



BOARD OF ALDERMEN
SHELTON, CONNECTICUT
**SPECIAL PUBLIC HEARING ON THE BUDGET
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MAY 13, 2019**

CALL TO ORDER

Alderman John Anglace called the meeting of the Board of Aldermen to order at 7:00 p.m. All those present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Roll Call

Alderman John F. Anglace, Jr., President – present
Alderman Eric McPherson, Vice President – present
Alderman David Gidwani – present
Alderman Stanley Kudej – present
Alderman Noreen McGorty – not present
Alderman Cris Balamaci – present
Alderman Jimmy Capra – present
Alderman Anthony Simonetti –present

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Budget Fiscal Year 2019-2020

CITY OF SHELTON

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

PURSUANT TO SECTION 7.6 OF THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF SHELTON, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN WILL CONDUCT A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020 **ON MONDAY, MAY 13, 2019 AT 7:00 PM IN THE AUDITORIUM** AT SHELTON CITY HALL, 54 HILL STREET, SHELTON, CT 06484.

ALL PERSONS WHO HAVE AN INTEREST THEREIN MAY APPEAR AND BE HEARD IN RELATION THERETO. COPIES OF THE PROPOSED BUDGET ARE ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE.

WRITTEN COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS MAY ALSO BE SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN AND MUST BE RECEIVED PRIOR TO THE PUBLIC HEARING.

ANTICIPATED REVENUES

Government Grants	8,479,958
Local Taxes	109,931,884
Other Local Revenue	8,098,688
General Fund Surplus	1,988,979

TOTAL ANTICIPATED REVENUES 128,499,509

PROPOSED EXPENDITURES

Administrative Office	614,187
Employees Resources	6,894,239
Legislative	153,319
Board of Ethics	600
Elections	158,906
Inland/Wetlands	93,494
Economic Development Commission	39,501
Economic Development - SEDC	100,000
Planning & Zoning	408,050
Recreation	1,671,030
Probate Court	13,960
Elected/Appointed Officials	18,450
Conservation Commission	65,913
City/Town Clerk	355,127
Public Employees Appeals Board	200
Senior Center	388,346

May 13, 2019 Board of Aldermen
Special Public Hearing on the Budget

Drug & Alcohol Commission	1
Zoning Appeals Board	27,305
Corporation Counsel	200,971
Public Safety	100,672
EMS Commission	131,239
Fire Marshal	289,431
Animal Control	253,245
Fire Department	999,928
Police Department	7,660,994
Youth Service	210,860
Public Health	293,569
Building Department	245,609
Highways & Bridges	3,721,305
Road Repairs	50,000
Public Works Director	51,480
Engineering	273,422
Tree Warden	115,000
Recycling Program	36,702
Sanitation	2,591,020
Library	1,226,951
Debt Service	10,882,960
Utilities	2,778,679
Building Maintenance	1,472,647
Management Information Services	449,017
Assessor	577,266
Tax Collector	294,256
Purchasing	357,887
Public Risk Management	2,311,698
Accounting	535,437

Community Development	81,116
Miscellaneous	1,365,306
Capital Spending	0
Outside Agency Contributions	368,518
Transfer to Other Funds Capital Projects	0
Contingency	150,000
BOE Bus Transportation	3,381,146
<u>TOTAL EXPENDITURES - CITY DEPARTMENTS</u>	<u>54,460,959</u>

**TOTAL EXPENDITURES - BOARD OF
EDUCATION** **74,038,550**

TOTAL PROPOSED EXPENDITURES **128,499,509**

Alderman Anglace noted that Alderman McGorty could not attend due to a death in the family and had to be out of town but wanted it to be noted.

Alderman Anglace reviewed the public hearing procedure

- Speaking Order - Determined by sign-up sheet.
- Introduce yourself – state your name and address for the record.
- Each speaker has up to five (5) minutes (longer presentations should be submitted to the clerk in writing with ten (10) copies provided.)
- Decorum – The Public Hearing is a formal occasion requiring courteous attention to other speakers, regardless of their views. Do not applaud or indicate pleasure or displeasure with another’s remarks.
- If another speaker has made your point, you may indicate that you agree with the remarks of one or more previous speakers.
- Each speaker shall have one opportunity to be heard.

Alderman Anglace asked the audience if anyone wished to speak.

