

**Board of Apportionment & Taxation
City of Ansonia**

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The Board of Apportionment & Taxation of the City of Ansonia held a regular meeting on Thursday, May 8, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in Ansonia City Hall. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss budget issues for the 2014-2015 fiscal year.

Members Present

Ms. Blackwell
Ms. Geruntho
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Kohut
Mr. Smerznak
Mr. Veillette
Ms. Waugh
Mr. King

The meeting was called to order the Board rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. The record shows 8 members present.

Mr. King opened the meeting reminded everyone that he had asked them to review the budget in its entirety and bring to the meeting tonight any thoughts, concerns or changes they were interested in.

Mayor Cassetti as well as Comptroller Nimons were available to discuss any issues and sure their concerns with the budget.

Mayor Cassetti addressed the Board stating his administration run with the promise of giving the citizen of Ansonia a break on their taxes, reducing the mil rate while continuing to provide a good education to the children of Ansonia. We are all members of the same team and I trust you will do the best for the City of Ansonia.

Ms. Waugh asked the Mayor to recap the proposed budget submitted by the Board of Aldermen, what was the starting point BOAT received the budget at? The total budget was \$61,104,251 which represented a .25% (1/4) decrease from the previous year.

Ms. Blackwell asked the Mayor where the budget was lacking; he thought the Board of Education could use additional funding.

Ms. Waugh still questioned why the baseline submitted by the Board of Education of \$29,190,981 was not sufficient, that is the number requested by them. Mr. Gaskins explained that the base line was a bare bones budget with no additional programs, it consisted of strictly fixed costs.

Mr. Nimons reminded the Board that the Board of Education is not 50% of the total budget once you consider the State Grants received to fund education the city's share is approximately 37%. There are no frills in the BOE budget even if this Board decides to

grant the additional funding of \$148,000 being proposed this evening it will result in 7 lay offs 2 of which are teachers.

The Ansonia teachers are among the lowest paid in the States even with the current contract increase of 2.25%.

Mr. Kohut questioned why is it that this Board has been working on this budget for three months and this is the first time the Mayor, and Comptroller attend a meeting the last one before the tentative is presented.

Mayor Cassetti advised that this Board is here to do a job, I came this evening to discuss additional changes I wanted you to consider.

Aldermen Lorie Vaccaro Chairman of the Board of Aldermen Finance Committee want the Board to understand the numbers the Board of Education is facing. Two years ago Ansonia had 320 special education children, at the beginning of this year we started with 360. Currently we are at 410 with one child being out sourced at a cost of \$167,000. Special Education is the lion's share of the budget we know we need to get our State Legislator's working on a situation but those thing take time.

Mr. Gaskin as well as Mr. Nimons advised the Board that grants are being submitted to get iPad for text books to each child in the schools that is a goal of the future.

Mr. Kennedy questioned of the Board of Education budget \$29,000,000 plus represents salaries, benefits, tuitions, transportation and other. What is the other? For the 15 years I have sat on this Board the Board of Education has always threatened layoffs of teachers, it is always a lower level position.. Ansonia is given a grant by the State, we hire personnel, the grant come to an end and Ansonia has the additional headcount to cover in the budget.

Mr. Nimons stated Ansonia is rated 164 or of 168 Towns and Cities in the State in spending per pupil.

Mr. King we don't want to see Ansonia fall behind in Education, Equipment, Vehicles or City Pensions. The Mayor wants everything addressed.

The Board questioned taking from the Fund Balance for the operation budget, has that been done it the past? Mr. Nimons explained the Fund Balance is a build up of surplus over the years it currently sits at \$7,500,000. The City is in this situation because of the decease in the Grand List, poor tax collection, and poor economic development. All of which are being worked on very aggressively. This budget is based on a 96.5% collection rate but we are going to work very hard in collecting both back and current taxes.

The proposal before the Board this evening is to increase the Board of Education by \$148,000, realize an additional \$100,000 in Special Revenue and set the Fund Balance as Income back to \$550,000. If this is achieved the mil rate would be a .72 deduction from this current year. The first tax decrease Ansonia has seen in many years.

Also Mr. King requested the Board allocation an additional 60,000 from BOAT Contingency into Policè Overtime. Put the funding in the budget, making everyone
BOAT 5-8-14

responsible; give the department real numbers to work with rather than expecting them to come back in March for an additional appropriation.

Mr. Nimons advised the Board that the Administration was very careful with how this budget was developed and items are being worked on to continue to save Ansonia funding. The Benefit Package saving the City is working on, they started the year off with anywhere from a 14-16% increase in benefits by combining the City and Board of Education the City Employees package will have a zero increase and the Board of Education will increase approximately 3.3%.

The Garbage is currently being worked on for additional savings.

Ms. Blackwell believes it is not worth not funding the Board of Education.

Mr. Kennedy wanted to go on record stating it is not this Board's job to support the Board of Aldermen and Mayor by giving them what they want. It is this Board's job to work for the betterment of Ansonia.

Mr. King voiced that this Board did the work on this budget, this budget is ours.

Ms. Geruntho made a motion to put the proposed changes to a vote. Ms. Waugh seconded the motion.

Ms. Geruntho made a motion to approve the budget changes as follows:

Increase Special Education Revenue 2-001-303-19-101 from \$850,000 to \$950,000
Set the Fund Balance as Income 2-001-310-11-1014 from \$325,000 to \$550,000
Increase the Board of Education 1-001-702-19-999-1 from \$29,190,981 to \$29,338,981 an increase of \$148,000.

Ms. Blackwell seconded the motion. The motion was approved by majority of 6 yes 2 no (Mr. Smerznak, Mr. Veillette)

Ms. Blackwell made a motion to approve the request to increase the Police Overtime line item 1-001-0301-12-120-001 by \$60,000 reducing the BOAT Contingency 1-001-0200-11-812-0001 by \$60,000.

Mr. Kohut seconded the motion. The motion was approved. (8 yes)

Based on these changes the mill rate would be 38.60 a reduction of .72.

Ms. Waugh made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Ms. Geruntho seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,


Donna Duclos (v) *(v)*
Secretary Board of Apportionment & Taxation