

CITY OF DERBY  
BOARD OF APPORTIONMENT & TAXATION  
PUBLIC HEARING  
Wednesday May 19 2010  
7:00 p.m.  
Aldermanic Chambers

Jeremy Bell  
James Butler  
Timothy Conlon  
William Nelson Cummings  
Anita Dugatto

Carolyn Duhaime  
Frank Lazowski, Sr  
Carlo Malerba  
Mark Nichols  
Judith Szewczyk - Chairwoman

A public hearing of the Board of Apportionment & Taxation of the City of Derby was held on Wednesday evening, May 19, 2010 in the Aldermanic Chambers, City Hall.

Chair Judy Szewczyk called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. with the pledge of allegiance.

By roll call, members present were Chair Judy Szewczyk, Frank Lazowski, Mark Nichols, Jeremy Bell, James Butler, Timothy Conlon, William Nelson Cummings, Carlo Malerba, Anita Dugatto and Carolyn Duhaime.

**PUBLIC PORTION**

Dr. Tracy - Superintendent of Derby Public Schools. Dr. Tracy presented the board with his thoughts on the budget offered by the City. This is not an over funded school system. The preliminary budget adopted last week provides an additional \$227,000.00 to the school system. The new middle school will function for a full year for the first time and its expenses are estimated at \$262,000.00. Other expenditures mandated by law or contract is \$740,000.00. Ranging from a 5.8% increase (not requiring layoffs) to a 4.5% increase (start to lose positions), down to the figure adopted by the tax board last week would mean losing 9 teachers, a curriculum a development function, athletics etc. Last year's budget cuts resulted in losing 7 1/2% of staff. A 5.8% increase as requested by the school board would cost the taxpayer an additional \$19.00 a month.

Ken Dupke - President of the Derby Police Union. The money financed by the board for the supernumerary line item would be in violation of the police union contract. He is asking for the correct amount to be reinstated to avoid a union grievance.

Darrell Cotter - 132 Park Avenue. Mr. Cotter heard comments how the City is so financially sound, with a great bond rating and in the best shape in years. This board stated it does not want to take a risk on losing its great bond rating. If the board is ever going to take the chance, do it on education.

Mary Mendez - parent of two Derby children. She is concerned with not having enough money to run the new middle school. 1% does not make good sense for the children. If you are going to blow the bond rating a little bit, do it for education. Don't have programs cut.

Chantal Gerckens - 65 Hillcrest Ave. Now is the time to give more money to education to further the success of the children of Derby. If you take away from their education, then you are taking away part of their success. Too large class sizes decrease the learning potential of the students. There was already a loss of staff last year. What percent of the budget is actually allocated to education. Please do not take away all day kindergarten, this would be a difference of 600 literacy minutes a week.

Denise Bottone. Ms. Bottone stated the town should have had an idea how a new school would impact the budget. What kind of shape will Derby be in if they have no accreditation for the high school?

Dan Mendez - freshman at the high school. Don't forget about the good people trying to make an honest living.

Linda Romano - Educator. Property value is attached to education. The people voted for a new middle school because it was needed. We need to keep the building going. The students want a future with tools needed to be a success. Do what is best for the taxpayer but also for the students.

John Saccu - Director of Youth Services. Derby has a progressive education team, and a progressive administrator with progressive ideas. He would like the board to give whatever financial consideration it can to education.

Molly Cain. She is a junior and agrees with Ms. Romano, be as best as you can with school materials.

Kim Kreiger - 7 General Wooster Road. Ms. Kreiger stated the bottom line is there are two pieces of the budget request that must be addressed. One is the money to fund the new middle school. The second piece is the financial contractual requirements in place for 2010-2011 which includes health insurance, salary obligations, transportation, NEASC accreditation. The total dollar amount for these must do items is \$743,000.00. Ms. Kreiger has served on the education board for nearly ten years. There has been a lot of talk of distrust and a lack of transparency. Dr. Tracy has brought complete disclosure, honesty and transparency in everything he does. Last year being open, honest, truthful and frugal resulted in the loss of 7.8 teaching positions and 12 para professionals, among other programmatic losses. The school board has made significant reduction. It is irresponsible not to fund the school board's budget.

Mike - sophomore at High School. He wishes there could be more extracurricular activities. What does our diploma have to offer. Please make our diploma more than just a piece of paper.

Ray Bowers - Silver Hill Road. The school board budget is a bare bones budget. The City needs more revenue in town (redevelopment) without taxing more.

