

Board of Apportionment & Taxation City of Ansonia

The Board of Apportionment & Taxation of the City of Ansonia held their regular meeting on Monday, May 9, 2011 in the Aldermanic Chambers of Ansonia City Hall. The purpose of the meeting was to hold a public session for comment on the tentative budget and to establish a tentative budget and tentative mil rate for the fiscal year July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012.

Members Present

Banks	Norman
Boran	Smerznak
Commune	Strumello
Confinante	Veillette
Kennedy	Williams
Kohut	Sturges

Chairman Sturges called the meeting to order. The Board rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. The record shows 12 members present.

Mr. Norman made a motion to accept the call of the meeting. Mr. Commune seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

Public Session

At this time Mr. Sturges opened the meeting to anyone who wished to comment on the tentative budget

Joyce Cicrella, Director Ansonia Library

We are here this evening to “Save our Library” we understand you have a difficult task at hand. It is my job to do whatever I can to offer quality service to the citizens of Ansonia, the budget cuts proposed will limit quality service. I have a petition with over 300 signatures asking you to not cut the Library budget. I would like to offer some facts and figures concerning American Libraries: Americans are turning to their libraries in large numbers in recent years, looking for future employment or educational opportunities. Residents are seeking help with technology training, resume writing and job interviewing skills. Approximately 4,000 residents a month use the library, we have been keeping track by hour so we know when they are there and not there. Residents use the computers to search for jobs or prepare resumes, federal tax service, faxing, free wireless internet. They take out DVD, CD’s and books. We circulate over 90,000 items per year. We have over 11,000 registered patrons which represents over 57% of the residences of Ansonia. We offer programs to enhance the quality of life, we have a community room which many groups use and it is booked everyday. Studies show that public library’s ROI (Return on Investment) are very high anywhere from between \$2-\$10 for every tax dollar received. By cutting the Library staff this will result in a need to cut hours, this is a matter of safety. By cutting hours we limited the amount of aid we can offer Ansonia residences. Please do not cut

the library budget. Thank you.

Vi O'Donnell, Treasurer of the Ansonia Library Board of Directors 18 Finney St. Ext
The Ansonia Library Board of Directors supports the Library monetary and we support the fact that the part-time employees are needed in order to operate effectively and efficiently. Almost every Library in the State has part-time hours, the part-timers fill in for when people are out sick, when people are on vacation, they will in for the night crew and Saturdays. We support the Library financially; here is a brief summary of the Library Trust: \$543,186.79 Current Balance Of that amount 69% is restricted to be used for books only. The City has not purchase books in at least 10 years and the trust has purchase \$493,168 in books. We have also contributed \$141,412 for computers and \$275,003 for the HVAC Replacement. Even though the Library has a trust there are restrictions on those funds they cannot go below \$196,783.47. We don't mind buying the books but we need your support in supplying us with the personnel to run the library effectively and efficiently. Thank you for your time.

Michael Egan 103 Benz St.

Thank you for your time and service to the City of Ansonia. Taxpayers are being hit hard with taxes and sewer use charges. The Board needs to stop and reverse this trend. Starting with the Board of Education 80% of their budget goes toward staff, let's not play the students against the taxpayer, the students deserve a good education and the money should go for that purpose. The administrative staff is way too top heavy. Take a ride by Prendergast School during school session see how many cars are parked on the road. Limit the funding; let the departments eliminate the extras. Every year we hear the same thing contractual agreements, that's a poor excuse I have been a union person most of my working life, we need to negotiate the contract. Thank you for your time and please remember the taxpayer not the various special interest groups.

Donna Lingren Director Ansonia Nature Center 81 Prindle Ave.

The Nature Center is a positive force of the City. I am hear to ask you to consider my budget request that was submitted to you in the winter months. We were asked to not increase any salary line items but I need to remind you we have four part-time ranger positions there, they keep the park open and program going seven days a week. Winters we close early but in the spring and summer we stay open later. Please consider an increase for my rangers and my part-time custodian I don't believe they received a raise in two years and they certainly deserve it they are positions of responsibility they do a wonderful job for the Nature Center and the City of Ansonia. Thank you.

