

From:  Budget 2021 Wednesday, May 13, 2020 12:51:36 AM  
"Jeff Fligelman" <jeff@gothamwriters.com>  
Subject: Fwd: 141 Redding Residents in Favor of the Proposed Budgets  
To:  **Steve Gniadek**  **Krista Gramer**  Zachary Smith

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Please see the letter below signed by 141 Redding residents in favor of passage of the proposed budgets. (Please note that this same letter was submitted previously with 130 names.)

Dear Members of the Redding Board of Finance,

We face a very difficult time and very real hardships. We all have friends and neighbors who have been affected by COVID-19, either directly or indirectly. People are sick and dying, people have lost jobs, and our children haven't been to school in weeks.

And through it all, we remain optimistic. Our town has overcome challenges for over 250 years. We are a diverse community, and that diversity will help us weather this storm. The damage caused by the coronavirus is real, but we are confident that together we will overcome it. The question we face is what is Redding going to look like when we get to the other side.

We are especially concerned about our children. The educational careers of 1,500 kids have already been severely impacted. They have stayed home, away from their studies, away from their friends, away from their childhoods, to help protect our community. Yet some are calling for cuts to the funds that support their education. However, you only get one chance at Kindergarten, or third grade, or being prepared for high school, and next year all of our children will be starting at a deficit. Larger class sizes, fewer support staff, and less programming would only make a difficult situation even worse.

As members of the Board of Finance, you likely know that the only way to guarantee losing money in the market is to sell at the low point. That's how you lock in a loss. The same is true for the education of our children. By cutting now, you would ensure that what should be a temporary educational setback becomes an ongoing deficit. Please don't allow fear to cause you to sell when things are difficult. You have prudently addressed our town's cash flow concerns, and as was explained by our town's tax collector, we will be made whole by the end of our fiscal year.

Understanding that all of our boards have scoured their budgets for savings, we ask that you pass those budgets as presented to you. If you want to make changes to the budgets, we believe that those changes should be supported unanimously by the Board of Finance and by the other board in question. For instance, if the BOF wants to cut the Selectman's budget, then all of the BOF members should agree with the cut, and all of the Selectmen should agree as well. We need consensus, not a fractured leadership. Put differently, we believe that having a bare majority of the BOF overrule another elected board and then go ahead and ratify that budget without a town-wide vote would damage public trust in our local government.

Redding has always been a community that comes together and supports one another, and together we are going to get through this difficult time.

Thank you for your service and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Margaret and William Brown  
2336 Meadow Ridge

Nicole Steen  
Erach Screwvala  
35 Lamppost Drive

Katharine Dusenbury  
19 Lamppost Drive

Chris Racette  
76 Drummer Lane

Sarah Kelly  
Liadan O'Connor  
Lorcan O'Connor  
144 Seventy Acre Road

Maisie and James Wallick  
235 Redding Road

Amy Arnold  
17 Werf Drive

Jonathan Hopkins  
Heather Hopkins  
16 Little Boston Lane

Keith and Marissa Rich  
40 Putnam Park Road

Joanne and Reid Gray  
Carolina Gray  
Helen Lindauer  
15 Lonetown Road

Brenda Phelps  
Robert Mars  
2 Indian Hill Road

Jen and Mike Lyons  
22 Orchard Drive

Melinda Irwin  
55 High Ridge Road

Jeff Fligelman  
Kathryn Zimmerman  
72 Pocahontas Road

Alex Zuluaga  
29 Sunnyview Drive

Dan Burgess & Sarah O'Dell  
214 Black Rock Turnpike

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8 Iris Lane

Chad and Leila Herrman  
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Michael Dobbins  
Maureen Dobbins  
30 Wood Road

Rudd and Tracy Anderson  
6 Meeker Hill Road

Eric Baker & Jeanne Halloran  
216 Black Rock Tpke

Brian Baker  
Carolyn Baker  
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105 Portland Ave

Alisa Masson  
18 Packer Brook Road

Susan and Chris Runge  
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9 Dan Beard Lane

Darrell Bradford & Cindy Bradford  
93 Cross Highway

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Rebecca Rappoccio  
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Cathleen Gelman  
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Malcolm & Vanessa McPherson  
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Leif Smith  
70a Portland Avenue

Martine and Liam King  
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Judy and Harvey Kagan  
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Lucy Tancredi & Edward Humphrey  
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34 Farview Farm Road

Jessica Marx  
25 Old Mill Road #2

Richard Anstett  
Kristen Anstett  
60 Whortleberry Road

ALL ADDRESSES ARE REDDING, CT.

From:  Budget 2021 Wednesday, May 13, 2020 12:56:14 PM  
"Jeff Fligelman" <jeff@gothamwriters.com>  
Subject: Fwd: UPDATE: 143 Redding Residents in Favor of the Proposed Budgets  
To:  **Steve Gniadek**  **Krista Gramer**  **Zachary Smith**

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Please see the letter below signed by 143 Redding residents in favor of passage of the proposed budgets. (Please note that this same letter was submitted previously with 130 names.)

Dear Members of the Redding Board of Finance,

We face a very difficult time and very real hardships. We all have friends and neighbors who have been affected by COVID-19, either directly or indirectly. People are sick and dying, people have lost jobs, and our children haven't been to school in weeks.

And through it all, we remain optimistic. Our town has overcome challenges for over 250 years. We are a diverse community, and that diversity will help us weather this storm. The damage caused by the coronavirus is real, but we are confident that together we will overcome it. The question we face is what is Redding going to look like when we get to the other side.