Rich Naylor, 19 Oak Glen Drive: I have two children in school, and I am concerned about the budget. Every year we seem to be fighting and never get

any increases to the school system. This year every department, other than the school system, is getting increases. Just doing some research and what other towns in the area are spending it seems we are out of line with spending on per pupil basis. Our budget, in 2018, was \$14,864 per student. The state average was almost \$17,000. The towns neighboring us, they are ranked, by great schools, our town for Shelton High is ranked a 7 out of 10. All of our neighboring towns, Masuk, Trumbull, Fairfield are all 9 out of 10, so it's a much more higher quality rating and I would just love to see Shelton get to that level. It doesn't take much, we are a big town, we have a lot of resources here, so it would be minimal tax increases just to help that along. So I would appreciate the consideration of actually trying to do that because it is going to benefit our community because once you have a great school system people are going to want to come to your town, they are going to want to buy houses in your town and property values are going to go up. Property values are going to go up and taxes are going to go up from that, assuming your mill rate stays the same. But more people are going to want to come to your town. The elderly, maybe they don't want to pay more taxes, but they would realize that in the end, when they want to sell their home, it will be worth more in value, so those are my major points. Thank you.

Alderman Anglace: Thank you.

Dr. Darlis Ritter, 157 Long Hill Cross Road: Hi everyone, my name is Dr. Darlis Ritter. I live at 157 Long Hill Cross Road. I am a resident and BOE member who is here to ask the BOA to please restore some monies to the Police account and the Street Department. Not only do these departments serve the residents of our city but they may be called upon to play a crucial role for the safety and transportation of our students. I am appreciative their committed involvement to serve both the adults and students of our city. The public doesn't realize that we use all the departments in the City of Shelton to make the school system what it is. And I think they need a little more money because we are using their time and services. Thank you.

Alderman Anglace: Thank you.

Andrew Connolly, 13 Princess Terrace: Good evening, my name is Andrew and I am a senior at Shelton High School, and I am here to ask you, to please, for the sake of future generations, please increase the funding to the Shelton Public Schools district. I am graduating this year, and I could have as easily said that this issue no longer pertains to me, or that my journey here was over, but I did not. This issue is one of the utmost importance. The children are the future of this planet and they deserve the very best. When I hear that there are proposed budget cuts or a fail to match the requested education budget request do you know what that tells me? The students hear that you don't care. That's what we hear. You don't care about us and our future. You don't care about our dreams and hopes. You don't. It is as simple as that. Childhood is the most important stage of development. We, the children of the world, spend a great deal of time

during this stage in school. We though, fall behind when we do not have access to the necessary resources. We have textbooks that are missing pages and falling apart. We had some history textbooks so old, that one of the most life changing events of the 21st century, September 11th, did not exist in them. We have books in English that we read that were printed before my parents were born. They are tattered and torn, but we cannot get new ones. We have laptop carts that take 40 minutes to get working. A school period is 46 minutes. Why does this happen? You do not give us, the future of America, the funding we need. The budget also effects extracurriculars. School is a time when children learn who they are, and what they wish to be, and this is often done after school, and school clubs or sports. Now I want to ask you all a few questions, and please think about the answers in your head. How many of you attended a football game this year? But how many of you noticed that one senior could not play this year, in his final season because he could not afford pay to play? You had "proposed aid" but the expense often falls on children for clubs, and their salary is not reported. This senior did not get to play in his final season of perhaps his life, for budget cuts forced pay to play. How many of you saw photos from the SHS winter semi-formal? But how many of you noticed the walls were covered with scraps of fabric donated from a theatre as opposed to decorations we make from paper, for guess what? There was no paper we could find in the building. Rolls of paper were not reordered, so no club or teacher had any more to use. We just had scraps from last year. How many of you saw Extraordinary Changes Club trying to promote kindness this year with assorted events? Who realized most of the paper we used to spread positive messages was donated by officers or members? Or that the face paint for pink month was purchased and donated by myself for the club. Why? We did not want to enforce club dues when kids had larger expenses to worry about in sports for pay-to-play. Who saw the amazing production of Chicago last month at Shelton High? Did you realize the drama club is not only completely self-funded, but they have purchased most of the lights and lighting and sound boards in the auditorium, and graciously let others use their supplies? Who saw the art show last month? The art teachers have to limit student creativity to save supplies for they never know if they will get stuff. Did you all attend all of these events? Guess what? I did. Guess what? Most of my peers did. Guess what? We can do amazing things. The children in this town, and the teachers, are absolutely amazing. Could you imagine though what we could do with the proper supplies and funding? Our scores would skyrocket, and we know the city wants to look good. Well good scores would help the city look good. Our athletes and artists would thrive. They could pursue their passions as they please, and teachers could encourage them even more so than they do. So, I ask you today, please show us that we matter. Please give us the resources we so desperately need. For I know one thing, I've been taught one thing every year in every class, and that is, stand up for what I believe in, and this fall, in my very first election, I will be filling out an absentee ballot from college, and I will be voting for those representatives every year who support education.

Alderman Anglace: Andrew, if you don't mind could you give your comments to the clerk? Thank you Andrew.

