

# **Board of Selectmen/Board of Education Joint Special Meeting**

Tuesday, March 28, 2023 7:00 PM

Meeting Access: BOS/BOE (3/38/23 at 7 p.m.) Web:

<https://zoom.us/j/91096218072> Dial In: (929) 205-6099 Meeting ID: 910 9621 8072, 3 Brush Hill Road, New Fairfield, CT 06812

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. DISCUSSION OF THE 2023-2024 BUDGET**

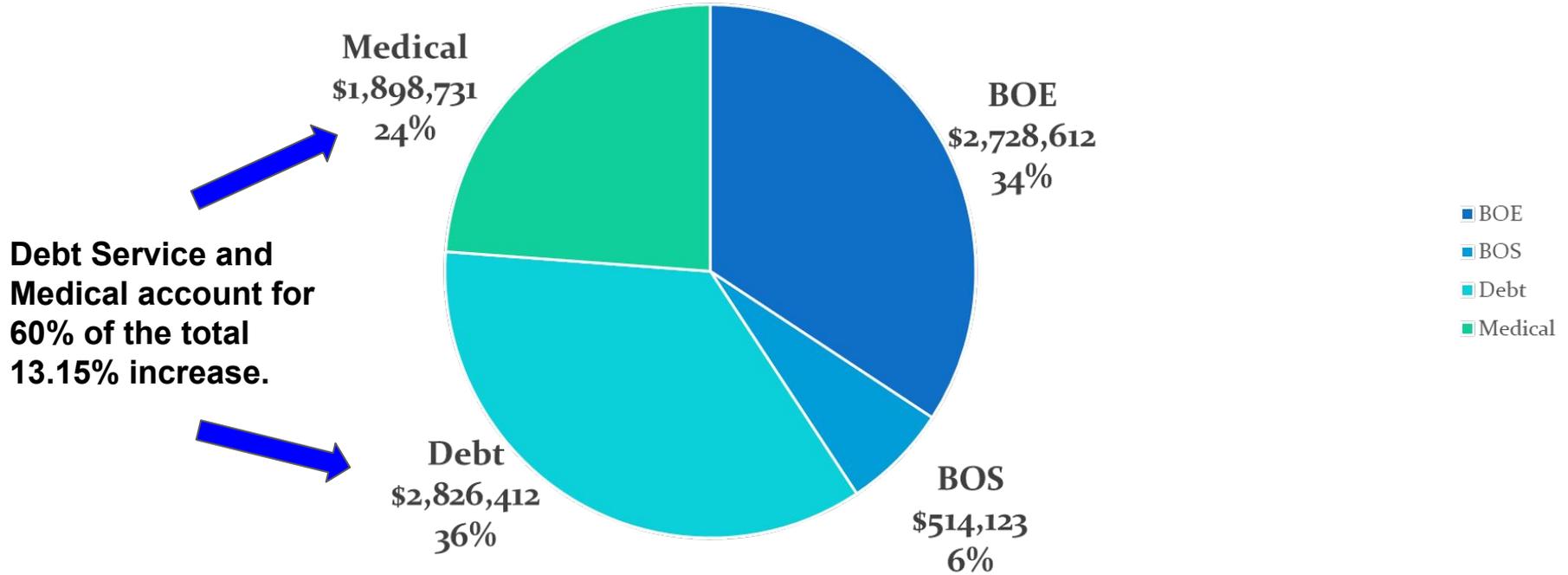
**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

# **BOS & BOE Joint Meeting**

**2023-24 Budget  
March 28, 2023**

# Increase Over Last Year \$7,967,878



# Budget Reductions

- A **1% reduction** in the budget is a cut of **\$550,000**.

Budget Increase Over Last Year	Reduction Required
7%	\$3,300,000
6%	\$3,850,000
5%	\$4,400,000

- It will take **years to recover** from cuts of this magnitude.

# BOE Operating Budget

- 85% of the increase over FY 23 budget is due to fixed costs - salary & benefits.
  - Contractual salary increases
  - Federally-funded positions reverting back to operating budget
  - Addition of 6.4 paraprofessional positions
  
- Most of the remaining increase is also due to fixed costs.
  - Transportation contract
  - Special education transportation
  - Increase in special education evaluations
  - Utilities

# Impact of Operating Budget Reduction

- Reductions will come from staffing.
- Staffing reductions would come from all levels.
  - **Certified** - teachers, administrators, coaches, interventionists, counselors, etc.
  - **Non-certified** - paras, secretaries, technology, & facilities staff
- Magnitude of reductions will determine amount of staffing eliminated.



Staffing is based on student needs.

Eliminating positions affects delivery of programs & services.

