



CITY OF DERBY  
BOARD OF APPORTIONMENT & TAXATION  
PUBLIC HEARING  
Monday May 23 2011  
7:00 p.m.  
Aldermanic Chambers

Jeremy Bell  
James Butler  
Timothy Conlon  
William Nelson Cummings  
Anita Dugatto

Carolyn Duhaime  
David Anroman  
Carlo Malerba  
Mark Nichols  
Judith Szewczyk - Chairwoman

A Public Hearing of the Board of Apportionment & Taxation of the City of Derby was held Monday evening, May 24, 2011 in the Aldermanic Chambers, City Hall.

Chair Judy Szewczyk called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the pledge of allegiance.

By roll call, members present were Timothy Conlon, David Anroman, James Butler, Nelson Cummings, Chair Judy Szewczyk, Carolyn Duhaime, Mark Nichols, Jeremy Bell, Carlo Malerba and Anita Dugatto.

**PUBLIC PORTION**

Phil Martino - Mr. Martino was born and raised in Derby. Mr. Martino's father formed Derby's Little League and built the complex. Mr. Martino is on a fixed income. Derby has the largest mil rate in the state a big portion of that is the education. His daughter is 42 years old, paid taxes all his life, it is not fair for all the seniors to have to pay for the highly paid superintendent, principals and vice principal. They should be scaled down to keep the teachers in the system.

Keith McLiverty - City Treasurer. Mr. McLiverty will not lobby the board for a magic number however, he will lobby for the board to be certain to keep our fiscal indicators on the radar, are prudent and that we meet the essentials in the indicators of success as determined by the rating agencies. Derby is AA-, the highest bond rating in the Valley and tied with Shelton. We must continue to pay as we go capital, have adequate fund balance, debt ratio low, strong and stable tax collection.

Property values are directly correlated with the quality of a town's education system, not just a level of funding. Rasmussen's report just came out with a statistic - 27-36% of Americans are under water, owing more on their home than they are worth. Using property value as a reason to raise taxes for education today when people are unemployed and suffering is a tough sell.

The federal government has lost touch with reality in the middle class. Local government is the last resort to preserve any quality of life for our residents.

The power rests with the Board of Apportionment & Taxation and with that power comes a social and fiscal responsibility.

Mr. McLiverty continues to hear the Board of Education has been underfunded. In 2007-2008 the Board of Education returned \$91,000 dollars. In 2008-2009 the board returned \$700, in 2009-2010 \$95,000 and 2010-2011 it is estimated at \$30,000 and \$35,000. It is hard to conclude that any department is underfunded when they return almost \$250,000 over four years. It is time to start spending money on what it is intended for.

There must be cost containment, cost elimination, revenue growth, and reform of how services are delivered.

Chantal Gerckens - 65 Hillcrest Avenue. In order to get proper education for the children's quality of life, then we must raise taxes slightly. Only 50% of the City's budget is for the Board of Education, compared to Ansonia at 59% and Oxford at 55%.

Sara Kish - 28 Derbyshire. Ms. Kish is here to support full day kindergarten and education. She also supports band and chorus.

Dr. Stephen Tracy - Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Tracy spoke of the School Performance Dash Board monthly reports on the board's website which outlines academic, discipline, attendance, participation results. The board's goal is not to spend money, the goal is to spend what is given to them wisely.

With regards to money being returned you have to go back to before this board was in office, and when Dr. Tracy was not in Derby. Over the three years since Dr. Tracy has been in Derby, the board has returned on average of \$44,000 a year.

The school board has eliminated over 20 positions over the last three years. The board has negotiated a wage freeze with the teachers for this year and with the administrators will work without a raise next year.

Shannon Meseck - 30 Cedric Ave. Derby is number twenty seven on lowest per student spending. The schools are ranked 134 out of 182. The City spends about 50% now on education. Derby has problems like the state and federal government and a major overhaul needs to occur. People don't want to see their tax money paying high salaries for state, federal and city employees. People don't want to see their tax dollars for high benefits. Perhaps librarians can work half time with the school and half time with the libraries. Think outside the box.

Gerald Narowski - Chief of Police. Chief Narowski thanked the board members for their hard work. Chief Narowski commented on the preliminary budget for his department. It is a cut from his proposed budget. It results in the removal of the SRO from the school system.

A comment was made by a board member that the police department budget is almost a 6% increase and the Board of Education should be funded in a similar manner. His concern is the police department is being used as a political tool to leverage additional funding for the Board of Education. That is unfair.

