

From:  Budget 2021  
Stephanie Ortegon <imimpayshent@hotmail.com>

Thu, Apr 16, 2020 6:51:33 PM



Subject: Fwd: School Budget Concerns

To:  **Steve Gniadek**  **Krista Gramer**  Zachary Smith

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a parent of two Redding public school students, one who has special needs. My family decided to move to this town after doing much research, and knowing that Redding has a wonderful school district. In this current time of uncertainty and chaos it is my hope that there will be no money cut from the 2020-2021 Redding Elementary School and John Reed Middle School Budget. The impact of our current educational situation remains to be seen. We can only assume, with some certainty, that there will be a long period of catch up at the beginning of next year. I think it is our responsibility as parents and community members to give our children the best opportunity moving forward.

Regards,  
Stephanie Ortegon

Sent from my iPhone

From:  Budget 2021  
Chris Tse <ccmtse@yahoo.com>

Friday, April 17, 2020 1:30:41 PM



Subject: Fwd: 2021 budget comments

To:  **Steve Gniadek**  **Krista Gramer**  Zachary Smith

Dear BOF,

Heard all the comments from 04/16 budget meeting. Would like to add one more:

To centralize Town administrative functions such as insurance, utilities (solar) and maintenance..... will have a synergistic effect on cost efficiency. The appointment of the facility director is a good first step, and the integration of other centralize administrative functions that can benefit cost efficiency should be explored.

Christopher Tse

111 Gallows Hill Road

From:  Budget 2021  
schwartzfour@gmail.com

Thursday, April 16, 2020 6:30:50 PM



Subject: Fwd: Park and Rec and schools

To:  **Steve Gniadek**  **Krista Gramer**  Zachary Smith

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Regarding budget discussions:

1. I understand that park & rec staff are being paid even though they are not working - and I agree that is the right thing to do as a community. I also think they should be working. They could be running online events for kids and adults and families, but in particular events for kids would help parents by providing healthy distractions. (My kids are grown, but I can only imagine how much I would want this if they were going!) If they can't think of anything they can do online with for the community, I'd be happy to generate a VERY long list of ideas!!

2. Since schools are closed, there should be savings (supplies, oil, electricity, insurance! to name a few). Is that money going back into the budget for next year?

3. Similar question for the town... for example, insurance companies are giving credit on auto insurance because driving has been reduced. Is the town getting an insurance rebate, or are there other, similar savings?

I can not attend the meeting via zoom because I have to attend a virtual memorial service, so thank you for taking my questions via email.

-Debbie Schwartz  
96 Peaceable St

Typos courtesy of the autospell feature on my iPhone

From:  Budget 2021  
Pamela Friedman <pamelas.friedman@gmail.com>

Thu, Apr 16, 2020 6:11:04 PM



Subject: Fwd: Budget Vote

To:  **Steve Gniadek**  **Krista Gramer**  Zachary Smith

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Hello. I am mom with 3 children at RES. I fully support the BOE proposed budget.

Thanks,  
Pamela Friedman

From:  Budget 2021  
Erin Tieman <tiemanerin@hotmail.com>

Thursday, April 16, 2020 6:02:54 PM



Subject: Fwd: Budget Vote

To:  **Steve Gniadek**  **Krista Gramer**  Zachary Smith

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We are writing to urge the Board of Finance to support the budget that has been put forward by the Board of Ed. We have been in the Redding school system for the past 3 years and we can assure you that our schools are not operating with frill expenditures right now. Any cuts to an already tight budget will be detrimental to the future performance of our schools and the desirability of our town. We implore you to leave the budget put forth by the Board of Education intact.

Thank you for your consideration.

Erin Tiernan & James Patts (4 Church Hill Ln)

From:  Budget 2021  
Gcow777 <gcow777@aol.com>

Thursday, April 16, 2020 5:28:55 PM



Subject: Fwd: April 2020 BoF Meeting Statement

To:  **Steve Gniadek**  **Krista Gramer**  Zachary Smith

Dear Board,

My name is Greg Cowell. I moved to Redding in 2006, at the near peak of the housing bubble. My house value has plummeted nearly 45 percent since then, however, my taxes remain nearly unchanged. Moreover, I have had an opportunity to dialogue with many Redding residents, both with children, and those without. Regardless, most individuals would agree that Redding is a nice community to reside.

The dichotomy of our current situation resides with the unknowns resulting from this Coronavirus. On one side, we have citizens with school age children and the other, those without, as well as, those who continue to realize unaffected employment and those who have been furloughed or completely let go, never the less realizing a reduction in income. It seems that the growing population of those without school age children would like to see a reduction in the budget (resulting in lower taxes), especially as it pertains to our largest line items - schools and law enforcement, regardless of employment. Conversely, the population with school age children are willing to maintain the current budget or pay more (increasing taxes), in order to ensure this town sustains the best possible educational system for their children in conjunction with safe secure neighborhoods, free from crime.