Carol Merlone, Superintendent of Schools 8 Shortell Drive

I am resident and taxpayer of Ansonia. Thank you for your time and effort I know this is a difficult task. I know you have to listen to the taxpayer who is unemployed, the taxpayer who lives on a fixed income and those struggling to make ends meet. I'm sure you are hearing from not just the Education side of this budget. Please take into consideration we are turning around our school district, student achievement is improving, the State's decision to remove Ansonia has

a priority school district is proof that we are no longer one of the poorest performing districts in Connecticut. What we have been doing to help are students and parents save money, we now have eleven advanced placement courses (students earn college credits). We are hoping to bring in the STEM Program (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) these areas will lead to higher paying positions for the current and future students. This program will open doors for more scholarships and college acceptances. We have work hard to tighten our belts, we will continue to do our best for the 2,700 students in the Ansonia Schools. I would like to thank the Mayor and President of the Board of Aldermen for advocating for the education system. The Mayor attends many events and our student know there Mayor. BOAT choose the road less traveled the path may be bumpier, please make the difference for our children I am not asking you to pit the children against our taxpayers.

Melissa Haas 8 Arbor Terrace

Speaking on behalf of education tonight I have a Senior at Ansonia High School and a Kindergarten, I am one of the cars parked outside of Prendergast because I volunteer. My daughter has worked very hard she is a straight A student and graduating in the top 5 of her class. The scholarship have not been has great as we have hoped, some parents have heard from schools that a GPA from Ansonia may not be worth as much as a GPA from a school who spends more money on education. Ansonia spends the least amount of money per student then any other town in Connecticut, that's shameful. There have been cuts every year that my daughter has been in school. Project Explorer was cut, band cut, French was cut. Education can not afford anymore cuts, I urge you to give the Board of Education the budge they asked for Ansonia's children are worth that. Thank you.

Monica Fasciano 14 Michael Street

I am here today as a parent and a teacher at Seymour High School. Seymour has had six years of zero increase I have seen the decline in programs and students. I have students in the Ansonia school system and I don't want to see that here. People look at the school systems when they move to a town we want to be at least rated. The teachers are great. Full day kindergarten needs to be offered. I was out in the business world before I became a teacher, teachers are not over paid. The children have to come first I understand it is a bad time but we have to make the hard decisions, I would rather put my money in the education budget then have to pay for a private school. Thank you.

Milton Soriano 28 Jewett Street

Thank you for your hard work and representing us. I am here as a taxpayer and parent of 3 children we have lived in Ansonia for 8 years. I believe my children will be leaders in the future, good role models, excellent students, they contribute to our community. Our children are the future; they are going to be representing us. Making cut to their education is putting their dream at risk. Consider not making any cuts to education, maintaining a good education system. Thank you.

Jessica Rogers 7 South Westwood Road

I am a Second Grade Teacher at Mead School and a parent and I grew up here. I feel Ansonia has nothing to offer my children. You are making cuts to the Nature Center, Library, Schools. We are looking at private schools because my daughter is going from a full time pre-k program to kindergarten for 2 ½ hours a day. Please don't make the cuts proposed. Full day kindergarten can not go.

Sigma Kerin Co-President of Ansonia Administrative Org. and Principal of Ansonia High School

I have grown to love Ansonia and their children. Thank you to the BOE for putting together a budget that demonstrates their commitment to the children of Ansonia. Also thank you to this board for your concerns of the greater community and the need of our citizens in Ansonia. We are here to support a budget that is thoughtful, appropriate and necessary to continue to improve the educational experience. Over the past three years Ansonia schools have improved, we have raised test scores, trained our teachers and brought back programs. New legislation was enacted which will increase credit requirement at the high school from 22-25 beginning with the freshman class of 2014. The will require additional staff with cuts to the budget or zero increase when this new legislation is enacted we will be hit all at once. The high school will also be undergoing the accreditation process which may lead to improvement that may need to happen. With all the improvement made we sadly the reward is the beginning of the loss of the priority school grant. The \$500,000 requested over last year is a budget that moves the district forward. We need to keep that forward movement; we owe it to the students now and as we build better schools for their future. Thank you.

Amy Dickenson 93 Hubble Avenue

My children are going into kindergarten and as many other students going from a full day preschool to a half day kindergarten. From 6 ½ hours a day 2 ½ hours a day both the child and parents need the full day please do not cut it.

