


**New Milford Board of Education  
Special Meeting Minutes  
May 27, 2016  
Lillis Administration Building – Board Room**

Present:	Mr. David A. Lawson, Chairperson Mrs. Angela C. Chastain (arrived at 6:45 p.m.) Mr. Bill Dahl Mrs. Wendy Faulenbach Mr. Dave Littlefield Mr. Brian McCauley Mrs. Tammy McInerney Mr. J.T. Schemm Mayor David Gronbach, ex officio
Absent:	Mr. Robert Coppola

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NEW MILFORD, CT  


Also Present:	Mr. Joshua Smith, Interim Superintendent of Schools Mr. Anthony Giovannone, Director of Fiscal Services and Operations Ms. Ellamae Baldelli, Director of Human Resources Dr. Eugenia Slone, Acting Assistant Superintendent
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1.	<b>Call to Order</b>  <b>A. Pledge of Allegiance</b>  The special meeting of the New Milford Board of Education was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mr. Lawson. The Pledge of Allegiance immediately followed the call to order.	<b>Call to Order</b>  <b>A. Pledge of Allegiance</b>
2.	<b>Public Comment</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was none.</li> </ul>	<b>Public Comment</b>
3.	<b>Discussion and Possible Action</b>  <b>A. Adjustments to 2016-2017 Board of Education Adopted Budget</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Lawson asked Superintendent Elect Smith to begin the discussion.</li> <li>• Mr. Smith said that the budget’s failure to pass by 18 votes was disappointing but he hoped it could be attributed to busy schedules and lack</li> </ul>	<b>Discussion and Possible Action</b>  <b>A. Adjustments to 2016-2017 Board of Education Adopted Budget</b>

	<p>of attention versus a mandate. However, in light of the budget's failure to pass even if by a small amount, he said he thinks it is appropriate to look at adjustments. The Mayor reached out to him Wednesday morning with the request that the Board of Education meet to form a suggestion for the Town Council to consider early next week. Mr. Smith said he appreciated the suggestion as this was different from past practice where the town assigned an amount without BOE input.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mr. Smith had indicated to the Board earlier in the week that there might be savings in insurance based on correspondence with actuaries. The actuarial figures did not take into account the \$400,000 offset that will be added from the internal service fund when the budget is approved by the voters. Mr. Smith said he recommends in the future that any internal service fund revenues be shown as a line in the budget for clarity. As they continued to delve further into the detail it was determined that the savings had already been captured at budget time so there was no overage from which to take.</li><li>• Mrs. Faulenbach asked for further clarification regarding the insurance. She stated that in the past insurance numbers usually change in May. Mr. Smith said they changed only slightly.</li><li>• Mr. Giovannone said there was only an approximately \$2,000 difference.</li><li>• Mr. Smith said he was presenting a recommended cut of 0.5% this evening for discussion by the Board, bringing the proposed budget increase to 1.1% down from 1.6 %, and had prepared a handout with suggestions for discussion as to where that percentage might be taken.</li><li>• Mrs. Faulenbach asked if this was developed with Central Office staff.</li><li>• Mr. Smith said yes that the administrative team had spent several hours reviewing the budget and looking for suggestions that would not impact programs. He said he did not want to</li></ul>	
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come to the Board this evening with an arbitrary decrease and no suggestions as to how they might get there.

- Mr. Smith said the salary adjustment being suggested is possible due to the live tracking offered through Munis. The original budget was built on the AS 400 which was static. The live tracking of actual staff allows adjustments to be made to reflect newly hired staff whose salaries are less than those they are replacing. This was the case with several staff this year.
- Mrs. Faulenbach said she would like to see a breakdown by line.
- Mr. Schemm said the Operations subcommittee has been seeing this reflected each month in the certified staff line.
- Mr. Dahl asked for clarification as to the purpose of tonight's meeting: to determine how much of a cut should be recommended or where it should come from. Mr. Smith said the Town Council will not tell us where to cut, just the amount. He said we are trying to only determine a percentage at this time.
- Mrs. Faulenbach said she appreciated the Mayor reaching out to the Board but that she was unprepared for the specificity of tonight's discussion since she was under the impression they were going to be discussing an insurance adjustment. She resented not being given the opportunity to prepare.
- Mr. Lawson said he appreciated the opportunity to make a recommendation to the Town Council. He thinks a 0.5% decrease might meet with success. If the Board agrees, there is time to decide where that decrease will come from; the handout is only to give ideas. He said he was pleased with the suggestions made which do not propose any programming or staff cuts.
- Mayor Gronbach said he is not requesting actual cuts tonight. With the referendum to be held within a few week timeline, he is looking for the current conversation to be about the recommended percentage only. What does the