Judson Crawford, 8 Jordan Avenue: As you stated, Mr. Anglace, that the budget is in the hands of the City Town Clerk. Looking at it, under account 4200, there is no back up documentation. I have questions to be presented to you people. How many drivers and monitors will be hired? It seems that the City of Shelton is taking over the bus contracts. Will they be hired as full time or as part time employees? Will the drivers be hired at the current wage that Durham Transportation has just proposed? Also, will the monitors, that will be hired, are they going to be appropriated the same as the contract for, under Durham that came before them and was ratified. Thank you.

Alderman Anglace: Thank you.

Lauren Moore, 5 White Birch Court: Over the past year I have taken time to try to understand the role of the BOA. As you know I attend most of the meetings, probably all of them. I have asked questions, I have met with city officials, I have done my research. I will not stand up here tonight, like last year, and demand you fully fund the BOE budget. What I am going to ask you tonight is to fairly fund the BOE budget. After attending your meetings, I will say that I do understand that Mayor Lauretti's budget proposal did not flat fund the BOE budget and there is that transportation savings that is in there. Another fact that I believe came out of some of the meetings I attended, is that other city departments are receiving a 2 to 2 1/2% increase per pay. The teachers are receiving a 3% increase to their salaries. If funding is not provided to cover some of the increase other areas will suffer. This is just a fact; the money needs to come from somewhere. I would also like to touch on technology. Dr. Clouet has provided you with a technology and textbook request. I know that one to one pilot program has been mentioned and some questions have come up in your meetings about that. I will tell you, most of the questions that you all have about the one to one pilot program, has been addressed in BOE meetings. Topics such as insurance, Chrome Book repairs, the different uses. It's all been covered. I hope all of you are as optimistic as I am that quarterly meetings between the boards will be extremely beneficial. I do ask that you consider to fully fund Dr. Clouet's technology and textbook request. It's truly truly needed. I hear it often, from my 12-year-old, about the importance of Chrome Books in the classroom. Mental Health Resources in our community. I am going to try to stick to the facts here. As you all know I am passionate about the increasing mental health resources in our community as a whole, not just within the BOE resources. Dr. Clouet has a School Psychologist in his budget request. Just last week my husband and I were attending a meeting during school hours and during our meeting a student was being taken to the blue room at school. There was screaming, the child was in distress. At one point the kicking was so hard that my husband felt that wall would come into the conference room that we were in. I guarantee you many parents behind me don't even realize that is what goes on

today in school. I don't believe one School Psychologist is enough, but the fact is there is one School Psychologist in his budget request, and at the very least the minimum, if you guys could fund that position, I could tell you it is greatly needed. In closing I understand you all have a very hard and challenging decision to make, you will do what's in the best interest of all residents, not just what's in the interest of residents of school age children. I've witnessed firsthand, residence coming up to some of you saying, "please don't raise my taxes". I know it's said, I know it's not an exaggeration, I know I've heard it first hand when I have been with some of you. Unfortunately, that time has come though. Taxes need to be increased and please, like Dr. Ritter was saying, don't take from the Police Department or the Youth Service Bureau. I have done the research, this is not the answer. An appropriate mill increase and a fairly funded department budgets is what's needed. Thank you.

Alderman Anglace: Thank you.

Bill Silverstein, 10 Kimberly Drive: I listened to quite a few people here and agree with quite a few points, but I wanted to talk to you guys from the business side, I am a businessman I work for a billion-dollar company, run a division. I am missing something here on some of the financial sides that are not being addressed. Mayor Lauretti has asked for a mill rate increase, I get that. It's going to affect all of us. But how come he is not asking for the additional amount needed to cover what is being asked for the contracts that are in place to accommodate that rates of increase for his teachers? So, you're getting half of your money, why not increase for all of your money. So, to me, you are missing an obligation on the second side of the contracts in place, got it. But then when the money that is coming in, why is it not being allocated to the school system. For me if the school system is not one of the 3 best things in this town to fund, we are missing something as a business. Just (inaudible) when monies come in we fund it and keep things going and we have to make things work at the end, it's not a profit, it makes it work, it balance. Enough money comes in enough money goes out but accommodate the things. When I moved to this town twenty years ago, when I put two students, two children through the school. That third one, I am worried about what he's going to be neglected, that he will not have a chance to experience going forward. So, I just wanted to talk to you about a business side of the aspect.

Alderman Anglace: Thank you.