Ane Lemany 152 Pulaski Highway

I have lived in Ansonia for eight years, I came here for a better education for my children. The City of Ansonia is the least supportive town for education. The community and nation won't succeed if taxpayers do not support the budget. Families will move from town. There are increases all over the budget why not education?

Kim McDermitt 171 Walkee Avenue

I have a home, 8 vehicles registered paying taxes. Two children in the school system. My family has been here for over 150 years I do not want to move but programs like tutoring and interventions are being eliminated. Don't cut the education budget.

Charlie Stowe 23 Grantie Terrace

Thank you for all you have done as a board. This is not a problem for just the Board of Education or Library or Nature Center this is a society problem. We as a society have to do some heavy work. Renegotiate union contracts, we have not had time like this since the great

depression.

MaryAnn Depone, Asst Director Ansonia Library

Statistics have been passed out from 2007 to the first quarter of this year, you can see how our staff has grown. In order to maintain the Library we need these positions reinstated. In 1891 the building known now as the library was donated to the city it remained empty for four years because the City did not want to pay for staffing. I don't want to see history repeated I don't think anyone does please consider reinstating those funds.

Danile 18 Coe Lane Erica 110 Woodbridge Ave Juniors at Ansonia High School

We are both in honors and AP classes and are in the top 20% of our class. I am on the tennis team and we are very involved in our school. Every other town has to pay something to pay sports, we don't pay anything. Kindergarten half day isn't going to do anything. Classes I plan to take next year to help me in college are being cut, tutors are being cut. The Board of Education needs an increase.

Gil Torres 8 Prospect Street

We have lived in Ansonia for six years, Ansonia has a lot to offer. I have a 4th grader he is an honor student, involved in the YMCA, he is a gifted athlete. We believe in Ansonia and the education that is provided here, we love it here, we don't want to see anything negative happen to our children in terms of their education. We know the whole budget thing is difficult but please take a second look and save some of that budget for the Board of Education our children are our greatest resource.

Sandy Salazer 102 Jackson Street

I am a US Army Vet my family moved us here in 1997. My son is in the Ansonia Pre-K program and has done a wonderful job learning sign language, they learn about other countries and cultures. I love it. A lot has already been said I don't want to move either please do not stay at zero increase the Board of Education Budget for our kids our future. Thank you for your time.

No one else wished to address the Board the public session was closed at 7:50 p.m.

Mr. Sturges advised the audience that the Board would vote on a tentative budget tonight, by law, it is not the final budget all concerns aired this evening will be considered prior to the final budget vote next Monday night. Thank you all for coming out and voicing your concerns.

Tentative Budget

101 School Building Commission \$2,100

Mr. Norman made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for the School Building Commission in the amount of \$2,100. Mr. Kennedy seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

200 BOAT \$874,357

Mr. Norman made a motion to approve the tentative budget for BOAT for fiscal year 2011-2012 in the amount of \$874,357. Mr. Confinante seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

201 City Government \$3,001,701

Mr. Kennedy made a motion to approve the tentative budget for City Government for fiscal year 2011-2012 in the amount of \$3,001,701. Ms. Banks seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

202 Elections \$41,140

Mr. Smerznak made a motion to approve the tentative budget for Elections for fiscal year 2011-2012 in the amount of \$41,140. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

210 Flood Control \$29,900

Mr. Confinante made a motion to approve the tentative budget for Flood Control for fiscal year 2011-2012 in the amount of \$29,900. Mr. Commune seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

211 City Engineer \$36,135

Mr. Veillette made a motion to approve the tentative budget for City Engineer for fiscal year 2011-2012 in the amount of \$36,135. Ms. Banks seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

212 Building Inspector \$113,658

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the tentative budget for the Building Inspector for fiscal year 2011-2012 in the amount of \$113,658. Mr. Smerznak seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

214 Nature Center \$171,084

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for the Nature Center in the amount of \$171,084. Mr. Confinante seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

215 Insurance and Debt Service \$9,548,042

Mr. Commune made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for Insurance and Debt Service in the amount of \$9,548,042. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