Barbara DeGennaro - business owner, alderperson for first ward. Ms. DeGennaro reminded the board there is a contractual obligation pertaining to the supernumerary line item and reconsider the preliminary number. Also, please listen to the parents and consider Dr. Tracy and the board of education's request.

John Kowarik - High Street. Mr. Kowarik owns three homes in Derby. He has elderly neighbors and they are concerned about a tax increase. He also has four neighbors who are unemployed. He implores the board to consider how difficult it is to pay the taxes. House values have dropped 20%, people are under water in their mortgages. The teachers are not sacrificing in this town. The teachers are paid a lot of money. If the students went to a private school, it would cost half of what it is costing the people in Derby. Derby is 60% elderly.

Dan Waleski. Residents are looking for lower taxes. Derby has lost manufacturing, commercial income and the burden is falling on the residents. The police budget is very high, the crime rate is low. He questions the auxiliary budget. Dr. Tracy has done a terrific job and made progress, but

the City is in dire straits. The City has a higher bonding rating and there is a big effort to increase our economic development in the City.

Gabriella Augustitus - 2 Commodore Hull Drive. She does not want to see a tax increase. But, if it is for the purpose of education she would sacrifice and would like to see that, it is important for the children.

Mary Mendez. Ms. Mendez stated it is not just teachers here. She is on a strict budget but is willing to pay more taxes on her car if that is what is necessary to do. She wants her kids to have an education.

Tom Lionetti - 79 Sunset Drive. He doesn't want to see his taxes increase. He is willing to pay more taxes if it was for education.

Kari - Lyn Dapp - 32 George Avenue. There will be a big difference between full time and part time kindergarten.

Mr. ? had a question on circuit breaker program for seniors. Mr. Phil Robertson stated the income has to be \$18,000.00.

Linda Coppola - principal Bradley School. Ms. Coppola asked if the board realizes the cut the school board took last year. Bradley School alone lost four teachers and three para professionals. Enrollment is up due to taking children from Irving. It would be a giant leap backwards to go to a half day kindergarten.

Jenny Ings - reading teacher Irving School. She performs kindergarten screens. There was a vast majority who couldn't count, or know the letters of the alphabet or their last name. Going to a half day kindergarten would set them back.

Stacey Whelan - 35 Coppola Terrace. Her son is a special needs student and didn't know his body parts, couldn't read or write. He can now read. It has been amazing what the curriculum at Irving has done. We have to educate our children.

Marie Bowers - 269 Silver Hill Rd. She is a para professional for Derby schools. The most important thing about working in the school system beside teaching is preparing the students. She has a child about to go to middle school. She has heard about the children sharing books. By not funding for school supplies and cutting programs you are setting the children up for failure. They will see things in college that they will not know what that is.

Casey Picheco - Board of Education member. She is proud to advocate and support the teachers and students education system.

Frank ? - teacher at the high school. He is a new teacher. He finds it hard to have solidarity. How can students make connections with new teachers because they may not be back the next year? Continuity is important.

Lou Coppola - high school teacher. We need to prepare the students to get service tech jobs, green jobs, etc. The next generation should be better than we were before.

Chantal Gerckens. The teachers have made sacrifices, she volunteered for two months in the library, everyone has made sacrifices.

Casey Picheco - her son brought home a book about Derby and was very proud. Think about that when considering the budget and support the kids.

Jen ? - Counselor at the high school. The teachers are giving back educationally. The high school teachers gave out some money for scholarships, teachers buy their own paper to make copies of books, application for college fees and SAT fees.

Gary Bussell - Shagbark Drive. A lot of seniors do not know about elderly programs and the City should get out and tell these people. His son said he is glad to be getting out of school. They don't even have copy paper. Eighteen dollars per tax payer a year is not a lot of money. You can't keep taking away from the schools.

Dan Waleski. Mr. Waleski encourages people to contact their state representatives and agencies involved in education for contributions to the City.

? - Derby resident. She works for Bradley School with the children. The growth has been phenomenal with the full day kindergarten.

Caitlyn Gerckens - 2nd grade. The teachers she has at Bradley School are very important. She is afraid that if teachers are lost, class sizes will be bigger.

John Kowarki - He proposes a one mill increase anything more would be detrimental.

Sarah Gerckens - if you cut taxes, education won't be as good.

#### **Adjourn**

**A MOTION** to adjourn by Mr. Butler, second by Mr. Nichols, all in favor. Meeting ended at 8:08 p.m.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Denise Cesaroni  
Recording Secretary*

\*\*\*\*These minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of the Board of Apportionment and Taxation.