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Kristen Anstett  
60 Whortleberry Road

Linda Mitchell  
50 Huckleberry Road

Paula Darlington  
59 Long Ridge Road

ALL ADDRESSES ARE REDDING, CT.

From:  Budget 2021  
**Angelica Fontanez**

Wednesday, May 13, 2020 12:19:36 AM



Subject: Fwd: Proposed Budget 2020-2021

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

May 12, 2020

Dear Board of Finance,

I would like to thank you for your support regarding my Social Service Department. I am aware that there were a few questions about my budget. Please note that my position not only entails social services, but I also oversee all of the Heritage Center operations.

First, I would like to share with you a snapshot of the budget and the donations that I have been able to use from the Trust and Agency account. As you can see I already have exhausted the allocated town budget and now I am using funds from donations. I would like to share some other data that I have been able to collect from the United Way Crisis Line, DSS Snap program, Police Department, ERCCC (EASTON REDDING CARE COMMUNITY COALITION) survey, and the Free Reduced Lunch Program. We are not only confronting the challenge of unemployment, but a large scope of mental health issues in the community that needs to be addressed. We need all possible resources available including a strong school community.

Account 160200-5561 Social Service Account

Year	Budgeted	Used
2020 until April	30,500	32,968  (-2468)
2019	30,500	31,709
2018	25,000	24,861
2017	20,000	20,483

Account 50-5990 Supplements Social Service especially the Energy Assistance Program

From Donations from 50-4360

20	50
20	55
20	46
19	60
20	64
18	25
20	76
17	55

Please note that these accounts are earmarked for food, fuel assistance, and electrical bills. I do have access to various grants from the United Way Alice program and Salvation Army.

Prior to pandemic I have been working with approximately 20 seniors and 24 families going through hardship. Presently, the number has increased to 26 seniors and 30 families. Please note some cases are not only about financial hardship, but also referrals to mental health services. I also do wellness visits in collaboration with the police department, local EMS, and fire department.

I would like to share further data that shows we can have a crisis if not appropriately addressed.

**SNAP** ( Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program formerly known as Food stamps). The net income limit for 1 person is \$1041 a month and a family of 4 is \$2146.00. If someone is disabled or 60 years of age then the gross income limit for 1 person is \$1926 and family of 4 is \$3970. There is an asset limit test.

**Data current as of 3/31/2020**

**88 individuals ( 61 adults, 27 children)**

**17 individuals from the above are aged 60+**

**54 Households**

**Data in 2016:**

**There were 65 individuals**

**17 individuals from the above are aged 60+**

#### **46 Households**

**Free Reduced-Price school meals: The annual gross income for a family of 4 for the free meals is \$33,475 and the annual gross income for the reduced-price meals for a family of 4 is 47,638.**

**Prior to the pandemic: There are 67 students in both Elementary and Middle school on this program.. There are 38 Redding high school students and 40 Easton students on this program.**

**United Way 211 Counts data:**

**From May 12, 2019 to May 10,2020**

- **Out of 100 percent of their phone calls from Redding 06896 which were 170 phone calls: Mental Health and addiction was 41.7 % ( 150 phone calls). Then those calls are broken down to:**
- **Mental Health Services were 71.3% (107 households requesting referrals and resources).**
- **22% Crisis Intervention and Suicide were 22% (33 calls) .These calls reflect individuals with suicidal ideation, attempt, or plan.**
- **24.2% were under the age of 18 (at least 8 were identified) and mainly females.**
- **42.4 % of the calls did not want to confirm the age.**

#### **ERCCC ( EASTON REDDING COMMUNITY CARE COALITION) SURVEY:**

**There were 441 kids amongst Easton and Redding between the age of 13 and 18 who participated in this survey:**

- **25% of female students suffer from Depression.**
- **15% of female students who attempted some form of suicide act.**
- **50 % of students with low grades who reported depression/suicide ideation.**
- **28% were victims of violence in the home. Please note that domestic violence has increased by 50 percent during the pandemic as evidenced by police activity.**
- **66% of students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts with a school staff.**

This data shows mental health issues in the community that are pre-existing to the pandemic and will only worsen. Based on my numbers, I am providing services to a certain amount of families with financial hardship prior to and during the pandemic. Some of the possible resources that have been able to help other families are an extended family system, church groups, and most importantly a strong school system that provides appropriate professional support. Please note when a school staff has to make a crisis phone call on behalf of a student that staff must stay and remain with the student until a therapist from the crisis hotline arrives to the school. From my own prior experience in working in the school system that can take anywhere from 30 minutes to 3 hours. You are trying if possible to prevent a psychiatric hospitalization. If the school system loses a percentage of its staff and resources; how are they expected to help these students? Please take into consideration this current data as you make your decision for the school budget. It is imperative after this pandemic that all resources remain readily available for the students and their families as they transition back to school.

Thank You,

Angelica Fontanez, LCSW  
Director of Social Services  
Town of Redding

(203) 938-3580  
(203) 938-5018 fax

From:  Budget 2021  
Annie Evans <anniegwenevans@gmail.com>

Mon, May 11, 2020 9:44:13 AM



Subject: Fwd: PASS THE BUDGET

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

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Dear Dr. Yonkers,

In the time of Covid, when we're unsure of so many things, please pass the budget so our children don't suffer. They've suffered enough being stuck at home when they're social beings who need to be in school.

Thank you!