Regardless of these two conflicting interests, the corona virus black swan event must force us to evaluate all assumptions. Just like many towns, cities and federal jurisdictions, as well as businesses, we need to be prudent in our spending and budgetary assumptions. However, unlike those same jurisdictions and businesses, Redding does not have a large commercial revenue source. As a result, the costs to run this town reside on individual tax payers. Therefore, we might be at a crossroads; do we continue to fund our fantastic police force and wonderful schools, ensuring the future of this town long after this corona virus has run its course, or do we call for significant cuts, which in turn will compromise the principle reasons many of us live here (Safe town with great education for our kids)?

I firmly believe that we should **fully** fund our Redding School System as well as our Law Enforcement assets. If we fail to maintain nothing less than the best most competitive school we risk a further degradation of our house prices resulting in the potential reduction in quality of life (higher crime rates). History of towns and cities across America demonstrate this phenomenon. Instead, our town leaders should take advantage of lower commodity and consumable pricing resulting from the virus' economic impact (lower oil and gas prices). Similarly, we should reconsider the necessity of town leased vehicles, dry cleaning and uniform costs. Finally, plan for the future - fix the wire mill area and bring in a revenue source commensurate with our way of life.

In closing, my family and I fully support a Redding budget that supports a well funded school system and police force. In fact, I would call for additional funding to promote vocational studies as well. The future of Redding absolutely depends on this town's school system. Now the voters have to decide what their priorities are and in which direction they want this beautiful community to go.

Respectfully,

Greg Cowell

From:  Budget 2021  
Heather Hopkins <heatherhopkinscht@gmail.com>

Thu, Apr 16, 2020 6:42:48 PM



Subject: Fwd: Budget 2020-2021

To:  **Steve Gniadek**  **Krista Gramer**  **Zachary Smith**

Dear Redding Board of Finance,

I am writing to voice my full support for the Board of Education's proposed budget for the 2020/2021 academic year as it stands. As a parent of two Redding Elementary School students, I have seen the challenges that occur when the budgets are continually cut. We have lost enrichment opportunities which are critical for keeping our children engaged in their learning. I have seen my children's class sizes grow to a level where the effects are being seen in the students both behaviorally and educationally. I worry about what school looks like in the future and the need for support to the children who will have suffered from this unforeseen pandemic. I feel that this is a time to look forward and maintain standards of excellence in education. I urge you to pass the budget as it stands and to stand up for the future of our schools and Redding's children. Appropriately fund our educators, school staff, support professionals, and the numerous people and programs that continue to make our schools a featured part of why people choose the Redding community over neighboring towns. The elected Board of Education has thoughtfully presented this budget based on decades of experience in education, while weighing the many needs of our schools and the community. We ask that you respect and support these experts and their carefully presented plan.

Sincerely,  
Heather Hopkins  
16 Little Boston Lane

Sent from my iPhone

From:  Budget 2021  
THOMPSON <thompers@optonline.net>

Thu, Apr 16, 2020 6:00:37 PM



Subject: Fwd: Public Comment on 2020-21 Budget

To:  Steve Gniadek  Krista Gramer  Zachary Smith

Dear Members of the Board of Finance

It is with some fear and the great sadness shared by many of our friends, neighbors and colleagues that tonight we recite today's headlines.

The Connecticut Post: "350,000 jobless claims were filed in just four weeks, a volume typically seen over a period of several years."

The Hartford Courant: "Connecticut will pay tens of millions of dollars of backlogged unemployment insurance benefits in the next two weeks" and "Connecticut's labor market: Employers cut 7,600 jobs in March."

The Danbury NewsTimes: The United Way's food distribution center today *ran out of food* in just twenty minutes this afternoon.

The Governor has issued a multitude of Executive Orders upending our normal fiscal processes. Insurance companies are suspending penalties for late payments, cutting premiums and holding cancellations in abeyance. Evictions and foreclosure processes have been stopped by Executive Order. Courthouses are closed. The *only* certainty in this grave time of uncertainty is that we now stand at the precipice of a potential economic recession.