# Impact of Staffing Reductions

\$250k	\$500k	\$750k	\$1 million	\$1.25 million	\$1.5 million	\$1.75 million	\$2 million
3 certified	6 certified	9 certified	12 certified	15 certified	18 certified	21 certified	24 certified
1 non-cert	2 non-cert	3 non-cert	4 non-cert	5 non-cert	6 non-cert	7 non-cert	8 non-cert

## 7 Major Impacts of Budget Reduction (Grows with the size of the reduction)

- Increase in Elementary Class Size
- Reduce or Eliminate Programs (e.g. Gifted)
- Reduce HS Course Offerings & Increase Class Size
- Reduce or Eliminate Co-Curricular Offerings (Athletics, Arts)
- Reduce Services for Students (Interventionists, Counseling Staff)
- Reduce or Eliminate Middle School Team Model & Increase Class Size
- Reduce Instructional Improvement Supports & Curriculum Development (Coaches)

**Note:** The District must adhere to all state & federal mandates, including all special education requirements. 6

# Impact of Increasing K-5 Class Size

Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5
Proj. Enrollment	147	132	143	148	161	140
Proj. # Sections	8	7	7	7	7	6
Avg. Class Size	18.1	18.9	20.4	21.1	23.0	23.3
Reducing 1 Sec.	7	6	6	6	6	5
Avg. Class Size	21	22	24	25	27	28
Reducing 2 Sec.	6	5	5	5	5	4
Avg. Class Size	25	26	29	30	32	35

## **BOE Class Size Goals**

K	18
Grade 1	18-20
Grades 2-4	20-22
Grade 5	22-24

## Reducing one section:

Adds 3-5 students per class depending on grade level

## Reducing two sections:

Adds 7-12 students per class depending on grade level

# Impact of Reducing or Eliminating Academic Programs

PROGRAM REDUCTION	IMPACT	FTE
Gifted & Talented & Enrichment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Eliminates Gifted and Talented Classes from grades 3-8 and all Enrichment Services</li></ul>	2.0
K-5 STEAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Eliminates Vital High-Interest Program</li></ul>	1.0
Strings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Eliminates a program that the district has been building</li></ul>	.75
1 High School World Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reduces language choices for HS students</li></ul>	Up to 1.0
Math Lab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Eliminates math intervention &amp; daily math</li></ul>	1.3

# Impact of Reducing HS Course Offerings

## IMPACT ON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Eliminate Low Enrollment Courses

- AP /ECE (i.e. BC Calculus, Biology, US History, Languages)

Fewer electives

Difficult to provide upper level courses

Creates part-time teaching positions and exposes District to teacher retention issues

Reduces competitiveness of our students in the college process

Increases class sizes in required courses as a result of fewer sections

# Impact of Reducing or Eliminating Co-Curricular Offerings

CO-CURRICULAR	REDUCTION	IMPACT
<u>ATHLETICS</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eliminate freshman sports</li><li>• Increase in Pay-to-participate</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduces number of available opportunities for students to play a sport</li><li>• Increases financial burden on families</li></ul>
<u>ARTS</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pay-to-participate</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increases financial burden on families</li><li>• Results in fewer students participating</li></ul>
<u>CLUBS</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduction in number of club offerings</li><li>• Pay-to-participate</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Impacts students' ability to pursue their interests</li><li>• Reduces opportunities to develop leadership qualities</li></ul>

**Note:** Reductions to co-curricular opportunities makes it more difficult to compete in the college search process with fewer activities on a resume.

# Impact of Reducing Services for Students

STUDENT SERVICE	REDUCTION & IMPACT
<u>Academic Intervention &amp; Recovery</u>	<b>Reducing Math and/or Reading interventionists will result in:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Larger intervention groups &amp; fewer students supported;</li><li>● Reduced personalized attention for students;</li><li>● Decreased ability to close performance gaps;</li><li>● Increased referrals to special education.</li></ul>
<u>Social Emotional</u>	<b>Reducing Counseling Staff will result in:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Fewer social workers, psychologists &amp; counselors to address social-emotional needs of our students;</li><li>● Increased caseloads;</li><li>● Increased referrals to special education, outplacements and specialized evaluations.</li></ul>

# Impact of Reducing or Eliminating the MS Teaming Model

Grade	6	7	8
Projected Enrollment	175	164	180
Projected # Sections	8	8	8
Average Class Size	21.9	20.5	22.5
Reducing 1 Section	7	7	7
Average Class Size	25	23.4	26

## Reducing a section of 7th grade will result in:

- A .8 FTE reduction;
- A team of teachers reduced to part-time status (English, Math, Science and SS teacher);
- Difficulty retaining and recruiting part-time teachers;
- Increased class size.

## Reducing a section in 6th and 7th grades will result in:

- Teachers teaching across grade levels;
- Team unable to plan collaboratively for student academic and social-emotional needs;
- A junior high school model;
- Increased class size;
- A 1.6 FTE saving.

# Impact of Reducing Instructional Supports & Curriculum Development

What is the impact of reducing the number of instructional coaches on...

