

From: [Glenn Pianka](#)
To: [Michael O'Connor](#); [Jeanne Goulart](#); [Carl Zorn](#); [BALLINGER BILL](#)
Cc: [evan@gilmanbrothers.com](#); [Raymond Barber](#); [Phil Lavallee](#); [Michel Leask](#); [Annie Chambers](#)
Subject: Public Comment
Date: Wednesday, April 15, 2020 7:01:39 PM

Board of Finance, Board of Education and Board of Selectmen,

As many of us presently have, there's a lot of uncommitted time to ponder contemporary issues. Besides the obvious health/life risks, the economic impacts that will reverberate through all layers of our economy will not heal, or correct itself, anytime soon even if things were to go back to "normal" within the next 30 days. Time beyond that only magnifies the issues exponentially.

We keep seeing the phrase "WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER". That should not be just a phrase, but as community leaders, to be put into perceivable action, compassion, and solidarity for our fellow town folk. Some relief is mandated via the Governor's Executive Orders in various forms. We can still exercise some local autonomy. This budget which is being put into our hands to approve and adopt absent a Town Meeting is an opportune venue to put that perceivable action into place.

I propose the following:

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- 5) That I personally would volunteer the removal of my Selectman stipend of \$1,721 for this next fiscal year. NOTE: I have also contacted the Connecticut State Police Union to conduct a survey of retirees to suspend COLA raises.

This is a time when government, US, and those more fortunate need to set an example. Words are NOT enough.....ACTION is !!

Glenn Pianka
Sent from my iPad

From: [Raymond Barber](#)
To: [Michael O'Connor](#); [Jeanne Goulart](#); [Carl Zorn](#); [BALLINGER BILL](#); [Glenn Pianka](#)
Cc: [evan@gilmanbrothers.com](#); [Phil Lavallee](#); [Michel Leask](#); [Annie Chambers](#)
Subject: Re: Public Comment
Date: Wednesday, April 15, 2020 10:51:16 PM

Glenn Thanks for your remarks they are very similar to what I intended to say at our next meeting. Ray

On Wednesday, April 15, 2020, 07:01:37 PM EDT, Glenn Pianka <stonebeam@sbcglobal.net> wrote:

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From: [ANN CHAMBERS](#)
To: [Glenn Pianka](#); [Michael O'Connor](#); [Jeanne Goulart](#); [Carl Zorn](#); [BALLINGER BILL](#)
Cc: [evan@gilmanbrothers.com](#); [Raymond Barber](#); [Phil Lavallee](#); [Michel Leask](#)
Subject: Re: Public Comment
Date: Thursday, April 16, 2020 8:40:13 AM

I could not have said it better or more eloquently. Annie

On April 15, 2020 at 4:01 PM Glenn Pianka <stonebeam@sbcglobal.net> wrote:

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Glenn Pianka

Sent from my iPad

From: charlesgallery@comcast.net
To: [Michael O'Connor](#)
Subject: upcoming budget
Date: Thursday, April 16, 2020 11:50:10 AM

Mike, Please keep the budget from any increases in the new year. I still don't know why we can't tie the Board of Ed to a per pupil fixed cost. To be paying the same amount of money to educate less than 200 kids as we did to educate 250 or more, just doesn't make sense to me. No new toys for the Board of Selectmen's budget either. Let's get back to 25 mils maximum and keep it there for a while. thanks,
Charlie Connell 421 Fitchville Road, Bozrah

From: [Jeanne Goulart](#)
To: [Glenn Pianka](#)
Cc: [Michael O'Connor](#); [Carl Zorn](#); [BALLINGER BILL](#); [Evan Gilman](#); [Raymond Barber](#); [Phil Lavallee](#); [Michel Leask](#); [Ruth Levy](#); [Jonathan Gilman](#); [Mary Elizabeth Lang](#); [Robin Barry](#); [Thomas Finn](#); [Jack Santo](#); [Nicholas Savoie](#); [Sue Lyon](#); [ANN CHAMBERS](#); [Eileen Hargreaves](#)
Subject: Re: Public Comment
Date: Thursday, April 16, 2020 9:50:11 PM

Glenn,

Thank you for your input regarding the BOE budget in this communication and at the BOF meeting Monday night. I replayed the meeting video and captured all of your questions. I will compile answers to all of them with the input of the board, Ruth Levy, Eileen Hargreaves, and Sue Lyon.

