

David Campo

From: Mike Perkins <mike.perkins68@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 14, 2020 12:51 PM
To: David Campo
Subject: Public Comment Re: RTM Budget Hearings

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Dear Waterford RTM Members,

I would ask that this letter be read into the minutes of this evening's RTM Budget Hearing.

I am writing in regards to the controversy over the reduction in the Board of Education budget request. While I understand the fear of staff reductions and cuts in programs, I would like to offer an alternate perspective.

In this time of uncertainty, I feel that the reduction is appropriate. I myself have taken a 15% pay cut in order to retain my employment and support the company I work for and my wife has accepted a 20% reduction in pay to support the local family business for whom she works. Despite this, and the affect on our household budget, we keep in mind that we are more fortunate than many in that we continue to receive an income. Our heart goes out to those in our wonderful community who have experienced job losses and, in many instances, a total loss of household income. We all would agree that unemployment benefits, while helpful, are far from the income necessary to maintain a household.

Regarding the reduction in the board of Education request, I would offer the following:

1. Superintendent Giard's presentation Monday evening (I've attached the slide) showed a \$989,426 increase in salaries and compensation. This represents a 3.2% increase over the current fiscal year.
2. If the teacher's union were to reduced that amount by the \$470,000 reduction to the overall budget, the increase would still allow for a \$519,426 or 1.52% increase in salaries and compensation.
3. Keeping in mind those residents who have experienced pay reductions or catastrophic job losses, the teachers and staff would still realize a pay increase with no cuts to current proposed staffing or programs.
4. If the Teachers union agreed to a total pay "freeze", that would allow a \$519,426 "buffer" for the upcoming year to offset part if not all of the fear of what might be for the upcoming year.

I find the argument that the only result of the reduction to the Board of Education's request is staffing and program cuts to be not only short sighted, it is tone deaf in these trying times. Outside of the current pandemic, the Town of Waterford cannot sustain these continued increases. As a former RTM member, I tried for two terms to convey this message. I applaud the fortitude of the current RTM for their willingness to do the right thing in the face of what is popular.

In closing, I would like to convey to those in our Waterford Family who are suffering far more than I, that we are with you, we support you, and our town government supports you.

Best personal regards,
Michael Perkins

BUDGET DRIVERS

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Category	\$ Increase Over FY 20	% Increase Over FY 20	Part of the 3.05% Increase
Salaries & Compensation	\$ 989,426	3.20%	2.00%
Employee Benefits	\$ 366,340	4.81%	0.74%
Heat, Energy, Fuel	\$ 41,608	2.72%	0.08%
Transportation	\$ 106,841	4.87%	0.23%
Tuition	(\$ 254,843)	(7.51%)	(0.52%)
All Other Lines	\$ 255,879	6.98%	0.52%
	\$ 1,505,251		3.05%