Annie

From:  Budget 2021  
Tina Dahm <tinadahm@sbcglobal.net>

Wednesday, May 13, 2020 7:51:32 AM



Subject: Fwd: Budget

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

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We truly believe it is the fiduciary obligation of the members of the Boards of Selectmen, Finance And Education to spend within the real means of our Town and not jeopardize our credit rating nor our home prices (due to high property taxes.)

We did not compose the following message but it expresses our thoughts:

We believe that most people in Redding feel that that the town's budget and taxes are higher than they are comfortable with. This was true before the current crisis. While we seem to be bending the curve for COVID-19 infections and deaths in Connecticut, we are at best at the end of the beginning of the economic crisis engulfing our nation, state, and town. We are a long way from peak unemployment, and the overall pain that all Americans, including residents of Redding, will feel Redding's triple A credit rating is a valuable asset that must be preserved. Spending down the Unassigned Fund Balance (the rainy-day fund) will negatively affect our credit rating. Its loss would mean higher interest rates to be paid in the future, adding to our financial burden, and a tarnishing of the town's stellar reputation.

For this reason, no increase should be contemplated in the proposed budget for the Redding Board of Education.

Chris and Tina Dahm  
70 Umpawaug Rd

Sent from my iPad

From:  Budget 2021  
"chris dahm" <chrisdahm@sbcglobal.net>

Tuesday, May 12, 2020 8:17:39 AM



Subject: Fwd: taxes

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

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To the BOF:

Like many others we have paid this town hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxes over the last 30 years. We have no intention of making that commitment to this town in the future -especially without the ability to have a vote and a reckless member who does not care about the towns credit rating.

Like many others we can no longer make the fiscal or emotional case to continue to live in Redding. Your spending and commitment to spending is out of control.

Chris Dahm  
70 Umpawaug Road  
Redding, CT 06896  
917 575 2660  
chrisdahm@sbcglobal.net

From:  Budget 2021  
"cracette@yahoo.com" <cracette@yahoo.com>  
Chris Racette <cracette@yahoo.com>

Wed, May 13, 2020 2:34:39 PM



Subject: Fwd: Pass budget tonight with no more cuts

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

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Hi - time to quit using the pandemic to push long standing personal agenda of gutting the Education Budget. The budget proposed for the March BoF meeting was a .67% increase. There have been cuts since then (BoF and/BoS has done POOR job of communicating - website still notes the March 19 proposal). .67% increase is essentially flat. Less than .67% increase IS flat.

Flat is responsible. Crazy increases irresponsible. Crazy cuts irresponsible. Getting to exactly zero for zeros sake is irresponsible. Be responsible. Pass budget. Move on.

No - flat DOES NOT MEAN EVERY LINE ITEM NEEDS TO BE FLAT. This is not the time for line item review. You should have done that months ago. This is the time to discuss the TOWN BUDGET as a whole.

Chris Racette  
76 Drummer Lane  
203 918 1558  
cracette@yahoo.com

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

From:  Budget 2021  
danb1972 <danb1972@gmail.com>

Tuesday, May 12, 2020 10:15:51 PM



Subject: Fwd: Re: Fund at levels submitted

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

To all Board Members:

I again urge the Board of Finance to fund the Board of Education budget at the levels submitted, particularly given the concerns our schools face with the continued impact of COVID-19 in the months ahead. Arbitrary cuts with no approval from Redding voters at the ballot box would yield nominal monthly savings for the average middle class homeowner at the risk of severely reducing our homes' values and leaving our schools unprepared to address the necessary changes to provide safe and effective education.

A campaign to assault our schools continues. Falsehoods and exaggerations around per-pupil costs, tax shortfalls, and local unemployment are spread to convince naive voters to look for scapegoats instead of solutions. I further urge the Board of Finance to formally demand that the town develop a rational and practical plan to rapidly identify additional commercial sources of revenue to finally break the cycle of continued overdependence on property taxes.

Respectfully,  
Dan Burgess  
214 Black Rock Tpke

On Wed, Apr 22, 2020, 3:08 PM danb1972 <[danb1972@gmail.com](mailto:danb1972@gmail.com)> wrote:

I urge the Board of Finance to fund the budget at the levels submitted, particularly given the concerns our schools face with the continued impact of COVID-19. Even a cut as large as 10% would yield low monthly savings for the average middle class tax bill of \$12k-\$15k, at the risk of further reducing our homes' values in this important time.

Respectfully,  
Dan Burgess  
214 Black Rock Tpke

From:  Budget 2021  
Daniel Souza <dmsouza47@hotmail.com> Monday, May 11, 2020 9:52:20 PM 

Subject: Fwd: BUDGET 2021 COMMENTS

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

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**The Board of Education budget as proposed reflects the erroneous belief by school advocates that**

**increases in spending translate into quality education. Numerous studies over many years have irrefutably debunked this myth. Great schools are the result of great teachers coupled with**

**sensible, cost-effective policies. For this reason no increase should be contemplated in the**

**proposed budget, particularly in a year of extreme crisis we are in.**

**Daniel Souza  
Fire Hill Road**

From:  Budget 2021  
Diane Tamboia <dtambo@optonline.net> Wednesday, May 13, 2020 6:31:45 AM 

Subject: Fwd: Board of Finance - regarding budget

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

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Representing my husband and myself, we are NOT in favor of a tax increase this year.

There has been a lot of public commentary on social media on this subject and we don't align with the people that want to throw money at the problem and claim our property values will decline if we don't continually pump money into the school system. In our opinion, people won't want to move here because our taxes are too high.

Without a public vote, the fairest outcome would be to keep the budget flat or equal to what it is this year (and no hidden increases for inflation, etc.)