I am concerned that you continue to feel the board is not transparent in its operation and communication with the town. Both Mike O'Conner and Carl Zorn were invited to and participated in the budget planning meetings. We have been exchanging weekly, if not sometimes daily emails regarding the operation of the school and budget issues related to the Covid-19 situation. I know Dr. Levy has been communicating with Mike and Carl as well. I am continuing the practice I started with you, of sending a summary of BOE meetings to the BOF, BOS and FD when they are not in attendance, to summarize items that were discussed, prior to the publication of the official meeting minutes. If there are additional ways that we can collaborate and communicate between boards, I welcome your suggestions.

Sincerely,

Jeanne

On Thu, Apr 16, 2020 at 8:40 AM ANN CHAMBERS <anniegurl@comcast.net> wrote:
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Thank you,

Jeanne Goulart

From: [Glenn Planka](#)
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Cc: [Michael O'Connor](#); [Carl Zorn](#); [BALLINGER BILL](#); [Evan Gilman](#); [Raymond Barber](#); [Phil Lavallee](#); [Michel Leask](#); [Ruth Levy](#); [Jonathan Gilman](#); [Mary Elizabeth Lang](#); [Robin Barry](#); [Thomas Finn](#); [Jack Santo](#); [Nicholas Savoie](#); [Sue Lyon](#); [ANN CHAMBERS](#); [Eileen Hargreaves](#)
Subject: Re: Public Comment
Date: Saturday, April 18, 2020 2:39:48 PM

Jeanne,

Yes, I acknowledge that you enhanced the communication between the board and I and I commented several times on how much that was appreciated. I thank you again. When I attended the Town CEO meetings at SCCOG, and those informational meetings organized by Norwich Mayor Nystrom, the underlying issue was that of the MBR and the ever expanding umbrella of what qualifies as Special Education/Special Needs. This years BOE request has topped 6 Million dollars, and listening to the presentation the other evening, I again become educated, that not only are we paying for education, but housing and transportation costs that extend in some cases, year round.

As you have reviewed, my questions are from someone who only had the luxury of reviewing the proposed budget for a very short time, yet all of those items flagged. To propose to spend six million dollars without questions would not be something that I would ever expect. I demanded transparency for all of my boards and commissions and asked that they post pertinent attachments to their minutes. You may have invited Mr Zorn and Mr O'Connor to budget development meetings but I never was. If you think that I have been exceptionally critical of the BOE then I invite you to some of the discussions at BOS. I want to see efficiency and product for monies spent. I would be happy to discuss some of the things that are, and have been, on my radar on both the town and BOE side.

The resistance to involve community members of the Public Safety Advisory Committee with the School's Committee continues to be very disturbing to me. Having been involved with emergency response and public safety for most of my life, trying to involve the community as I did, to never seeing any documentation as to the monies expended or received as grants for that effort is deplorable at best. That's what I'm talking about in regards to transparency. I asked about that again the other evening. I also asked about the bus transportation and have since learned that a five year contract has been signed with 3% annual raises therein. The other night you seemed more concerned about their profits than the bill currently being presented to taxpayers. This COVID matter will result in even less ridership than currently alternatively provided by parents driving their kids to school. Five year commitment ?

I have been a life long advocate of education, culture (museums development), community involvement and the furtherance and assistance to those less fortunate. The town administrates through Warm Thy Neighbor about \$3,500 for fuel assistance, \$1,000 for Welfare Assistance, maintains a Food Bank, and not a whole bunch for our seniors.....are you getting my drift? If you consider the current budget request, the 1.3 million dollar recent roof replacement, the \$150,000 or so UST replacement, the annual in kind services and fuel for buses provided by the Town, and recent expenditures in regards to School Security.... we are approaching \$8 million dollars..... divided by how many students ?

A business or management leader needs to bring facts to the forefront. Political leaders are mostly chameleons. Change and hard facts are very hard for many to digest.