Missy Mosher, 41 Brook Pine Drive: I basically echo what everyone else has said, pleading for the schools. I have a daughter in the innovation program, who has been thriving since it started. She is one of the original students that started in that program. Programs like that don't come along without funding. Luckily it is being maintained, I hope, but who knows. It has been a great opportunity for kids to learn a different way, a better way to go forward in the future, be successful adults in this world. If we don't fund the schools, there will be no more programs

like this, or any other innovative programs. It will just be cut, cut, cut. Average inflation is about 2 1/2% across the board, in this country. People expect some sort of increase to help with inflation. If that doesn't happen your flat funded or you get less than that, it's like losing money. So, you have to go and keep cutting. So again, I echo with what the last speaker said, with understanding, or two speakers ago. There is only so much to go around, you have to make decisions, it's tough decisions but you know, I think we are getting tired of beating our head against the wall. It would be great if for once education could win. Thank you.

Alderman Anglace: Thank you.

David Ferrara, 22 Trolley Bridge Road: I would like to start off by thanking the BOA for continuing to keep an open mind regarding the budget, and obviously because it's part of the City Charter, hosting a public hearing. I would also like to thank my friends and everyone Shelton family here tonight to express how each dollar towards the Shelton Public School System makes a difference in their lives, their families live and all of us here in Shelton. I am a senior at Shelton High School. I have lived in Shelton all my life, from being at Sunnyside in kindergarten to being a high school graduate just a month from today. Being a senior, I will be attending college this fall. I hope to pursue law school. My future ahead is not only thanks to my parents but because of the commitment, resilience and guidance that each member of the school system has given me and each of my peers over the last 13 years. This dedication of my teachers has proved itself through the obstacles that they have been able to overcome despite a lack of funding and a limited resource available to them. I am an advanced placement, also known as an AP student, and I have the opportunity to take college level courses in high school. This year though, due to the restraints on the budget, I had my UCONN, early college experience course teacher, not have enough text books for every student. She was making do with limited paper, I know Andrew had mentioned that earlier, she made do with the limited paper supplies and found a way to teach the course without using a textbook. But this isn't the case for every course, and this isn't going to be able to be the case going forward. I've been told and I've heard, from different teachers and from students around that students will be required to purchase their textbooks using their own money, in the years coming forward, because of the lack of funding. In my advanced placement science courses, there were required labs for the national curriculum. My teachers, over the years, were forced to purchase the materials with their own money and then hope to receive a reimbursement over time, from the school. Not only all this, when it comes to advanced placement class, the superintendent has made it a mission of his to reduce the difficulty of lower income and disadvantaged students to be able to participate in these college level courses. But with a lack of resources available to them it's going to be impossible for them to actually participate. Focusing a little less on curricular outside of school, I'm an officer for JSA and was also an officer for Student Counsel and participated in Student Counsel. JSA is a national and nonpartisan

organization. We have an active chapter at the high school and on the national level there are regional officers that organize conventions in Washington DC, Boston, New York. These conventions provide the opportunities for students to gain essential leadership and speaking skills that they will carry for a lifetime. I have had the opportunity to participate in these conventions thanks to my parents' salaries. Our chapter in our school has not money to subsidize the cost of the trip. Our friends over in the Amity JSA chapter, from Amity Regional High School, who we had the opportunity to share a bus ride with for two conventions this year. They were fortunate enough to have their school system cover the transportation for the trip. The barrier entry for lower income students, when it comes to extracurricular and field trips and stuff like this was immense. Our trips, one or two day conventions, cost over \$500 each. Whether it be academic or extracurricular, the restrictions of having a limited school budget have been obvious since day one. However, that is not to say that we in Shelton have not found a ways for us to work with what's in front of us. My friends, my classmates and my teachers have the tenacity to succeed with a limited budget. If we are successful today with a limited budget, I ask all of you to consider the accomplishments that would be possible with just a little bit more money tomorrow and I ask that you to fund the BOE coming forward. Thank you.

Alderman Anglace: Thank you

William Kelley, 34 Sunset Drive: I have been following this in the news, which isn't really good because it doesn't bode well for Shelton. The Mayor made some comments about the Super Intendant. You guys are suing the BOE, and it's just the antagonistic attitudes don't help matters at all. It doesn't say much for Shelton. Our greatest natural resources are our kids, all these kids that are here. And you guys aren't helping them. You are fighting about money constantly. We need to do right by the kids. Some of the people here have been in power for a long time, and they view this town as theirs. It's not, it's our town and we need to start working together to do the right thing by our children. That's all I have to say, thank you.

