is a net reduction from the current year budget should gain support from the community.

The Board of Education recognizes the reduction of the 968,000 and asks that you hold that line while investing the additional 1.5 million in revenue to the overall needs of the community as you see most beneficial fit.

						5.21.18 Suggested Adjustment	
	17/18 Approved Budget	18/19 Board Adopted	18/19 Mayor Proposed Budget	18/19 Town Council Budget	18/19 BoF Referendum	18/19 Budget Amount	18/19 Budget Change
BOE	\$62,810,586	\$64,278,670	\$63,678,670	\$62,810,586	\$63,310,586	\$63,310,586	(\$968,084)
TOWN	\$38,204,134		\$38,195,508	\$38,084,316	\$38,286,674	\$36,710,135	(\$1,576,539)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$101,014,720</b>	<b>\$64,278,670</b>	<b>\$101,874,178</b>	<b>\$100,894,902</b>	<b>\$101,597,260</b>	<b>\$100,020,721</b>	<b>(\$2,544,623)</b>