Regards,  
Diane and Chris Tamboia

From:  Budget 2021  
gvond@aol.com

Wednesday, May 13, 2020 7:15:35 AM



Subject: Fwd: Budget

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

Good Morning,

In these unprecedented times, we need to take measures to adapt to what is happening. I urge you to consider a budget reduction in both the town and education budgets. Our staff are well compensated, especially at the central office. With high unemployment, and many residents forced to take pay reductions from their jobs, I am urging you to consider the same for our central office and town staff.

Years ago, a 4 day work week was implemented to save on energy costs. This has not been an issue for many years, however the schedule remains the same. I propose that if the 4 day work week is to continue, then salary reductions should follow to reflect the loss of a day. I understand the hours are longer, my proposal is to cut the hours to 32 since we appear to be managing Our service delivery with 4 days.

In addition, realignment of the school administrative staf- specifically 1 principal and 2 assistant principals is a common sense example of where reductions can be made in the lower school budget.

The Central office staff is well compensated with fewer students than we have had in years. Again, salary reductions in addition to combining positions, staff reductions are a necessity in these unprecedented times.

I urge you to consider making the cuts proposed above, or other appropriate salary/ staff reductions, as opposed to cutting programs in the schools. The children have suffered enough, it is time to cut the administrative fat out of our budgets.

We all need to tighten our belts and do more with less. Again, I am urging you to implement a reduction in the town and school budgets to reflect the needs of our times.

Thank you,  
Gail von Dwingelo  
106 Black Rock Tpke

Sent from AOL Mobile Mail

From:  Budget 2021  
Gus Olsen <gusolsen@hotmail.com> Wednesday, May 13, 2020 12:52:57 AM 

Subject: Fwd: Redding: Will COVID-19 be a Budget Buster?

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

Attachments:  Save Redding.pdf / Uploaded File (9.7M)

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## **Redding residents fear COVID-19's effect on town's finances.**

**A bi-partisan group of Reddingites are concerned that the economic effects of the Corona Virus are being severely under estimated by the town's government officials and if pro-active action is not taken now, a cash flow crisis may cause a severe fiscal problem later this year and in 2021.**

The rapid rise in Redding's unemployment rate caused by the Pandemic will cause hardships and slow property tax collection, which may necessitate layoffs or furloughs of town employees and teachers unless bold, pro-active measures are taken now in order to avoid more drastic, emergency cuts later, according to a statement (see above) issued by the group, called the Committee to Sustain Redding's Future.

As Redding residents will not be able to vote for or against the 2021 budget in a referendum this year, due to the Corona virus, Redding voters are being urged to contact their Board of Finance (budget2021comments@townofreddingct.org) and express their deep concern about Redding's budget proposal which will be voted on today, Wednesday May 13th, by the Board of Finance. For more information, click on the above pdf.

Gus Olsen  
The Committee to Sustain Redding's Future (CoSuReF)  
203.770.3433



From:  Budget 2021  
Heather Whaley <hbwhaley@gmail.com>

Mon, May 11, 2020 2:24:42 PM



Subject: Fwd:

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

To the members of the Board of Finance:

This morning I watched the state's roundtable discussion on reopening schools. It was a highly informative conversation between the Governor's advisory group on education, whose members I have listed below. This pandemic has all schools in need of financial support, including private colleges and universities, but I want to talk about what was discussed for K-12.

It was stated that in order to safely open schools in the fall, anticipated social distancing measures will require additional bus runs and smaller class sizes. The expected continuation of periods of distance learning will necessitate training for teachers to increase aptitude. Former Yale President Rick Levin noted that schools have done a good job with the sudden transition to distance learning, but it is largely in the primitive stage as of now. Universities have been using distance learning successfully for years, and the best programs include supplemental materials, animations, and documents, and are available for K-12, but our teachers will need to learn to use these new platforms, and could require unforeseen expenses in technology.

It was stated that school districts considering a budget increase of 1-2% for the coming year will likely not be able to meet the necessary expenses for schools to open. Of course opening schools is vital to getting the economy going, as people need to go to work. But perhaps the most important message is that we cannot ignore needed safety measures and allow schools to be the place where the virus resurges and again shuts the economy down entirely.

I understand the desire of some in the community to drastically dig into the school budget, but in listening to this conversation, I do not think we will be able to run a school if we do so, and we will ultimately regret it. I urge you to pass the budget as proposed, even as I acknowledge it might be leaving us susceptible to a shortfall.

Heather Whaley  
Windy Hill Road

#### Advisory Group on Education

- Moderator: Mark Ojakian, President of Connecticut State Colleges and Universities
- Dr. Joanne Berger-Sweeney, President, Trinity College (CCIC Chair)
- Beth Bye, Early Childhood Commissioner
- Miguel Cardona, Education Commissioner

- Dr. Matt Cartter, Department of Public Health State Epidemiologist
- Jan Hochadel, President of AFT Connecticut
- Thomas Katsouleas, President of UConn
- Rick Levin, Former President of Yale
- Glenn Lungarini, Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference
- Fran Rabinowitz, Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents
- Rob Rader, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education
- Don Williams, Executive Director of CEA

From:  Budget 2021  
Henry POLIO <hankp@optonline.net>

Wednesday, May 13, 2020 8:11:24 AM



Subject: Fwd: town budget

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

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Dear BOF members,

Unlike with past budgets, the town is faced with a possible decrease in tax revenue. Are only solution to the problem at this time is to tighten our belts which means decreasing town budgets by at least five percent and possibly borrowing money to compensate for any unknown short fall in tax revenue.

