



BOARD OF ALDERMEN
CITY OF SHELTON
SPECIAL BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
MAY 14, 2026
SHELTON CITY HALL, 54 HILL STREET, SHELTON, CT
Live Streamed at www.cityofshelton.org

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Alderman Anglace called the Board of Aldermen Special Budget Workshop to order at 7 p.m. in the auditorium at Shelton City Hall. All those present stood and pledged allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Roll Call

Alderman John F. Anglace, Jr., President – Present
Alderman Bernard Simons, Vice President – Present via Zoom
Alderman Lorenzo Durante – Present
Alderman Porter McKinnon – Present
Alderman Anthony Simonetti – Present via Zoom
Alderman Benjamin Perry – Present
Alderman Bryan Lizotte – Present
Alderman Michael Duncan – Present

ADMINISTRATION

Grace Zweig, Finance Director – Present
Ray O’Leary, Treasurer – Present

BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2026-27

Alderman Anglace: Thank you all for coming and being present. Now, the call of this meeting is a workshop essentially to talk about two items that were brought up. And one is Special Education and the second one is healthcare. Now, healthcare, Joe Pinto is coming tonight. Is he here? He is not here and that is not what I want to hear. He’s the key to discussion on this whole thing.

Alderman Duncan: It looks like we do have an email that was sent over with some explanation and run rates and year over year projections. So, I think it will help aid some discussion.

Alderman Anglace: He sent that. As far as it goes, it's wonderful. But we want to talk about the nuances. So, let's talk first about Special Education and what that's all about. And here's what I know.

Two years ago, the Board of Aldermen put into place a reserve account to cover \$1.3 million of Special Ed overages, overruns. By the way, let's start off by saying that this has nothing to do with any of our

opinions or feelings about Special Education. It's an issue that we have to deal with and we deal with it. We are as objective as we can. It has nothing to do with who it is and what it costs and things. So, if something's said that somebody doesn't like, it's unfortunate, but, it's so easy to hurt somebody's feelings in this area. It's so sensitive. And I just want to bring out the sensitivity of it and to make sure everybody who might be listening or have a way of reading your minutes or something just understands that we have to deal with this in a business-like fashion. So, the Board of Education has asked us to consider Special Education and talk about it. The Board of Education, as you can see, normally does put money into their budget to cover Special Education. They have been running roughly, over the last two or three years, a \$1.3 million deficit. This covers Special Education excess costs. Excess costs are over and above what the Board of Ed has to pay. They have so many mandates and things that they have to do and they must do, and they have to spend the money on it. If you don't do it, people have an IEP, which is Individual Education Plan for Special Education Students, and they can enforce it. They can bring you to court. They can contest it. So, one of the things that we did two years ago was we put \$1.3 million into a reserve account to cover this cost. And said, let's see how it goes and how it works. Well, they did exceed the money. They did overspend. They brought it to our attention. And of course, we directed them to the Mayor because the Special Education account that we set up this reserve, we placed it under the city budget which then he has the ultimate authority to spend or not to spend. And he did not release any of that money back to the Board of Education. I can't tell you why, because he didn't share that with me. So, they're asking us to look at it again. Now, meantime, fast forward, this year there was quite a push in Connecticut to address the issue of Special Education. Unfortunately, what the state did, they did nothing to change it, but they did say that they are limiting their Special Education access costs to 68% of something, of your budget, I'm not sure, because they didn't give us anything in writing. So that means we automatically, they look to us to pay the unpaid 32%. So that means \$1.3 million they are looking for us to pay that every year. That's like giving you a mandate, an unfunded mandate, and not passing a law. They write the laws, they make the laws. If they are working, change the law. We pay as much as two, three, four times as much for some Special Ed students as we do for regular education students. So that's the background. That's where we are. And the question is, they want us to look at, will you put any money in this year to a reserve account for Special Ed. I have feelings on it. I understand the need. I understand the reason for it. I think the State has passed this law, made it a law and they responsible. Fund it. If you don't want to fund it change the law.