Alderman Anglace: Thank you

Bryan Vasser, 18 Balsam Circle: Good evening all of you. And at first, I just want to say thank you all of you, I know it's (inaudible) a thankless job a lot of times and not everyone could be perfect all the time and I just want to say I appreciate the time you give. I have been here once before, and it seems like we are covering the same old ground here. It seems like the BOA and the BOE, there goals are just misaligned. I don't understand why. It seems like they ought to be one in the same, but it's not to say, like I have said before, you should write them a blank check. But we need to get to a place where standard education benefits are not in danger everyday of being cut. I have kids now, in High School, and they have come up from Booth Hill, and I have two in Booth Hill coming up

behind them. They come home and tell me, constantly, there is a lack of basic materials. The sports programs are always in jeopardy of being cut. And I have for girls, and you know they are always the first ones to go right? I mean the boys get most of the sports programs, they are really held in jeopardy. The girls, they get cut first, or seem to be on the chopping block, and I have 4 girls that enjoy it. They tell me that the High School overall is in disrepair, I have seen it myself. The landscaping is in shambles. I could tell you the parking lots being done, and tennis courts being done is a step in the right direction. That was nice to see. But for the most part it's a lack of maintenance. The place has been run down for so long, for whatever reason, whether it's been lack of funding or over spending on the BOE side, really is no consequence to me or to anybody here. We rely on elected officials, you folks and BOE to take care of that in a responsible manner. One of my girls told me, one of the goalies, for the girl's lacrosse team, bought their own uniform. You know they are graduating this year so they think they got one left. They staple their uniforms together for god sakes, I mean it's embarrassing. And you know, I can't, I'm not going to sit up here and tell you the benefits of sports programs, there are obvious physical benefits, but keeping kids occupied and out of trouble and colleges, down the line, they don't just look at specific issues with education. They don't look at academic achievements, they look at all achievements outside the classroom. They look at sports and volunteering and things like that. So, you take that away from them you are kind of stifling their ability to compete against other kids in other towns. Everybody can't be wrong or right, I am sure there are valid points on both sides of the argument. I don't know all the facts and if I did, I wouldn't have the time to analyze them all. That's what we have you folks here for, at least we hope. Some point I think Shelton needs to decide if it wants to be a community that embraces young families or if they want to run a community of retirees and corporations, because I gotta tell you if you keep the same course, slowly but surely you will get your wish, if that's what you want. Parents with options, they are going to leave. I have thought about it. I have two kids coming up and two kids in High School and hearing stories and as a parent there is not much you could do but come and speak at functions like this. That's pretty much it. But I am not going to stand by and watch my kids try and compete against other towns and they just are at the back of the line. And that I can't let happen. You know we are just not competitive with neighboring towns. There taxes are probably higher, I would imagine, but it may be the only way to keep up. Giving responsible spending on both the part of the Town and the BOE. So anyway, just to reiterate, the BOA and BOE, you need to get on the same page. You need to fix whatever spending problem or revenue problem we may have. There shouldn't be stories about uniforms falling apart, text books missing pages, missing September 11th and things like that. It's great that some of the kids came so you could hear it from them. My girls would never come, they are too shy, but kudos to the kids who showed up to tell you. You heard it right from the horse's mouth, I think that's great. So that's it. As parents we don't have time to dive into all those issues, we

don't have time to go to endless meetings. We are looking for all of you to handle it.

Alderman Anglace: Thank you.

Julia Meyer, 56 Maple Lane: I am a graduating senior here at Shelton High and I just can't express enough how disappointed I have been in my time here at the Shelton Public School System and I know it's due to a lack of care and a lack of effort put into this school system with funding and what not. I could speak first hand, I know I have seen a lack of quality in the supplies that we have and a lack of supplies period. I have text books that are falling apart, English books with no covers, teachers have no paper to print out their worksheets on. I know personally, I am part of the school magazine, and we have had to reuse paper that already been printed on, to print our magazine pages on. In addition, I have friends who have come from other towns, to the Shelton Public School System, and they have reiterated that their quality of education at their previous town is so much better than it is here. I know for a fact it is because their school systems are more developed, and they have the proper funding and resources that basically helps the students as much as possible. In addition, something that is kind of disappointing as a student, is the lack of effort put into the school grounds. I know I have seen overgrown weeds and stuff in the parking lots, in front of the schools, the flower beds. It's really like a rundown looking building which is really disappointing as a student where you have to go to school where that is the case. In addition, self-funded organizations such as the Drama Club and the Gael Magazine that we have at our school are great because they are self-funded. Otherwise we wouldn't have these things so just imagine what could be done if we could allocate some sort of money to these self-funded organizations. In addition, by not funding our future we are setting up for the next generation to fail. That is just how it is and we will not be able the next generation of providers for this world. And I guess my last point is, one of my last points is teachers, I know for a fact, have been struggling working in this district, even though I know they say that they get good pay. They are just constantly fighting for the students and to get their supplies and what they need in general. I find that very disappointing as well and I feel for these teachers who are here to do what's right for the kids. And I find it disappointing as a citizen of this town that the city officials, the BOA, the BOE, you guys only seem to communicate through lawsuits and through arguments and that is just really disappointing as a citizen of this town and I just think there needs to be more communication and we need to be able to look up to you guys. So that's all. Thank you.