AREA AFFECTED	IMPACT
<u>Instructional Improvement</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Reduces essential support structure for teachers K-12.</li><li>● Reduces ability to support district strategic map to close achievement gap.</li></ul>
<u>Curriculum Development</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Loss of support for planning and implementing curriculum.</li><li>● Lack of coherence across and within grade levels.</li></ul>
<u>Professional Learning</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Fewer coaches available to plan and lead professional development.</li><li>● Increased costs for consultants to lead work.</li></ul>

# Municipal Budget Pressures

- **Inflation**

- Utilities \$41,294
- Contracted Services \$62,171

- **Added Positions/Funding**

- PD Add SRO \$82,657 **Approved Additional Appropriation, BOF and Town Meeting**
- Communications \$84,375 **Approved Additional Appropriation, BOF and Town Meeting**

- **Road Repair Funding** \$150,000

- **Paramedic Services** \$285,000

- **Municipal Budget Increase** **\$510,435 (3.85%)**

- No taxpayer contribution to Capital Expenditures this year

# Municipal Staffing

DEPARTMENT	# EMPLOYEES	
<i>Board of Selectman</i>	3 Elected, 1 FT	
<i>Town Clerk</i>	1 Elected, 2 FT	
<i>Registrars of Voters</i>	2 Elected, PT Poll Workers	
<i>Finance (Shared with BOE)</i>	8 FT, 1 PT, Shared with BOE	50%
<i>Treasurer</i>	1 Elected	
<i>Assessor</i>	2 FT	1 Assessor, 1 Asst. Assessor
<i>Tax Collector</i>	1 Elected, 2 FT	Asst. Tax Coll, Asst. Delinquent Coll
<i>Zoning</i>	1 FT	
<i>General Land Use</i>	1 PT	
<i>Police- Officers</i>	5 Officers, 3 SRO, 1 PT Secretary	
<i>Communications Center</i>	5FT, Part Time as needed	
<i>Fire Marshal</i>	1 FT	
<i>Building Inspector</i>	2 FT	Building Inspector, Admin Asst.
<i>Office of Emergency Management</i>	1 FT OEM/CC Supervisor	Combined 2 positions
<i>Animal Control</i>	1 FT	49K/yr vs 80K/yr Regional
<i>Public Works</i>	14 FT 1 PT Seasonal	Plow Routes
<i>Health</i>	3 FT, 1 PT	Health Dir, Sanitarian, Administrator
<i>Social Services</i>	1 FT, 1 PT	
<i>Senior Services</i>	2 FT, 1 PT	Dir, Prog. Coord, Admin
<i>Recreation</i>	1 FT	
<i>Library</i>	6 FT, 7 PT	
	8 EO, 61 FT, 14 PT + PT Poll Workers, PT Dispatchers	

**Average Salary \$57,000/yr**

# Municipal Staffing

- Majority of departments req'd by statute are **1, 2 or 3 employees**
- Larger departments include **Police, Public Works, Finance, Library, Communications**
- **Finance Department**, 8 FT, 1 PT shared 50/50 with BOE, Process payroll for approximately 530 employees, process \$60 million in revenue and expenditure transactions, purchasing, benefits administration, Town annual audit, grant administration and fund management. To avoid material weaknesses and deficiencies in internal controls, accounting must maintain enough employees to have separation of duties.
- **Communications Center** is staffed with 1 Dispatcher per 12-hour shift, 1 Dispatcher to monitor the School Safety Operations Center, part time positions to fill in and provide support on busiest shifts

# Potential Reductions

- **Considered Regionalizing** Communications Center \$250,000/yr savings, will take 6 months to accomplish, strong opposition from Public Safety and Residents
- **Reducing PW** staff means **reducing hours spent on maintenance of infrastructure** – fields, buildings, roads and drainage and reduction of services such as drop off center hours, roadside mowing and plowing.
- **Reduce Road Paving** \$150,000 (Pave Gillotti Road Only) results in deterioration of roads, drainage systems
- **Library** – Current budget \$514,911 - Reduce programs and hours of operation
- **Senior Center** – Current budget \$200,549 – Reduce programs and hours of operation

# Budget Mitigation Strategies

Exhaust all opportunities to mitigate the 13.15 % increase.

- Employ available strategies to reduce the impact of funding the Medical Reserve.
- Apply available bond premium to reduce the increase due to Debt Service.
- Identify non-tax revenue.

See sample mitigation scenario on the next slide.

# Budget Reduction Scenario

This scenario is an example of an approach to reduce the 13.15% increase.

Projected Budget Increase			13.15%
	<u>Reduction Strategy</u>	<u>Revenue</u>	
Debt Service (Apply Available Bond Premium)	-1,500,000		10.4%
Medical (Update to Claims and Contributions)	-500,000		9.51%
Projected Interest Income/Revenues		425,000	8.74%
BOS Operating	-100,000		8.56%
BOE Operating	-360,000		7.90%

# Questions

## **How does this process impact the town and school district?**

- Staff are wondering if they will have a job next year.
- Parents are wondering if student needs will be met.
- Staff may become distracted from our mission.
- Staff may feel their work is not valued.

## **How does this process affect teacher recruitment and retention?**

- We cannot begin filling vacancies until we know where the budget stands.
- The longer this process goes, the thinner the applicant pool becomes.
- Retaining and recruiting teachers becomes more difficult in this climate.

## **What questions do you have?**