Alderman McKinnon: For the five years that I been doing this we had the same exact discussion. Until the Democrats and the Teacher's Union and the superintendent's office goes to Hartford and argues this case, we are going to have the same discussion next year and the year after and the year after. We don't control Hartford. The Republicans have no voice whatsoever in Hartford. If we want to change this then it has to happen on a different level. So, I'm asking the teachers union, the Democrats and everybody else who has a voice in Hartford to argue to make this change. Otherwise, we are going to have this discussion until we are blue in the face every year. So, we are going to be obligated to figure out how to pay for this this year. The Board of Ed is going to be obligated to figure out how to pay for this this year for an unfunded mandate from the State of Connecticut. If you want to change it, we have to have this argument at the State level. Otherwise, it's not going to change. So, for five years, we've had the same discussion, and we can have this discussion again today, and we'll have this discussion again next year. So, unless somebody at the State level changes it, and we can't do that because we have no authority. Democrats have a super majority in the state. They're the only ones that can do

anything. We can talk until we are blue in the face. And we did, and they don't do anything. So, to the two Democrats on this board, and to the Teacher's Union that present here, go argue. Go argue at the State to change this so we can pay for this. That is my message.

Alderman Lizotte: I would like to speak from personal experience. When my son was in second grade, he went to St. Joseph's School. I went there, my mom went there, we figured it was a good school. It was a good school. However, when he got into second grade, two weeks into second grade, the teacher called us and said, your son can't read. And we had no idea. We were never told. So, we had the Shelton School System come in and test him. And they determined that he had ADHD and he needed an IEP. So, we transferred him from St. Joe's to ESS. Within three months he could read. And he had an IEP through eighth grade. And he progressed and progressed. We determined he wasn't college material so he went to Emmett O'Brien where he continued with an IEP. He actually got a Presidential Board of Excellence because of his studies. Today he a welder at Electric Boat. We never thought he would go that far because of his learning disabilities. So, I just want you to understand that an IEP is very important.

Alderman McKinnon: I totally understand and that's awesome that he did what he did.

Alderman Lizotte: It's great and the Shelton school system, I give them kudos because they did a great job.

Alderman McKinnon: If the state's going to mandate that, they should fund it.

Alderman Lizotte: I understand. And I hope we can do something to get that. And in the meantime, I think we have to help the school system with it, personally.

Alderman Duncan: So, I hear what you guys are saying. There's a mandate. Got to do it. They're not paying for the full cost. We've got to find a solution. So that's where we are at, right? So, I get what you guys are saying. So, what is the solution? How do we do it? The State most likely won't fund everything. We know that. You've said it for the past five years. Probably going to continue for the next 100 years. And the costs are going to go up, so that means we are going to have to fund more.

Alderman McKinnon: Here's the problem in that statement you just said. It probably going to happen for the next 100 years. We need to change the system and we not going to change the system unless the people in charge change it.

Alderman Duncan: I hear what you saying, that is at the State level. We know that State is not going to fund everything fully, not just Special Education either. So, we are left to deal with the problem. So, we have to work together to find the solution. If they are continuing this overspend by \$1.3 million, we've got to find a solution in the budget for that.

Alderman McKinnon: For this year, next year and maybe the next year but if we don't have this conversation three five ten years from now we need to start making the change at the State level.

Alderman Duncan: Sure, and I'm very happy to help lead with you through the unions and other things to make progress with that from Shelton and the area.

Alderman McKinnon: So, my point is that I don't want to have this conversation in five years. Right now, we can work to figure this out this year, next year, and maybe the next year, but I don't want to have this conversation in five years. And I think I'm putting that on the Democrats and the Teacher's Union who has so much power in this State to change it and imagine what it would do for every school system across the State if this was changed. Imagine what it would do for Hartford, Stamford, Norwalk, New Haven every school system across the State not just Shelton if the system was changed at the State level. That is what I'm talking about – let's change it statewide not just for Shelton, statewide.

Alderman Duncan: As you know they are working on the ECS funding formula while it may be overdue.

Alderman McKinnon: That's a minor couple hundred thousand dollar thing.