Alderman Anglace: Thank you.

Diana Meyer, 56 Maple Lane: Again, I want to thank you, I know you guys are volunteers and thank you for giving us the forum and thank for the students and everyone that turned out to speak tonight. I of course second what the students have been telling because we as parents hear it from home and I think that's

important for them to tell their story. The reason I am here to speak to you tonight is I want to know why our taxes are going up in Shelton. The largest expenditure in the City of Shelton is obviously our schools district. This year the mayor has recommended a zero increase to the school budget, so obviously the tax increase is not due to the increased expense in our school system. If you look at the new development in Shelton, the new plaza with the Starbucks and the Spotted Horse, the Big Y plaza that opened a few years ago and the new Chick-Fil-A plaza, all the development we have on Commerce Drive, all the various other projects, one would think that this strong commercial influx in the town would also equate strong tax revenue. Yet for the first time in 10 years there is a proposal to increase the mill rate, and I ask why. The Mayor and some of our Alderman have placed the blame on Shelton BOE for overspending 2.7 million in the Special Education Excess Cost Grant. Since that time CT Department of Education, along with others have stated the Shelton BOE handled the grant properly and the error lies in the way it was accounted for by the City. Despite this, the City is suing the BOE which will result in legal bills on both sides. Much like last year's suite, this will be another expenditure and tax burden to the citizens. The surplus a year ago was reportedly between 10 and 12 million. The error with the Special Education Excess Cost Grant is said to be 2.7 million. If you take that away from 10 million your left with 7.3 million in surplus. So, let's assume there was about 4 million that was used for capital projects around town, this would still leave us with 3.3 million surpluses. But today we sit here, from what I understand, is at zero. So, what I am asking is how did we get to this zero. And I think one suggestion, I think I heard someone say it before, is perhaps to get an outside party to do a forensic audit to see exactly what is going on and I think that might be less costly than going to court, which is what we are proposing now. I just think before we talk about raising the mill rate maybe we should take a closer look at the accounting and figure out what happened this year to get us to the zero surplus because we don't want to repeat mistakes we already made. Thank you.

Alderman Anglace: Thank you

Martha Parkins, 15 Serene Drive: Like all the constituents before me, I support our public-school system. I agree with the decision to raise taxes to better fund our City services. I believe that the education of our children is the most important service provided by the City and am respectfully asking for the BOA to follow the lead of the Board of Apportionment and Taxation in support of our schools. Thank you.

Alderman Anglace: Thank you

Tori Weed, 79 Oronoque Trail : Before I begin I would just like to state that I am not an expert in finance, I have never dealt with more than \$1,000.00 in a single time, and my mind cannot begin to fathom the many aspects of a budget. But I merely would like to share my opinion on an invaluable aspect of Shelton High

School that is in danger of being cut due to the projected deficit in the Shelton Board of Education budget. As I stated before, my name is Tori Weed, I am currently a Junior at Shelton High School and I have been a member of the girl's swim team for my entire high school career. A team that is currently in jeopardy due to the lack of increase in the budget. I believe that cutting some sports teams, an action that would be inevitable with the current deficit forecasted for the 2019/20 school year is detrimental to students. The athletic culture of Shelton High School has nurtured many children into capable adults. Athletics teaches students time management skills, teamwork and dedication. In order to participate, in an athletic team, one must maintain a C+ average and they cannot have any absences or tardies throughout the season in order to participate in practices or games. For some sports is their gateway to college and it is the only way they really attend school. Being a member of the girl's swim team has educated me in many ways that a classroom education never could. The confidence I've acquired through past captains and my coaches has enabled me to succeed in my high school career. In November I was named captain of the girl's swim team for the 2019/20 year and feel that through this leadership position I could assist other girls in finding their path in high school but without the team I don't feel I could help anybody. Thank you.

Alderman Anglace: Thank you.

Nicole Lenti, 205 Fox Run: My daughter is in the 5th grade and has wonderful experiences and both Booth Hill and now Perry Hill but that's due to the amazing commitment of both the teachers and the staff. Yet year after year we face the same challenges, funding's inadequate, we need to make cuts and we need to do without. That leaves the parents and teachers to fundraise to supplement what we need but unfortunately that isn't enough. Like the previous speakers, I would like my child and her friends to have the best chance of success. In addition, I am a homeowner and would like to see my property value increase. The first thing I'm asked when friends are considering moving to Shelton is "how's the school system?" Unfortunately, they could find out the answers in the data themselves and it isn't very positive. Please consider funding not the children but the future of Shelton. Thank you.

Alderman Anglace: Thank you.