Each department has presented its own request for funding and the respected impact of its cuts. Funding requests should stand on its own merits and not be compared to other departments. It's unfair to pit departments against each other to compete for funding within the City.

The preliminary police department budget is 3.9% above this fiscal year's original budget and not over 5% which was stated. Wages are 93% of his budget. The next year's union contract calls for a 4% wage increase. The department needs to absorb a 53 pay period.

The police department is not extravagantly funded at another department's expense. Capital improvement has been eliminated. The police department needs to purchase two marked vehicles.

The union was not willing to give union concessions because they gave concessions in previous years. Members took salary freezes during this contract cycle. The last three years in a row the department has been funded under the contractual wages.

The department will turn back over \$52,000 to the City. Money was generated in unanticipated revenue and a single time cost savings expense due to a retirement.

Rita Asare - 21 Clark Street Ext. Ms. Asare just moved to Derby. Education is very dear to her heart. Don't take the future away from our children.

Chris Bowen - 1027 Roosevelt Drive. Collective bargaining rules are the same for the rest of the City just as they are for the teachers. It is not prudent to say have everyone take a wage freeze. Mr. Bowen would like to see the tax board members go to the Board of Education budget meeting to see what they have to cut. The education budget is the foundation of our City.

Beth Collette - Minerva Street. Ms. Collette thanked the board for their hard work. The NEASC report states the schools have an excellent team, many excellent teachers, but has the continued battle of no curriculum coordination, certified librarians, not enough textbooks, large class sizes and an unresponsive board of education and City government body that turns a blind eye to its young people and its pressing needs.

Kenya Epps - 240 Shagbark Drive. Ms. Epps moved here seven years ago. Her children have the opportunity for band and sports. She can't just up and move. Children are the future.

Don DeManuel - 66 Orangewood West. Mr. DeManuel appreciates the work of the Board and likes what Mr. McLiverty stated. It's not about the dollars and cents and what percentage each department gets. It is really about transforming how a City operates and maximizing each dollar spent.

Twenty million dollars was spent on the Middle School. Class room capacity has been increased while losing twenty teaching jobs.

Kim Kreiger - 7 General Wooster Road. Ms. Kreiger is a ten year school board member. Mr. Thompson (DHS Principal) brought forward a proposal to the school board. The proposal is to reduce the number of credits to graduate from 24 to 22 credits.

Ms. Kregier highlighted notes from the NEASC report, the elimination of all funding for professional development, no method of updating teachers instruction, outdated server, the three year technology plan remains unfunded, significant ongoing problems with heating and ventilation, the inadequate number of maintenance staff to clean and maintain the building, the need to disband the plan to renovate two class rooms each year, absence of contingency funds to address a catastrophe for issues of an aging building. The report is for the high school only, there are three aging buildings.

Anthony Szewczyk - 166 Mount Pleasant Street. Mr. Szewczyk is a retired adjunct faculty member at a community college. The education in this country is in turmoil. It is not only a Derby problem. It is hard to find any municipality in this country where they don't spend at least 50% of their budget on public education. Last year it cost over \$313,000 to operate an average classroom at Irving School to educate 25 students for nine months. Simply increasing the education budget won't take care of the situation, that has been done for decades. Politics need to be put aside to see things clearly and objectively. Derby should reach out to other towns regarding regionalization.

Chantal Gerckens - appreciates the comments from Mr. Szewczyk. Ms. Gerckens always wonders where the Tax Board members and the Mayor are during the Board of Education budget meetings. She agrees with sharing resources within the community.

Dr. Stephen Tracy. Dr. Tracy would like to sit down with the Mayor to go over numbers with him. Full day kindergarten will hopefully be sustained. The collective bargaining unit documents can be shared with the public. Dr. Tracy shared his appreciation for Chief Narowski and comments did not come from him regarding the police budget.

Don DeManuel - 66 Orangewood West. Mr. DeManuel would hope the 4% increases are based on performance.

Rita Asare - Ms. Asare stated the common denominator for a City neighborhood to go from a great neighborhood to a bad neighborhood is .....underfunded schools and underfunded police departments.

Christopher Bowen - Mr. Bowen stated everyone gets involved when it gets to the budget. Things would be a lot better if these meetings were just as full during the non budget times.

Mayor Staffieri explained to Mr. DeManuel that he has an open door policy for the last five years. He understands what a good education is, but he was also a business man. He instituted department head meetings which Dr. Tracy, Police Chief Narowski, Public Works Director come to.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:19 p.m.  
*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Denise Cesaroni*  
*Recording Secretary*

**\*\*\*\*These minutes are subject to the approval by the Board of Apportionment & Taxation at their next regular meeting.**