Alderman Anglace: I want to be sure we clear that, like Brian brought out his personal example, we are supportive of that. We totally support what they have done and they done marvelous things in the school system. But the sneaky way the State comes about doing this, they pass the law and then they say we have decided we are only going to fund 68% of the excess cost. They know there's going to be excess costs. Now we can't budget for this. You can't budget. You don't know how many people you're going with problems, what issues, what they're going to be. It's so hard to budget at the local level for it and the State has the same problem. Call us or talk to us and say, look, can we somehow share the cost of the balance, or something like that, some alternatives. That's what we need to put alternatives forward because picking up \$1.3 this year may be more next year. I mean, Wayne Bragg said, Special Ed costs could be as much as four times what a normal student would cost us. And he is right because just sending somebody to another school out of the area is a \$100,000 a year. Then maybe the State should focus on overseeing those costs, those education costs. Maybe you should reign them in and say you can't charge any more than \$50,000 or something like that. Let's give them some alternative ideas. Let's help the process. We are not opposed to the process. We are not sitting here talking against it. We are saying, give them still what they need, but let's talk about the funding. The State doesn't invite us up to talk about it. If you talk to the Republicans that represent us up there, they tell us that we never had a chance to sit down and talk about it, unfortunately. So, does that summarize where we are? I don't think we can continue funding it, to be honest with you, \$1.3 million. I have my hands full just trying to negotiate a reasonable resolution of our budget to give them enough to do what they got to do and any money left over, the Board of Education, they'll use it all up. I don't know how they funded the 1.3 million, I know this, that two years ago when we gave them the \$1.3, they come back and they asked the mayor to release the \$1.3 to handle the excess cost and the Mayor wouldn't do it. So that money still sits in the budget rolls over.

Alderman Duncan: I want to understand this correctly. You are saying to remove or not have the \$1.3 sit in a reserve account. Is that what I'm hearing.

Alderman Anglace: For us not to fund it. We didn't fund it last year.

Alderman Duncan: I want to make sure I understand this correctly. So, we are not putting it into the Board of Education budget, right? But is it sitting in a reserve account outside? You are saying no, we are not doing that either?

Alderman Anglace: That's correct.

Alderman Duncan: And why is that?

Alderman Anglace: Well, we did it two years ago. And the mayor wouldn't release the money. So, what are we doing? If we fund it again, all we are doing is taking it someplace else. And he won't release the money. It will just stay in the general fund, the general fund surplus.

Alderman Duncan: And what do we do when the Special Education costs come in to get paid? Where does that...

Alderman Anglace: I don't know how the Board of Education handles it. But according to the Mayor, from time to time, he must think they got a lot of money, extra money to handle it in their budget.

Alderman Duncan: Do you have any idea of how that's handled?

Grace Zweig: The State mandated that the Board of Education has to be funded by the municipalities. The state mandated that municipalities have to pay any excess costs and the only obligation the Board of Ed has is to notify that they are going to be going over the budget.

Alderman Duncan: So, it's kind of how they manage the health care cost or whatever. If they're going over, they give us 30 day's notice and notify us.

Grace Zweig: Right, but they have to try to minimize any expenses that they have for the rest of the year. The obligation that they have.

Alderman Durante: I just wanted to say some time ago, I think it was last year, or the year before, that we had challenges of finding out who actually lived in Shelton and would be approved for the services and who you know was from out of town and was not taking advantage of our services but our services were better. I thought at that time we were asking Board of Ed to just see what else we can do. I don't know if that was ever mentioned. At some point that happened and it is not fair to our constituents and our Board of Ed students that really need the services, but I think those towns need to take responsibility for those. I don't know where we came with that.

Alderman Simonetti: We looked into that many times and we are not having the difficulty that people have brought up or proposed. So, I don't think that a problem with people from out of the City. We have a truant office that is supposed to be chasing those down when anybody comes into town. The Special Ed program is close to me because my wife was 35 years in the program and was an administrator for the last 15 years she was there. You actually have some Special Ed people actually working for the City of Shelton and doing an excellent job I might add because I visit them very often.

The school does an excellent job, their teachers are qualified, their paras are wonderful. There is no doubt about that. The problem lies with the State. We don't have any control over the State at this time. We can only ask people to vote to stop putting Democrats in but that is as far as we can go. We can ask the unions to help us out, and I'm in on doing that. I'll go to speak before them. I would think it would be to their advantage if more money came from the State, then they would be able to take advantage of those funds for better care. The only thing I will say is we had the Ripton School, which was situated where the Board of Education offices are now. I was completely against closing the Ripton School because it did take care of a lot of those students that have now been put into the system or into the regular classrooms that maybe would have saved us some funds there. I would also like to know the SPA, the new program, started about three years ago and we gave them near \$500,000. There are 40 seats in that building, supposedly and my understanding, the last time Mr. Saranich was before us, only 16 or 18 were filled. I'd like to see that program expanded to save us funds and also to bring in students from other cities that would pay the City of Shelton. Following John Anglace's comments, it's not just that we have to send them to another school, we have to provide the transportation. The Mayor has bought several smaller buses to do that to save us on that but there are some students, because of their special needs, have to go to the schools and special buses. I don't know if we have them anymore but we also had students at one time living in St. Vincent's Hospital and that was an extremely expensive situation for those students. They also upped the amount of time we have to take care of a student. After they graduated at 18, we have to take care of them now until 22, not 21. So, there is cause to say that we've been put upon by the State of Connecticut, and we do need relief. Those are my comments.