Joe Lenti, 441 Lynx Run: Just looking around here, when you see this many people expressing their thoughts on the education budget you know there is a problem. Students here tonight have told you all what schools are lacking, and basically when they stand up and talk about it, they're the ones that walk through the halls every day, they're the ones that use the equipment in the schools, they're the ones that turn the pages on the books, the frayed books, so they

know more about it than anyone here in this room. The Superintendent and BOE have never really been given what they have asked for. What we propose really isn't a great deal. The Superintendent doesn't ask for double, triple, just what's needed to bring the Shelton schools up to par. I really think it's time we did something about it, I think it's time that everybody on the day thinks about it and gives more to education. Thank you.

Alderman Anglace: Thank you.

Scott Smith, 104 Ridge Lane: Hi Folks I'm back. Scott Smith, 104 Ridge Lane. Today I wanted to, once again, really in favor of funding the BOE. Today I wanted to talk specifically about that per pupil spending number. This is kind of an odd arrangement because I feel like I am talking to you, but I am also talking here so forgive me for my back behind you. So, the per pupil spending figure, we all heard this, it's been vented around in Facebook groups and other online chat rooms. We know that we are lagging behind on this. So, I was like, where did this number come from? I started thinking about where it came from, and obviously it's probably some type of State data. Then I started thinking, what would this be used for? And I was thinking to myself, you know what? If I was a real estate agent I would want to have those figures, and if I knew someone who was moving, that was going to move to Fairfield County, I would take a look and see what those people are like and what they are looking for, I would say because that number is so low we eliminate a lot of people that want to move here because of that number. So, I was thinking about that, and as you know I am a teacher, a business teacher in another district. So, one of the things I look at is the economic value of things. So, we have been doing this low tax thing for the better part of three decades. And economics, whether it's micro or macro, it's all about balance. You just can't have super low taxes forever, otherwise everybody would be doing it, right? So, this is what I am wondering, what is the cost? What is the cost of having this really low tax rate for a really long period of time? The answer to that answer is the cost is our problem. We are artificially, through this tax policy, moving our own properties demand curve to the left. Because of the fact that our homes are not appreciating in value. Does this make any sense to anybody? Wouldn't you maintain your property? I am sure we all do, right? By doing this policy and not funding the BOE we are creating actually less demand for our homes. Seriously, who invests in something then continues to jeopardize its value. And that's what we have been doing for almost 20 years now, and I have lived here for sixteen and I have seen it happen. You may save \$200 a year in tax revenue per household. What if I told you the opportunity cost of that was 20, 30 maybe 40 thousand dollars when you go to sell your home. Do you want an extra \$40,000, I would like it? I would go to Florida and retire when I'm old and it will be beautiful. In any case, the road to increased property value starts and ends with funding the BOE much better than we have. I know this is going to be a shock to you, but people don't sit around their kitchen table trying to decide where to move. And they are not thinking about the fire department, the police department, I know this is shocking, they are not thinking about the BOA, they

are thinking about the school system, alright. So, this is what I propose, we really have to think about ditching this antiquated policy, tax policy, we need to get modern, we need to come forward and make ourselves more attractive. That's all I have to say about that. I just want to point out one more thing, a lot of this conversation has been going on on-line and in chat rooms and things like that. I think a lot of our constituents are becoming more modern. I have heard in some of those chats, the demographics in this town, well there is a silent majority that does not want the tax increases, does not care about education because their kids are all older. If you look around this room, I have not heard one person say for lower taxes here tonight. And if you look just at the faces, they are all either young people or people with young families. We are here tonight because we care. With that said I just want to say that we really believe in this town, we are all committed to it and let's do the right thing for all of us, not just the kids but for all of us in this town. Thank you very much.

Alderman Anglace: Thank you.

Rachel Brown, 15 Stone House Road: I recently interned with the BOA clerks, so I am very appreciative to the board so I figured I would bring my experience full circle and actually speak at a meeting. As a student at Shelton High School I know I have, and many of my teammates have heard about the cutting of multiple sports at the high school, including field hockey. As a junior I am worried about not playing experience playing field hockey my senior year. That is why I urge to board to increase the school's budget, as I believe it is evident by our school, we really care about our sports programs. Students and our families have already shown their commitment and want to keep our sports programs by majority of students completing pay to play. So, I ask you to show us the same commitment to our high school experience by making an effort to keep our high school sports programs. Thank you.

Alderman Anglace: Thank you. Is there anyone else that wants to speak that did not sign up?