If we're considering using the town "rainy day fund" to help make up for any short fall in tax revenue, it's my understanding over use could affect our town credit rating, thus increasing the cost of future borrowing.

Henry Polio (27 Gallows Hill Road)

From:  Budget 2021  
 howard sherman <hsherman309@gmail.com>

Wed, May 13, 2020 1:19:53 PM



Subject: Fwd: Being fiscally responsible in a time of uncertainty

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

Dear board of Finance,

We are living in a time of uncertainty. While difficult, it represents an opportunity to do what the town has needed to do for a very long time.

The fiscally responsible thing to do now is to take a cautious approach and reduce budgets across the board. It is painful, but any of us who have had a role of fiduciary responsibility know that in times of uncertainty, you behave conservatively and move forward from there.

The balance of this fiscal year should be dedicated to developing a needs based budget from a blank piece of paper that takes a holistic view of the towns requirements across all key areas.

This includes:

- Education
- Infrastructure
- Home values
- Social services
- Other

This is an opportunity to let go of a long lived and outdated process that has let the status quo drive budget decisions. To do anything else would be irresponsible. We need a realistic long term plan that supports all the needs of the community. If ever there was a time to stop, think and move forward it is now. In doing so we also need to build a collaborative, fiscally responsible relationship between the Board of Education, The Board of Finance and the Selectman's Office. The adversarial approach that has been in place for years now does not serve the town or its residence. In fact it by definition creates an environment of self interest vs mutual interest.

I would propose a 8% across the board budget reduction and the implementation of a strategic long term plan that gets us on track for a sustainable and fair budget process that is inclusive of all of our respective needs.

Regards,

Howard Sherman

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From:  Budget 2021  
Hunter Martin <hunter.martin@gmail.com> Wednesday, May 13, 2020 2:57:56 PM 

Subject: Fwd: Pass the proposed budget. No further cuts to education.

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

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Dear Board of Finance,

I am writing to urge you to unanimously pass the proposed Board of Education budget for K-8. Our schools are our greatest asset in Redding, apart from our children. The closure of RES and JRMS during the Covid-19 crisis has demonstrated just how much our children *love* their schools and how much benefit they derive from learning and engaging with their teachers and peers. Every dollar cut from the proposed budget comes at the expense of our children's present wellbeing and future prospects.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Hunter Martin  
64 Dayton Rd.

From:  Budget 2021  
FRITCH <jackiefritch@optonline.net>

Wednesday, May 13, 2020 2:08:08 PM



Subject: Fwd: Please approve BoE budget

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

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Dear Redding Board of Finance Members,

I urge you to approve the proposed Board of Education budget as presented. Please maintain the quality of Redding's most valuable asset, our school system.

Sincerely,

Jackie Dyar

60 High Ridge Road

Redding, CT 06896

From:  Budget 2021  
Jim Lang <operaa1@optonline.net>

Monday, May 11, 2020 3:55:49 PM



Subject: Fwd: Board of Finance Budget Comment

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

The budget as currently proposed by the BOE, if approved by BOF will likely result in an increase in our property taxes. I would strongly urge the boards to put on **hold** the proposed \$440,000 budget increase for technology and any net staffing additions. Based on unemployment projections even given these reductions, we will most likely have a tax revenue shortfall. These cuts should not negatively impact the quality of our students education in the short term”.

Jim Lang

Cell. 203 609 1025

Sent from my iPad

From:  Budget 2021  
Kea Chiang <keamarie@yahoo.com>

Wednesday, May 13, 2020 11:10:41 AM



Subject: Fwd: Please Keep up Educations Standards!

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

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Dear Board,

I am distressed other that the Board is leaning toward cutting education yet again. As a parent of school-aged children in town I implore you to stop cutting the budget, to stop increasing class sizes, and to stop reducing important educational programs like language, music, and physical education for our children.

Thank you for your time.

Kea Chiang  
Gallows Hill Road

From:  Budget 2021  
Eric Goldstein <ericgoldstein2620@gmail.com>

Wed, May 13, 2020 2:07:21 PM



Subject: Fwd: Goldstein Feedback

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

One of Redding's greatest attributes is our school system. While we are going through a difficult time right now, it is even more important than ever to continue to support our schools and teachers as we help ensure our kids continue to receive a world class education. I would strongly urge the Board of Finance and the Board of Education to limit additional cuts that would adversely impact our schools. If anything, what we have learned as parents during this period of social distancing is that our children need so much more than academics from their school experience. We have found that the biggest challenge is the fact that they miss out on the peer social interaction and the activities that enhance their learning, which include all of the FPA's and opportunities to engage in peer and social interactions above and beyond the core classroom learning. In fact, we would argue that they succeed in academics only when they have those additional experiences as part of their school atmosphere. Any cuts would surely impact everything from Art, Music and Physical Education to Library and most definitely Project Adventure. We hope you take this into consideration when making your decision and opt NOT to cut any further.

Many thanks for your time and efforts in helping Redding do what is best for everyone in our community.

Best,  
Lisa & Eric Goldstein

From:  Budget 2021  
Jew <dukewoot@gmail.com>

Tuesday, May 12, 2020 11:39:28 PM



Subject: Fwd: Budget

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

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Finance Committee,

I have a concern, shared by others, that the budget now being considered by the Board of Finance is not realistic considering the current and anticipated financial stresses facing Redding.