Alderman Anglace: The fact that what Lorenzo brought up, the Board of Education was faced with, when school started, with something like 90 Special Education students, and about half of them, if I recall correctly, about half of them were from out of town and were being transported here. When somebody comes and presents themselves to your school you know they have to accept them and they have to vet them and take care of them. They said some of the problems were related to getting help in other communities where it wasn't as good as it is here, so they decided to come here. And the Board of Education didn't have to deal with it, so they can't budget for it, because you don't know what to expect. You just don't know how many kids are going to show up at your doorstep.

Ray O'Leary: Last year, 2025, they had 924 Special Ed students. So that's at the end of 25. I don't know the numbers for 26. At the time there were 4,581 students. 924, which is 20.2%. I don't know what it is now. 10 years ago, it was 647.

Alderman Simonetti: We are looking at a situation where what was 1 in 250 maybe 30 years ago went to 1 in 200, then 1 in 150, then 1 in about 110, and now went to 1 in 75. It's now at 1 in 31 children have a diagnosis of some autism. It could be a very simple thing, or it could be a very complicated situation where a student may want to run from the room and they have to keep the door locked or keep someone at the door, depending on the person. So, 900 is a large number. It used to be probably 400 when I think my wife was there some 10 years ago, she left in 2022. So, it's possible that it's gained quite a bit. Because the testing is done and all the parent has to say is I want my child tested. Then we have to spend about \$4500 to test them. In other states except Massachusetts the student has to be tested on the outside and the results brought to the school to see if an IEP is required.

Ray O'Leary: We can't contest it either. We have no idea. That is why they come here. This is an excellent school system, and they do a very good job. That's why they want them here. And we can say or intimate that they're not really, it's a very mild case, and they shouldn't be a Special Ed and we can say that, but it doesn't mean anything. They are a Special Ed student, period.

Alderman McKinnon: Again, that is something that needs to be argued at the state level, with the Teacher's Union and the Democrats. we are the only state like Anthony said, New York, New Jersey, I guess Massachusetts not, but Rhode Island, New Hampshire, all the states around us have the reverse situation and we the only state the burden of proof is on the City versus the parents. And that can change a lot. And like Ray said, if it's a very mild case, maybe they don't qualify for this. But we can't contest it because it would cost us and I seem to remember Ken Saranich saying a few years ago that the cost to contest it is in the hundreds of thousands of dollars and it's not worth contesting it.

Alderman Simonetti: We would also pay a special attorney's group to do that is my understanding so they're not at the fee that we pay our City attorney.

Alderman McKinnon: Again, it is something that has to be changed at the state level to make a difference to everyone, again not just Shelton but every city in the state of Connecticut would benefit if we could change this.

Alderman Anglace: Let's just summarize it by saying we have demonstrated over the years that we are willing to work with the Board of Education. And unfortunately, this is going in the opposite direction. They won't change the law. So, I think what we have to do is we have to send a message to Hartford. You are not going to bully us into picking up the added costs when they are not mandatory. They are your costs. You have created them, and they are good for a good reason. They serve a good purpose. Pay for it. Then all we are contesting is where it's paid. Who pays it?

Alderman Duncan: So, I just kind of want to regroup and get us all grounded. We were talking about the fraud or misuse of services in Shelton, and I think Mr. Simonetti had said that while that may have happened in the past, it kind of has been controlled or reduced. Is that correct, Mr. Simonetti?

Alderman Simonetti: I believe it has been controlled and that they're checking more than they were in the past, so that it's not an issue. You can always ask the superintendent for that information, but I think they are very careful about that. ID, et cetera. Not that it couldn't happen. There are some people that are pretty sneaky, but I don't believe that anybody's doing it right this minute.