Mike Sciamanna, 27 Molnar Drive: I did not come here prepared to speak, but notebook in hand and pen, jotted down some notes and hope that I could share with you my thoughts, and I know it is the thoughts of my wife and great deal of others as well. I am a parent of three, all three kids in the Shelton School District, I am a Senior Vice President of Webster Bank. And if we were to view this forum as a business, like it was mentioned by a few others, that would make us your customers. If you are not doing what your customers are asking, you are in jeopardy of losing your business. If you don't adapt to customer need you simply go out of business or become obsolete. Like any other business, it requires you to look at what you offer to current customers as well as future customers. If not, customers will simply (inaudible). I was sort of thinking of analogies and a couple came to mind. One, when you go to a restaurant there is a sign outside that has

a letter grade on it. I don't know what our grade would be right now, if that same sign was entering the town of Shelton. If you were thinking to go to a restaurant and you looked at reviews, our reviews right now aren't great. Certainly, if we were put in the Zagat's book of towns right now, we would be a few pages back of where we should and where we deserve to be. This evening my wife and I are forgoing going to the senior boy's lacrosse game. I am the president of Shelton Youth Lacrosse, which is 160 kids k-8. Which is all volunteer, very little support from the town, they do mow the field which we appreciate. But those 160 kids, we are looking forward to them wanting to play lacrosse, to be involved in the sport. At the game tonight there are 10 seniors, 5 of which are going on to play collegiate league via scholarship because of their ability not only the field, but academically. So, I wanted to celebrate them this evening here. In closing, I think it's your job to provide a product we could be proud of, one that competes in the classroom, one that competes on the field as well as in the community. Help us to be proud what we are, and you heard the voices tonight and we are asking for help. Again, there wasn't an individual here who said let's go the other way with this. There was a request, because people want to be proud. I want to be proud of the product that I represent, when our kids go on the field and it says Shelton, I want it to say something about them and I hope that you support that. Thank you.

Alderman Anglace: Thank you.

Mandy Kilmartin, 51 Sorghum Road: Good evening everybody. My name is Mandy Kilmartin and I live at 51 Sorghum Road and in full transparency I am a member of the BOE. One of the things that has been on my mind, and my question to all of you is who saw Game of Thrones last night? Yes!

Alderman Anglace: Would you kindly address the BOA please.

Mandy Kilmartin: Stay with me Mr. Anglace, I am getting there. For those of you who haven't had a chance to get in front of your DVR's, don't worry I won't divulge any spoilers, but suffice it to say that last night's episode was very tough to watch. And it was tough to watch, not because of the brutality and violence that Game of Thrones has come to be notorious for, but because it's painful to watch when leaders let you down. It's painful to watch when you put your hopes in certain characters, the ones who are supposed to be the good guys, and it turns out they are not so great. That's tough to watch. That's a tough thing to state. Now for those of you who may not be Game of Thrones watchers, there was an episode last week that I am sure you all at least heard about right? Because it was like the coffee cup heard around the world. It was in the top headlines, the day after this Game of Thrones episode aired. Because what happened, after winning this epic battle between the living and the dead and being at this feast, there at the head banquet table, next to Queen Daenerys, Mother of Dragons, there is this coffee cup. And people lost their minds, they went insane, they posted all over about it. Why? Why do people care about this

coffee cup? Because it ruined the story line. The story that we have been buying into, that we have been listening to. That coffee cup was uncomfortable, but irrefutable sign that story was simply just that, a story. It took us out of the fantasy. And it made me think about another great story, that we have all been told over the years, that Diana sort of eluded to in her comments. That we can't possibly fund the BOE because that would mean we would have to raise everybody's taxes. Right I think you all heard that story. I heard that story a lot. And this year it wasn't that long ago we were told, hey guess what taxes are going up, and yet the plot twist, not a single dollar, not a single penny is going to give additional funding to the BOE. So, this coffee cup budget, that we have all been handed, is I am sorry, an uncomfortable and irrefutable proof that the story we have been told is in fact just that, it's a nice story. It's one that I am sure many of you in this room will continue to tell, but it is in fact just a story. Now I am not Mother of Dragons, but I am mother of boys, two of them. One happens to be at Booth Hill in the 4th grade and the next one will be a freshman at the high school this year. So, I know what and I know who it is that I fight for. So, I stand up here tonight and I just want to implore each of you, that as phase down this grand annual budget battle, that you don't forget the people you are supposed to be fighting for. That you don't leave them in the wake of poor decisions. That these people who have had the courage to come here and speak to you tonight are not the collateral damage for decisions that are made in this year's budget. And that's all I have to say, Thank you.

Alderman Anglace: Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other speakers, Alderman Anglace closed the public hearing at 8:00 p.m.

Alderman Anglace MOVED to adjourn the Public Hearing;
SECONDED by Alderman Kudej. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously and hearing was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Rogers

Amy Rogers, Clerk

May 13, 2019 Board of Aldermen
Special Public Hearing on the Budget

DATE APPROVED: _____ BY: _____

Mark A. Laretti
Mayor, City of Shelton