The proposal of increasing the budget and raising the mill rate does not appear to be a responsible approach to the serious financial issues with which Redding is dealing.

Yours is a difficult task, but I believe that you are up to it and will do what is necessary.

Based upon the above, I would respectfully request that the Board of Finance take a hard look at proposed expenditures in all areas with a view toward making well thought out reductions.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Michael Wooters  
28 Winding Brook Lane

Sent from my iPad

From:  Budget 2021  
Mike L <mikespub10@gmail.com>

Wednesday, May 13, 2020 7:46:05 AM



Subject: Fwd: Please do not cut BoE budget

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

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Dear Members of the Board of Finance,

Please vote Yes and pass the budget submitted by the Board of Education, and consider the following:

**Budget cuts** are largely **born by General Education** students

**Special Ed compensatory requirements** - *services not delivered* this year will hit *next year's budget*

Many children will need **additional instruction/services** next year to re-adjust to classroom (or more distance learning) instruction

Any (new) **social distance requirements** are likely to **increase costs**

**The school system is a top priority for home buyers**, not just in Redding, but in many places where people *choose* to live. Redding home buyers can afford to buy elsewhere.

In Partnership,

Mike Lyons

22 Orchard Drive



From:  Budget 2021  
"Nancy May" <nmay@optonline.net>  
Subject: Fwd: BOE and BOF Budget  
To:  **Steve Gniadek**  **Krista Gramer**  **Zachary Smith**

Wednesday, May 13, 2020 2:45:26 PM



As a longtime resident of Redding I've been concerned about the ever growing expenditures for our schools for years.  
The decline in the number of students served and the aging population is something that we all need to consider.

In the business world, many companies plan with a Zero Base Budget, meaning that every expenditure must be openly justified.

This includes the additional benefits that teachers AND administrators receive. No additional benefits should be paid to any teacher, administrator, or provider.

All of us will be impacted by our current situation.

Being that 559 residents have had to register for unemployment benefits – which are available for only a limited amount of time, does not mean that the rest of us have been counted or even considered.

Consider the financial damage done to:

- Sole proprietors whose customers have disappeared – we are not eligible for unemployment – and our customers/clients may NEVER come back.
- Seniors whose investments have been cut by nearly 50% or worse in some cases – these investments have, until now, put food on the table and kept a roof over many.
- Parents of young adult children who have lost jobs and had to move home. Those parents (AKA Redding residents) are now even more financially constrained by having to take in a child or even an elderly adult who could no longer afford to live in a care facility.

The groups noted above are not insignificant in numbers here in our town.

The facts on how C-19 has impacted our entire town has NOT been taken into full consideration.

The BOE and BOF has been selfish, lazy and thoughtless at best.

Think about those of us who have been paying into the education for years, with no benefit in return – those without children.

Parents of students have threatened those of us who do not have children in the school system. This is unconscionable and unlawful.

A minimum of 10% cut in the budget should be done. Period. Actually, a 20 to 25% cut should be on the table!

Getting money from the state will also NOT happen, even if expected. Get real and understand this fact.

We do not provide private schooling for our residents. This is a public school system and should be managed like one.

Children who receive private school (special) education through our system should be brought home too. There's just too much anger and disgust to continue.

The value of our homes have decreased and will NOT go back up due to schooling- EVER!

Get it, "man up" and take the right leadership action now. Deep financial are being taken by the rest of us at home. We must all learn to live with the new financial austerity.

Get it or get out!

From:  Budget 2021  
Nancy PelzPaget <nancypelzpaget@gmail.com> Wed, May 13, 2020 9:36:08 AM 

Subject: Fwd: Letter to BOF re Budget 2021

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

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LETTER TO BOARD OF FINANCE May 13, 2020

Now is not the time for optimism. It is the time for realism. Our economic context is dire and not likely to improve for some time to come. It is unfortunate that all Redding citizens do not appreciate that the real way to preserve the quality of life and education in Redding lies in taking a responsible approach to flat or reduced budget. This is not the time to increase salaries. We are not faced with Hobson's choice as is often suggested—and all or nothing approach – suggesting that cutting anything out of education budgets would diminish the value of real estate and ruin the lives of children. We are faced with taking responsibility to preserve the overall quality and sustainability of our town.

There is much research to suggest that there is no direct correlation with the amount of money being spent on public education and the results in student learning. What matters most is not class size – except in lower grades – but the quality of teaching and learning. Our focus should be on preserving the highest quality teachers and enabling them to become more proficient at distance learning which has been thrust upon the students and teachers. Redding can serve teachers and students better if teachers are skilled in this very different technique. There are increases still forecast in administrative budget. When the negotiations with teachers union occurs, we should seek to flatten or reduce salaries.

We are not the only town struggling with these issues but others are making more responsible decisions to reduce or keep all budgets flat. I urge the BOF to do the same so that we can keep our current credit status and not increase the already high taxes.

Nancy PelzPaget  
77 Stepney Road  
Redding, CT 06896

Nancy  
Nancy Pelz-Paget  
Director Emerita

Aspen Education & Society Program

Tel: 917 885-0149  
NEW ADDRESS:  
77 Stepney Road  
Redding, CT 06896

From:  Budget 2021  
Nick Kady <nickkady@yahoo.com>

Wednesday, May 13, 2020 3:04:59 PM



Subject: Fwd: Please Approve BoE Budget

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

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Dear Redding Board of Finance Members:

It is vital to the future of Redding that you approve the proposed Board of Education budget as presented. Our school system and the children that attend are our future. In our bucolic and quiet town, our school system is Redding's most valuable asset. Please protect our schools. Please protect our children. Please protect our future.