Alderman Duncan: Right, because I was going to say there should be a lot of controls in place to make sure that doesn't happen. And then, again, things can happen, and, you know, hopefully there's procedures in place to limit that. And then from the State level, I hear you guys in that. I would like to task all of us that we work together to lobby the state to do something about it instead of sitting here and just complaining. Can we all agree to that?

Alderman Anglace: Would you like to do something beyond that? Would you like to draft a letter that we can all look at and sign to the State like we did earlier this year?

Alderman Duncan: That would be great but we are going to need to do a lot more than that. I think you guys know that. So, sending a letter is going to be great, but we are going to have to work together to really do something a little bit more impactful. And then, from our finance director, we on the hook for the bill. So, by us not funding the Special Education in the budget the way that it going to need to we still getting the bill anyways. So, are you saying that you just want to defer the money to the general fund and let the bill come in, or do we want to properly budget for it? I'm just trying to make sure I'm following the bouncing ball here.

Alderman Anglace: What is the finance director saying? When these bills come in, they come into the Board of Education, am I right?

Grace Zweig: Yes.

Alderman Anglace: Okay, that is their expenditure, not ours. They're not the City side.

Grace Zweig: The State mandates that we have to pay the excess of the budget that we give them, and the only obligation they have, that the Board of Ed has, is to notify us that they are going to be exceeding their budget and cut back costs.

Alderman Duncan: So, they're required to do an audit of their funds to save costs somewhere, and when they can't, then they say we can afford this, please help us. So, if we don't put money aside in a reserve account or into their budget, if they consistently come back to us year on year for the money it going to continue to happen until the state says here goes a check to cover these costs. So, we need to properly budget for this otherwise it going to go to the general fund if I understanding this correctly.

Alderman Anglace: When we properly budget, properly budget means passing it on to our taxpayers, which is what we are trying to avoid. The State has got a lot of tricks up their sleeve, where they pass money, make it mandatory for us to pay it and pass it on to our taxpayers. And many times, I believe, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities has pointed out that the school districts throughout Connecticut are funding 57% of education's budget. They want more help from the State, and that is what they lobbied for this year. And this particular issue fell on deaf ears. They did make some changes to their credit but what are we supposed to do about it? Just turn over and say okay we will fund it.

Alderman Duncan: I mean, we are kind of in that position now. I mean, either we budget for it or we get the bill anyways. So, it'll eat into our reserves.

Alderman Anglace: And I don't know how the mayor handles it or how the Board of Education handles it. I just don't know.

Ray O'Leary: Can I just make a comment, personal? What Mike is saying and Porter, it comes back to the formula, it really comes back to that formula. We all know the State's response. It's their education

system. It's their responsibility. It comes back to the formula, and John's right. If you have 20,000 students, it's \$100,000 before you get 68% back. So, we have to spend \$100,000 or more for that student to get back 68%. So now you take your 20,000 students, and you have to spend \$100,000 to put them in the formula. Per student. So now, if they're not at \$100,000, then you pay. That's where John comes in with this 32%. So now, every student, we don't have a list of students. We know there's 924. 924, I think they gave us back \$1.3 million and change. I think I have \$1.3. But that's what they gave the City back and it has to go to the different accounts.

Alderman Perry: Who reports that to the State?

Ray O'Leary: There is a series of reports, and I want to get in the middle of those too, submitted twice a year, and Grace is going to help me, that goes to the State. Now here's what happens. When it goes to the state, they apply their formula. Now their formula is where the issue is. I'm telling you, we know the responsibility is the State. Now the State prepares a formula. Their formula. What they do is they run it through the formula, come up with 4.5 times the 20, and you up to that \$100,000. Then they start looking at how many of those you have and then they add those up and at the end of their formula, now this is not part of the direct formula, there's a couple of things on the end that really make a difference, they look at your ability to pay. Now that's your database, that's your base, that's your taxpayers. In addition to that, then they want to look at the next step, which is your family income. Those two things move us. Last year they moved us. We were 76. We are now 62. Now, 62 in the state out of 130 some, 62 in the State allows us to get back 62 and that keeps us in the same bracket, which says if you're in the middle, which we are, we stayed in the middle at 62 and 76, we get back 88%. Somebody like Bridgeport or New Haven, they get back 100 or 100 plus.