In our town of 9,000 people, it is easy for so many to simply disconnect from the harsh reality of the headlines. We are a rural community, and while we walk our winding roads and trails daily, it is commonplace to see no other person on those walks. It is silent here, and we are in many ways isolated. And for this reason it is too simple for so many to proclaim that we are somehow sheltered from the economic cyclone, and that the usual business of ever rising budgets should continue once again this year, unabated. But the reality is that the economic effect of this pandemic will be felt in this community, among our working families, our older citizens, our working-age students -- in public and in private -- for many years to come. These are not the citizens who put out lawn signs, who rally the email writers, who comment prolifically (and not always with civility) in our locally run social media groups. Indeed, in their public silence, these are the town citizens who said unequivocally in our recent Town Survey that their *number one concern* is the rapid and relentless increase in local property taxes, and that was before the economic tsunami of this pandemic. To use our own family as an example, in 5 years, the property

tax on our home has risen *every single year* for a total increase of over 10%, while we watch the real value of our property slip in equal measure. All while our school's per student spending swelled to more than \$25,000, sitting in the rarified air of only a handful of small towns who grace the top of the spending scales, even as student enrollment declines. All while the prior debts of our road repairs and capital projects now come due, and while our first responders face unknown dangers and unknown costs associated with a pandemic that has literally stopped the world in its tracks.

The pleas from citizens in our small town to local government to control spending are not new, in and of themselves. We each can no doubt recall clearly the rancor and divisiveness of those particular occasions upon which budget referenda failed to pass, requiring further reductions in anticipated spending. But what is new this time is the desperate financial cliffs facing many of our friends and neighbors, most typically in silence. This year more than any other, the call must be for us to tighten our belts, to be *empathetic* to *all* of our town residents, and to recognize that this cannot and must not be a year to increase the local tax burden on those who face personal and economic adversity on an unanticipated and unknown scale. It is a time for us to show concern for *all* of our neighbors, to restore our personal and public fiscal health, and for us all to hope for the day when we return not to our old ways but to a different reality, and maybe even a "new and better normal".

Kim Thompson

Old Stagecoach Road

From:  Budget 2021  
"Laura D'Onofrio" <juneflower7@gmail.com>  
Fri, Apr 17, 2020 4:42:36 AM 

Subject: Fwd:

To:  **Steve Gniadek**  **Krista Gramer**  **Zachary Smith**

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Hello,

My name is Laura Cunningham, I am from 5 gallowes Hill Rd extension in Redding. My son, Caleb, currently is a second grader at RES, and will go into 3rd grade in the fall. He has an innate talent for math. It comes easily to him, and he desperately needs to be challenged. The only thing offered at RES for kids like him is the math challenge program. Only one teacher, Mr. Farina, is teaching this. This means that all students who are exceptionally good at math, in the entire RES school, have only one teacher. This past year Mr. Farina was not able to get to the second grade students because he only has so much time to work with all the grades. In the past there were more teachers, but with lack of funding the math challenge program has been cut down to one guy. We can do better than this. When the covid 19 happened and children came home from school, I saw the extent of my son's skills that were held back because the main class hadn't explored them yet. He memorized all the multiplication facts and was doing my daughter's 6th grade homework....Do you remember the words "no child left behind"? This was meant to help the students who were behind to catch up with everyone else with extra help. Shouldn't the gifted children feel challenged and reach their potential as well? My plea this year is to please support our schools. They are running on the bare minimum. Even the art teacher- there is only one art teacher in the entire RES, handling all the grades. Please support our teachers, support our students, and support our school by funding the programs that are desperately needed to let every child reach their fullest potential. I wish we could afford private school or private lessons to help supplement what is lost in the schools, but we are not fortunate enough to afford that kind of thing. Redding schools and the library are all this town has to attract people to come here, so let's invest in this town and in the students.

Thank you so much for your time  
Laura Cunningham

[www.lauradonofrio.com](http://www.lauradonofrio.com)

From:  Budget 2021  
Meredith Schuchard <meredith.schuchard@gmail.com>

4/16/2020 6:41:21 PM



Subject: Fwd: Education Budget

To:  **Steve Gniadek**  **Krista Gramer**  Zachary Smith

Dear Board of Finance,

I am writing you in support of the Board Of Education's 2020-2021 budget. These are difficult times for many- especially our children. They have been thrust into distance learning and despite the tremendous efforts of current staff and administrators, our students are suffering. This is not the time to be cutting education funds or staff. Our children deserve access to current technology, more reading and math specialists and the greatest access to mental health professionals that we can provide.

We are so happy that 4 years ago, our family made the decision to move to Redding from Denver, CO. We didn't choose it because of all the businesses (ha) and open green space. We picked Redding because of the schools. Schools, which now, are showing age and need repairs. Schools that seem to have to fight for every penny to simply keep up. It's disappointing and frankly, embarrassing.

Our children, our schools and the future of Redding depend on the actions you are taking at this critical moment. Please keep the BOE budget as is so we can support our children and our community.

Thank you,  
Meredith Schuchard  
81 Pinetree Rd

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Sent from Gmail Mobile