Best Regards,

Nick & Colleen Kady

36 High Ridge Road

Redding CT 06896

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

Wed, May 13, 2020 3:07:30 PM



Subject: Fwd: Budget Vote

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

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Dear Redding Board of Finance Members,

With the current state of affairs, approving the proposed Board of Education budget as presented is of the utmost importance. Redding's most valuable asset, our school system, has a strong correlation to new residents moving to Redding and a positive effect on our property values. The positive reputation of our educational system is the reason why many of us chose to live in Redding rather than surrounding towns.

Sincerely,

Pamela Friedman  
22 Goodridge Road  
Redding, CT 06896

From:  Budget 2021  
<rantonion@optonline.net>

Wednesday, May 13, 2020 10:18:35 AM



Subject: Fwd: BOE and BOF Budget

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

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Budget proposals for the BOE and each any every town department should not be accepted nor approved without demonstrated efforts to achieve a cost saving of 10% below last year's budget submission, and successfully submitting proposals for a minimum of 5% reduction from last year. In light of the present financial situation facing or soon to be faced by the taxpayers in this town, board members should consider themselves to be remiss in their responsibilities to achieve substantial budget reductions, and consider themselves derelict in their duties if they allow submission of any increase in the budget this year. They should consider this as taxpayer/voters will certainly remember this about incumbents in the 2020 elections.

Taxpayers who look forward to town budget increases should be offered the opportunity to commit to voluntarily paying more taxes out of their own pockets to make up any increase. See how many will agree to that proposal.

From:  Budget 2021  
Reid Gray <jreidgray@gmail.com>

Wednesday, May 13, 2020 9:40:52 AM



Subject: Fwd: Vote on BoE Budget

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

Dear Board of Finance Members,

Our students need our support now more than ever; we encourage you to vote for the budget that the Board of Ed has passed. The BoE budget is very well thought-out and fiscally responsible. There is no room for further reduction without critically damaging our children's educations. They are already dealing with the significantly lessened educational quality resulting from COVID isolation. And reducing the schools reduces property values, a further hit to residents already dealing with the economic effects of the virus.

Sincerely,

Reid and Joanne Gray  
15 Lonetown Road  
Redding, Conn. 06896

From:  Budget 2021  
Roger Van Ausdal <vanausdr@gmail.com> Tuesday, May 12, 2020 10:17:17 PM

Subject: Fwd: Board of Finance Special Meeting - May 13

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

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I believe that most people in Redding feel that that the town's budget and taxes are higher than they are comfortable with. This was true before the current crisis. While we seem to be bending the curve for Covid-19 infections and deaths in Connecticut, we are at best at the end of the beginning of the economic crisis engulfing our nation, state, and town. 481 Redding residents filed for unemployment during the six (6) week period between March 15<sup>th</sup> to April 26<sup>th</sup>, equal to 10.5% of the Redding workforce. We are a long way from peak unemployment, and the overall pain that the residents of Redding will feel.

Redding's triple A credit rating is a valuable asset that must be preserved. Spending down the Unassigned Fund Balance (the rainy-day fund) will negatively affect our credit rating. Its loss would mean higher interest rates to be paid in the future, adding to our financial burden, and a tarnishing of the town's stellar reputation.

For this reason, no increase should be contemplated in the proposed budget for the Redding Board of Education.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Van Ausdal  
21 Orchard Drive, Redding

From:  Budget 2021  
<barreror@brookfieldps.org> Wednesday, May 13, 2020 10:10:37 AM 

Subject: Fwd: Budget schools

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

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Hello,

I am writing this email to ask you not to reduce further the budget of the schools this year. I am extremely concerned that the quality of the education in this town is going to suffer. Please maintaining or even increasing the budget is the best for Redding.

Thank you,

Rosa Perales  
36 Sullivan Drive  
Redding, 06896, CT

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

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From:  Budget 2021 Susan Durkee <susan@susandurkee.com> Wednesday, May 13, 2020 10:15:35 AM 

Subject: Fwd: Reduce the budget

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

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Our town budget is too high, especially the Education budget and police department budget. Lets make Redding more affordable and bring our diminished real estate values back! Be responsible Town Stewards!

Warm regards, Susan  
Susan Boone Durkee  
Mark Twain's The Lobster Pot Studio  
[www.susandurkee.com](http://www.susandurkee.com)  
Studio 203-938-2760  
Sent from my iPad

From:  Budget 2021  
Susan Winters <swdesigner@me.com>

Wednesday, May 13, 2020 2:48:51 PM



Subject: Fwd: Please lower the budget

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

This is a copy of my latest editorial. I am submitting it as a letter to the board of finance.

I just want to say that I have gotten an enormous positive reaction to this and my past editorials. I have been encouraging residence to write into the board of finance. So many people have come to me to tell me that they agree and think that there should be no raises for those making higher salaries and that the budgets need to be cut or at least flat.

I am aware that it is long, so there is no need to read it into the record at the meeting.

Thank you  
Susan Winters

#### **Editorial: In My Opinion**

## **Thoughts about the Budget**

*by Susan Winters*  
*Publisher*

A decrease in the town budget is necessary and imperative. We are only in the beginning of an economic and health crisis different from anything we have ever seen. A 5-10% decrease is needed across ALL budgets but it needs to be done thoughtfully. Unfortunately, because of the limitations in order to get the budget approved, there isn't much time. So, all involved need to embrace cooperation and a desire to work together.