Glenn Pianka
Sent from my iPad

On Apr 16, 2020, at 9:50 PM, Jeanne Goulart <jgoulart@bozrah.org> wrote:

Glenn,

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Sent from my iPad

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Thank you,

Jeanne Goulart

From: [Mary Jane Malone](#)
To: [Michael O'Connor](#)
Subject: 2020-2021 budget
Date: Thursday, April 23, 2020 6:03:15 PM

To Bozrah 's Board of Finance

I feel that we should reduce the upcoming town budget this year. The State's stay at home order and closure of so many businesses, have place a financial burden on taxpayers. Reducing the budget will help aid Bozrah taxpayers to recover.
Thank you.
Sincerely,

Mary Jane Malone
3 Bozrah St.
Bozrah, Ct.

From: fms78@aol.com
To: [Michael O'Connor](#)
Subject: public comment
Date: Saturday, April 25, 2020 9:35:43 AM
Attachments: [BOF letter 4 25 20.docx](#)

Here it is in text and attachment. -ev

To: Bozrah BOF c/o Chairman O'Connor 4/25/20

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment on the budget proposals during this unusual budget year & process.

This letter is more difficult than most because of the financial, political and environmental turmoils that are tied in with the normal budget negotiating that Bozrah usually deals with. There are no EASY decisions this year.

A 3 mill increase is unacceptable, the budgets must be cut.
A 2 mill decrease is unacceptable, the budgets would be gutted.

I don't know exactly what the BOE & BOS will put in front of you on the 27th but I'm hoping it will be something that allows you to land close to the 0% mill increase of 27.5 that was hypothetically proposed in the 5yr projection without placing the burden of the cuts on the programming at Fields Memorial School. I'm hoping both boards will truly spend time on every line item and present what is frugal and necessary.

Last year, we didn't put a mill rate in place until June, I think waiting and collecting some additional information before making the tax rate decision is prudent. Information on economic conditions and reimbursements will be more accurate and Boards will have additional time to review contracts and invoices.

I am VERY disappointed that the town webpage under "Important Notices" is leading with a fish & chips dinner invite and not the emails and information about how to provide public comment to the boards. At least it IS in the TWIB...did we ever determine the digital readership of that newsletter? The point of this is – we should be doing a better job of educating the public and soliciting public comment since there will be no hearings or town meeting.

Thank you very much for the time and effort you donate to Bozrah!

-Ev Brown
Fitchville Road

Good Evening:

I have resided in Bozrah for 45 years and have been very active in the budget process for more than 25 years. I am writing to voice my concerns about the Fiscal Year 20-21 town and school budgets.

It is my understanding that it will be a 3 mil increase if no changes are made in the proposed budgets. This is NOT acceptable. The COVID-19 virus has put a strain on many residents, and our seniors on fixed incomes should all be taken into consideration. The BOE budget is OUT OF CONTROL. I think many changes need to be made. Student population is at an all-time low.

I cannot believe the cost of special ed! I would like to know what the qualifications are for a student to be considered special ed. I realize that the student's name cannot be revealed due to a privacy issue, and that is certainly okay. The special ed cost must be lowered. It is not fair to the residents of Bozrah to shoulder these **outrageous** expenses. There must be a less expensive alternative without denying the student(s) their education.

- Why are there so many aides? Does the town pay for insurance and pension for these positions? If so, can these positions be reduced so that the town is not liable for pension and insurance costs.
- What is the teacher/student ratio?
- What are the class sizes?
- Are any teacher positions being added in the 20-21 school year? (i.e. are any grades going to be divided?)
- Why doesn't the BOE reports show the breakdown of classroom grades, sizes, and teachers assigned to each class **as they had reported in the past.**

As mentioned in the BOE meeting last week, the art and music programs should be looked at and either cut or reduced. I believe that only one, not both, of these programs are required.

Consider looking at salaries.

The school tries to pull the wool over our eyes, now and in the past. This practice needs to come to a halt. The school should not pad their budget.

I reviewed the Board of Selectman budget and except for a few line items there is very little fluff. Line items remain mostly the same as the 19-20 budget. Perhaps the BOS can look at salaries and Capital items to see if there are possible ways to reduce these expenses. I would like to see the Selectman keep the budget as close to the 19-20 budget as possible.

The acknowledge and appreciate the experience and wisdom of the Board of Finance. I am confident they will do their due diligence.

Thank you.
Patricia Goff