216 Mayor's Office \$200,367

Mr. Smerznak made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for the Mayor's Office in the amount of \$200,367. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

301 Police Department \$4,949,354

Mr. Kennedy made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for the Police Department in the amount of \$4,949,354. Mr. Smerznak seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

302 Senior Center \$138,203

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for the Senior Center in the amount of \$138,203. Ms. Banks seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

400 Fire Marshall \$71,025

Mr. Strumello a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for the Fire Marshall in the amount of \$71,025. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

401 Fire Department \$245,850

Mr. Confinante made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for the Fire Department in the amount of \$245,850. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

402 Finance Department \$484,875

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for the Finance Department in the amount of \$484,875. Mr. Commune seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

405 Economic Development \$190,622

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for the Economic Development in the amount of \$190,622. Ms. Banks seconded the motion. The motion was denied (7 yes, 5 no, Confinante, Kohut, Norman, Veillette, Williams)

Chairman Sturges request the Board continue now with the remainder of the budget and return to this department later in the meeting.

420 Tax Department \$150,539

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for the Tax Department in the amount of \$150,539. Mr. Veillette seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

450 Assessors Office \$209,372

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for the Assessor Office in the amount of \$209,372. Mr. Commune seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

502 Streets & Bridges \$1,516,117

Mr. Smerznak made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for Streets & Bridges in the amount of \$1,516,117. Mr. Kennedy seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

601 Library \$445,310

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for the Library in the amount of \$445,310. Mr. Commune seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (11 yes, 1 no Mr. Boran)

602 Building & Refuse \$2,525,110

Mr. Commune made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for Building & Refuse in the amount of \$2,525,110. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (11 yes, 1 no Mr. Norman)

701 Recreation \$93,135

Mr. Confinante made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for Recreation in the amount of \$93,135. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

702 Board of Education \$26,077,214

Ms. Banks made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for the Board of Education in the amount of \$26,077,214. Mr. Confinante seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (11 yes, 1 no Mr. Williams)

801 ARMS \$620,319

Ms. Banks made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for ARMS in the amount of \$620,319. Mr. Smerznak seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (11 yes, 1 no Mr. Williams)

802 Town & City Clerk \$183,972

Mr. Commune made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for Town & City Clerk in the amount of \$183,972. Mr. Smerznak seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

850 Municipal Grants \$366,494

Mr. Smerznak made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for Municipal Grants in the amount of \$366,494. Mr. Veillette seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

851 Educational Grants \$6,663,899

Mr. Veillette made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for Educational Grants in the amount of \$6,663,899. Ms. Banks seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

875 Capital Improvements \$104,000

Mr. Veillette made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for Capital Improvements in the amount of \$104,000. Mr. Confinante seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

901 Municipal Planning \$20,425

Mr. Boran made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for Municipal Planning in the amount of \$20,425. Ms. Banks seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

405 Economic Development \$190,622

Mr. Norman made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 for Economic Development in the amount of \$190,622. Mr. Commune seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (8 yes, 4 no Confinante, Kohut, Norman, Williams)

Use of Fund Balance as Income \$400,000

Mr. Norman made a motion to approve the use of \$400,000 from the 2010-2011 fund balance as a supplement to revenue for the 2011-2012 tentative budget. Mr. Kennedy seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

Total Tentative Budget Fiscal Year 2011-2012 \$59,074,319

Mr. Norman made a motion to approve the tentative budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 in the amount of \$59,074,319. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

Total Tentative Expenses Fiscal Year 2010-2011 \$59,074,319

Mr. Norman made a motion to approve the total tentative expense for fiscal year 2011-2012 in the amount of \$59,074,319. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

Total Tentative Income Fiscal Year 2011-2012 \$59,074,319

Mr. Norman made a motion to approve the total tentative income for fiscal year 2011-2012 in the amount of \$59,074,319. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

Tentative Mil Rate Fiscal Year 2011-2012 26.25

Mr. Norman made a motion to approve a tentative mil rate for fiscal year 2011-2012 at 26.25 mills. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

Mr. Norman wished to set up a workshop to discuss the public's concerns.

With no other business to come before the Board Mr. Norman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (12 yes)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Duclos
Sec. Board of Apportionment & Taxation
Tapes on file