Alderman Perry: So being fiscally responsible, you get penalized.

Ray O'Leary: Exactly. And what they did is and, again, I not blaming the Democrats or Republicans, I blaming the damn legislature and the State because at the end of that formula which it makes sense they had those two things and that is the base. Now, our base went up by \$2 billion from 8 to 10. So that puts us from 76 to 62. Luckily, we just made it in the middle or we'd be getting back less. So that's where I'm agreeing with everything you're saying that has to be done, and that's a perfect example of what to do. But that formula is the key. Those things on the end knock us right out of a good return. And we are fiscally responsible. What an excellent job we do financially. Excellent job. And you pay for it. You pay for it. And they added it at the end of that formula.

Alderman Duncan: Thank you. We definitely clearly need to work with you to understand the formula a little bit better. With the Special Education budget running over about \$1.3 million every year, from your perspective what should we do with this? Clearly there some sentiment that we shouldn't put it on the budget, we still required to pay for it.

Ray O'Leary: Historically, having been on the board and I was chairman and we did go through this and I went through this many number of times. There is only one reason they do this and they want the taxpayers to pay the bill. Then they decide that the taxpayers are really homeowners. So, you have a base of \$10 billion. That says that's what they determined is going to be the base for all their

calculations. So, any time you change the base, which is a good thing, and you have healthy income coming in, that's another good thing, and your houses went up and that is another good thing, all these things you're doing well now hampers your ability to get money back from the State. That's them copping out and saying, I don't want to pay it because you can pay your own. But it's still the taxpayer. So, you're asking me what I would do is there is not much you can do except change the damn formula and stop penalizing the homeowner and the taxpayer for a responsibility that's the State. And I think one of the best things that's going on, and I don't think it's going to change much, is that 100-person committee you're putting together. I would hope, and if you want to have some input on that, I would hope that it gets well represented by the people within the towns, not democratic appointments.

Alderman Duncan: So, in the short term, we are talking about budget for next year.

Ray O'Leary: Well, that's why you guys make the big money. There's only one thing. I do long-range planning for a living my whole business life with the banking institutions. One of the worst things when I came on from the banking and doing that environment, one of the worst things I ran into when the City is, and the Board of Ed, I was on the Board of Ed first, is when you do long range planning, the first thing you start with is not expenses. You start with where do you want to go, how do you want to get there, and those type of things. But then you have to generate income. So based on your income you start spending some money where if you not there now you have to spend money in marketing. So, all of this depends on income. Guess what the Board of Ed has for income; I think it was \$12,000 last year. They don't have any income. It comes back to the City, and it comes back to the taxpayers, and that's why the mayor's sitting there saying, spend the money, let the Board of Ed spend the money. I didn't understand where he's coming from. I didn't like it when I was on the Board. Spend the money, and I have the thing that I gave to John a while back that says, I can read it to you, but it says we should be looking at this quarterly so that at the end of calendar quarter, the end of March, the April report tells us where you are, what did you budget, how much did you get back, and what are you projected to be by year end. Now, that means in April the Board of Ed is looking at their numbers. We are looking at their numbers. No surprise here for the Board of Aldermen, the Mayor or them, and all of a sudden they now know it's April, with March's numbers and where we are going to be at year end, we can all plan better. Much better, actually. So anyway, there are no real answers unless they change that we going to have to pay some way and Mayor in charge of money.

Alderman Anglace: That came about as a result of the meeting with the Board of Education, not the entire board but members, at a finance committee meeting, remember? and Ray put it in writing and said, look, if you can follow this, so he sent it to them and asked them to focus on it and see if we can help. All that's going to do is to tell us we need to put more money in, and here's how much, and it's more accurate. But it's been running about \$1.3 million a year.

Ray O'Leary: They got back in 2025 if you look at some of the numbers, I think uh in three areas the three areas that the state repays, they got back \$1.3 million. We are going to make sure that \$1.3 million that they are getting back is in the budget and netted the expense down because it in for example the 1560 accounts, for example professional development we got back \$767 and change from the State, under that 2% Education Cost Sharing program we got back \$170,300, under tuition and ECS

we got \$395,644. All those three total \$1.333,000 that reduced those three expenses which is equal to about the \$1.3 that was there, so like half came back of what was spent.