With 30% unemployment statewide, the ability to afford timely tax payments will dwindle. People are already applying to take advantage of the tax deferment offered by the state. Redding is making arrangements to apply for a TAN (Tax Anticipation Note) to bridge the gap, but as the situation gets worse, who knows what will be happening to the average citizen's ability to pay.

Besides the 559 Reddingites who made an initial unemployment claim from March 8- May 8, 2020, countless others have taken a voluntary or involuntary pay cut from 5-30% that will last for the unforeseeable future. It's impossible to measure the extent of these pay cuts and the hardship they will cause. In addition, a great many who have managed not to lose their jobs or take a pay cut, are not expecting a raise any time soon.

It is not fair to ask those undergoing hardships to finance budget increases for anything but what is necessary. This isn't about a savings of \$75 to \$100 per month per family. It's about spending our money wisely.

In my opinion, there are ways to explore to economize and reduce the budget in ways that do not affect the programs for which Redding is known and that parents and students love.

One of the biggest expenditures in the BoE budget is salaries. There is no denying that our administration and tenured teachers are well compensated.

According to information I received from the Finance Director, the increases for 20-21 for Central Office Staff are as follows:

- Superintendent: 2.0%
- Assistant Superintendent: 2.5%
- Director of Finance & Operations: 3.3%
- Human Resources Manager: 4.0%
- All other central office staff: 2.5%

This does not include the perks such as annuities, contributions to 403b contributions, and health insurance.

The Superintendent's base compensation for the current year is \$224,488 plus annuity and other perks.

The Assistant Superintendent made a base salary of 201,765 plus perks and a stipend.

The contracts for the top 3 can be found here:

<https://www.er9.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=237639&pageid=762854>

All Central Office costs are shared equally with the three districts.

I hold the Superintendent in the highest regard and I am not saying that Central Office staff is not worth their compensation, negotiated by members from three boards. But, In a time when a great portion of the town is unemployed or has taken a pay cut, is it really fair to give high paid employees large raises?

I think there should be no wage increases for any Town or School employee for anyone who makes over \$75,000 per year.

I understand that the Board of Education has agreed to set up meetings with the unions to try to renegotiate the contracts (The four unions are Administrators, Certified, Non Certified and Custodians.) I think this is a needed step, even if there isn't time to get this done before the deadline. Teachers are wonderful and very important to our children and families. But, 80% of our staff makes the top step of our pay ladder which I believe is close to \$150,000 plus stipends and extras. They work 180 days a year. They are not immune to what is going on in this crisis and frankly, if everyone else is taking cuts then why shouldn't they?

RES and JRMS had the same administrative staff when the student population was double as they do now. We have an opportunity that we are down one principal. I still think that one principal for both schools with an assistant principal in each would be sufficient. The cost savings of an administrator could save some of our coveted programs.

This is a great step to start to get the budget into shape for this year but we also have to make long term plans for next year and going forward. We are only in the beginning of this crisis and using surplus funds to artificially lower the overall number creates budgetary issues in the next fiscal year and going forward that could lead to catastrophic results. Budgets need to be calculated on the level of expenditures, not on surpluses that are uncertain and unpredictable year to year.

There are one-time factors, such as the savings because of the school closures, that should enable us to attain a closer to flat budget this time. These factors will not be available next year... we hope. That's why all of our budgets need to be in the negative. Each budget needs to be cut, not measured against each other to

balance out to a negative.

Going forward, the Board of Ed needs to stop rubber stamping the budgets and information supplied by the school administration. It's the Superintendent's job to advocate to get the most for the schools but the Board of Ed should be working on the give and take to trim down the costs. A strong school isn't predicated on how much we spend but on other factors such as the quality of staff... having a better balance between older and newer teachers, retiring teachers who don't make the grade, encouraging more parent participation and engaging the community.

The topic of the quality of our special needs services has come up but has the amount we spend actually been analyzed? Do we provide more than the state has mandated? It is up to us to decide on how much service to offer, and that is where we can find cost savings.

The official word from Administration is that people don't target Redding to settle when looking for these services. But, many people have chosen Redding for our excellent Special Needs program. I have heard this personally during conversation with families over the years. But, is the amount we are spending on special services becoming a detriment to the needs of the General Ed Students?

The Board of Finance has been asking the Board of Ed to reexamine and lower the budget for years. It's time for the BoF to demand it.

We have a unique opportunity to right size the lower school budget. We need to take it before the economy and the health crisis get worse.

It's time to be creative. Let's get it done.

From:  Budget 2021  
Vanessa <vanessa.alward@gmail.com>

Tuesday, May 12, 2020 3:13:22 AM



Subject: Fwd: Support schools

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

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We need to support the school budget. Please remember we voted the majority of Democrats in because they continually support the schools. Our town is lovely with gorgeous open space and fantastic schools. The school rankings do help property values, which we are reliant on for taxable revenue. Do the right thing in this tough time.

Vanessa Alward  
Cross Hwy

From:  Budget 2021  
Victoria Winslow <victoria.winslow.33@gmail.com>

Wed, May 13, 2020 1:16:22 PM



Subject: Fwd: Please lower the budget

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

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Respectfully requesting that you lower the town of Redding budget. It is a certainty that we will be leading a very different kind of life for the next year at least. Covid19 will affect our economic situations and the ability/desire for town programs/services. Many people are making sacrifices, the government is putting programs in place to help people get through this difficult time and the town of Redding should do the same.

Thanks for your consideration,  
Victoria Winslow  
729 Redding Rd