	<p>Board think it can cut and still fulfill its mission? He said it would perhaps help the Town Council to have ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mrs. McInerney said she appreciated the opportunity as well. Her concern is if they bring an itemized list of suggestions to the Town Council and the discussion goes somewhere else will the list then work against us.</li><li>• Mr. Lawson said the list being discussed is simply a recommendation from the Superintendent to the Board of where reductions could perhaps be taken.</li><li>• Mrs. McInerney asked for clarification regarding the general supplies on the list. Mr. Giovannone said these are office supplies not tied to instruction. Mr. Smith said there are no 611 line items included.</li><li>• Mr. Lawson said the Board has been asked to make a recommendation. He asked for a motion to recommend a decrease of 0.5% to the Town Council.</li><li>• Mrs. Faulenbach said she was in dissent. She is not sure 0.5% is the correct number and feels that it needs to be justified.</li><li>• Mrs. Chastain asked why this change from past practice with the Town Council.</li><li>• Mayor Gronbach said it was at his suggestion. He thought it would be helpful to the Town Council not to have to make an arbitrary cut but to ask the BOE to recommend and clarify.</li></ul> <p>Motion made by Mr. Dahl that the Board reduce the 2016-2017 Board of Education Adopted Budget by 0.5% and send that recommendation to the Town Council for discussion next week.</p> <p>Motion seconded by Mr. Schemm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mr. Schemm said he remembers seeing a presentation slide at budget time that gave a listing of BOE and final Town approved budgets which included an eight year average.</li></ul>	
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	<p>The BOE average was 2.76% and the Town approved was 0.94%. Mr. Schemm said he was not comfortable cutting more than 0.5% but feels the Board needs to be proactive versus reactionary. Looking at the historical background, it appears a 1.1% increase has a good chance of being approved by voters and would be supported in the second referendum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mrs. Faulenbach said she supports the concept of discussion but does not feel there is any discussion taking place, just a handout being distributed.</li><li>• Mr. Dahl said he blamed the budget failure on voter apathy. He said he didn't think it was the Board's responsibility to publicize the budget more than they had. He said taxpayers can come to meetings any time if they want further explanation. He said 0.5% is the maximum cut he is willing to support.</li><li>• Mayor Gronbach said the number is necessarily arbitrary since taxpayers don't provide a number or suggested cuts when they vote no. He said this is what we have to work with; there will always be an element of uncertainty.</li><li>• Mr. McCauley said he appreciated the opportunity to discuss this recommendation and appreciated the work that went into the suggestions for cuts. Ultimately, specific cuts will be determined in June. He feels that additional voters will come out to support the budget at the second referendum.</li><li>• Mrs. McInerney asked if we were overshooting and should propose 0.25% instead.</li><li>• Mr. Lawson said he respects that the budget went down, if only by 18 votes, and that some action is necessary. He said he doesn't see why we are arguing about the suggested adjustments which he thinks are reasonable and do not affect programs.</li><li>• Mrs. Faulenbach said she had a procedural question in that Mr. Lawson says "no one can argue with adjustments". She wants to clarify that the motion is about the 0.5% only.</li></ul>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Lawson said it was a figure of speech on his part.</li> <li>• Mrs. Faulenbach said, with all due respect to Mr. Dahl, no one knows more than her about selling a budget and the Board did not do the work. She said she is struggling with the suggestion sheet presented and feels misled. She said it is her job as a Board member to give information and that is not how this is working so she will not support it.</li> <li>• Mr. Littlefield said this is a difficult situation and that 9% voter turnout was pathetic. He will support a 0.5% reduction but will wait to make decisions on specific recommendations for cuts.</li> <li>• Mrs. Chastain said she will support it too since she was willing to make additional cuts at budget time. She said she wished to take Mr. Dahl to task regarding his comments about not needing more transparency since the Board was lambasted last year for lacking transparency when returning JPS to the town.</li> <li>• Mr. Dahl said he has been involved with school budgets for over thirty years in other capacities, including union presidency, not just in his time on the Board of Education. When he talks about transparency he is talking about public meetings that anyone can attend. He thought the Board was transparent with its budget, people just did not get out to vote.</li> </ul> <p>Motion made by Mr. Dahl to call the question, seconded by Mrs. McInerney, and passed unanimously.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Faulenbach asked that the main motion be repeated for clarity. The recording secretary said the motion was that the Board reduce the 2016-2017 Board of Education Adopted Budget by 0.5% and send that recommendation to the Town Council for discussion next week.</li> </ul> <p>Main motion passed 7-1.</p>	<p><b>Motion made and passed unanimously to call the question.</b></p> <p><b>Motion made and passed to reduce the 2016-2017 Board of Education</b></p>
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	Aye: Mr. Lawson, Mrs. Chastain, Mr. Dahl, Mr. Littlefield, Mr. McCauley, Mrs. McInerney, Mr. Schemm No: Mrs. Faulenbach	<b>Adopted Budget by 0.5% and send that recommendation to the Town Council for discussion next week.</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Adjourn</b>  Mrs. Chastain moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 p.m., seconded by Mr. McCauley and passed unanimously.	<b>Adjourn</b>  <b>Motion made and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 p.m.</b>

Respectfully submitted:



Wendy Faulenbach  
Secretary  
New Milford Board of Education