Alderman Anglace: I'd like to stop this discussion about Special Ed and go right to the heart of the matter, which is the request from the Board of Education and the office of the Superintendent for almost \$10 million. Can we go there now?

Alderman Anglace: No, we've got one other issue to take care of first, and that's the healthcare.

Alderman Perry: Joe Pinto's not here and we have a workshop, but I really thought Joe Pinto was going to be here tonight to give us some insight. He's a key to the meeting.

Alderman Anglace: I called him twice and reminded him. And let me tell you, he didn't tell me this, but I think somebody else didn't want him here.

Alderman Perry: Well, then why are we all sitting around here?

Alderman Anglace: Well, I think he sent us the information that he did, but that's without any verbiage. Last year he came and was very helpful, very informative about the insurance, very informative about the program and how it works, and we got to ask him questions. His absence is disappointing, to say the least.

Alderman Duncan: Yeah, after our last meeting, I compiled all the questions. I informed all of you, sent it to him so he can come prepared. And we got this email back, but it doesn't address all the questions we have.

Alderman Anglace: I think maybe we should tell Joe that the Board of Aldermen was very disappointed. It is a major issue, a major expense. What the Board of Education, what this handout shows is that the Board of Education has been spending \$8.2 million roughly out of their budget for the last three or four years and they're still running a deficit over and above that. Now, my understanding for what Joe said last year is monthly you get the cost runs and you see rising costs, lower costs over what you're projecting and sometimes they can low. So, you get mixed feelings throughout the year where you're going to be. And the Board of Education, as I understand it, their responsibility under law is if they suspect a deficit to project that out and to inform the fiscal authority of the City about it. A lot of good that does us. They're going to go so deep. I believe the superintendent told us that they're projecting for this year \$4.5 million. Mayor, when you talk to the Mayor, honestly, I don't think we are getting enough information from the Mayor.

Alderman Perry: I apologize, and I don't mean to cut you off, but going into this meeting tonight, I was assured Joe Pinto was going to be here. I was really looking for some hard numbers from Joe Pinto. Going off of this and taking Ken, I'm not discrediting Ken whatsoever, but I wanted the hard facts from Joe Pinto. This way we could have got to the bottom of it. This meeting tonight to me is a huge disappointment. I don't even know where I'm really sitting here.

Alderman Anglace: Yeah, without him. Without him we are nothing.

Alderman McKinnon: Can I just add that I think we are scheduled to vote on this budget in a week. A week from tonight. And I think this is what broken about our system is that we don't have conversations. We don't sit down with the Board of Ed across the table and have a back and forth. They sit at this table, we sit up there, they say their stuff, we ask them a couple questions, but we don't sit down and have conversations. I've negotiated hundreds of contracts and things in my life and I've never been in a situation like this how the City works with our budget. I don't know how this ever happens and it drives me crazy. I asked the Board of Ed a couple very simple questions, very simple questions and their response was I'm sorry I can't answer your questions. This drives me crazy. I don't know how we are going to vote on a budget in a week that we can't sit here and why Ken's not here and Jim Feehan and everybody and it might be four hours that we are talking, but going back and forth and banter and discuss and ask questions and all this stuff. And it doesn't happen. And it drives me crazy. It happened with the Teacher's Union discussions last summer. It's the same thing. Nobody is allowed to talk. That drives me crazy. I just wanted to make that public and how frustrating it is that we sit here and we try to negotiate a budget without negotiating with the other parties. It just doesn't make sense to me. So, again, the fact that the Board of Ed doesn't want to answer my questions just makes it more difficult for me to make a decision next week. The fact that we are sitting here without the guy from the healthcare, Joe Pinto, makes it harder to make a decision next week. The fact that the Mayor is not a part of this makes it harder to make a decision next week. It is so frustrating and after five years of doing this I at my wit end. I don't know how the City manages to do this year after year the way that we do it. So that's just a statement I want to make.

Ray O'Leary: Can I just had one thing. I would suggest you get the March 31st statements from the Board. You'll know in nine months where they are with 2025. Let's get the projections. Where they are now, next three months and next year's projections.

Alderman Perry: Thank you very much.

ADJOURNMENT

Alderman Perry MOVED to adjourn the Board of Aldermen Meeting. Seconded by Alderman Duncan.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (8-0). Meeting adjourned at 8 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Donna Fonda

Donna Fonda
Acting Clerk, Board of Aldermen