



A Public Service Newsletter Dedicated to Keeping the Citizens of Wilbraham Informed About Important Matters.

CANDIDATES' NIGHT APRIL 30th

Each year, CCW sponsors Candidate's Night where we invite all Town candidates running for elected office to attend our April meeting and give a brief statement about themselves, why they are running, their objectives if elected, and anything else they wish to say. The meeting is open to the public and all are encouraged to come. Following statements by the candidates, an open question and answer period from the audience will follow. Here's a list of candidates who were invited to this meeting. A final list of those who plan to attend has not yet been determined.

Patrick Brady*	I	Selectman
William Caruana	I	Selectman
William Bickley*, Jr.	R	School Committee
Gilles Turcotte*	D	School Committee
Adam Basch*	I	Planning Board
Dean Stroshine	R	Planning Board
Lawrence LaBarbera*	R	Assessor
Beverly Litchfield*	D	Town Clerk
Jean Canosa-Albano*	D	Library Trustee
Justin McCarthy	R	Library Trustee
James Dunbar*	R	Water Commissioner
Donald Bourcier*	R	Cemetery Commissioner
Richard Swain*	R	Tree Warden
Anthony Scibelli*	D	Town Moderator

(* Incumbent)

Event: Candidate's Night
Date: Thursday, April 30
Time: 7:00 pm
Place: Wilbraham Middle School
Open to the Public

CCW neither endorses nor opposes candidates running for office. Our objective is to provide a public forum for citizens to meet the candidates and ask questions.

Setting the Record Straight on the Proposed New Minnechaug



By Robert L. Page Jr., Chairman CCW

It is particularly important for any major community undertaking like the possibility of building a new Model School Minnechaug that the information presented to the community be reliable and accurate. Recent news articles in the past 2 or 3 weeks have published misleading and conflicting information. This misinformation could result in the public making the wrong decision on the largest project that our communities have ever undertaken. Here are the facts and the source of the information.

Question: Which is the length of bonding for the proposed new Minnechaug project: 20 year, 25 year or 30 year?

Answer: The 20 year bonding period is currently correct. Currently the law for Regional School Districts¹ limits construction projects to 20 years bonding. Currently the law for Non-Regional Schools² limits construction projects to 25 years bonding. The Minnechaug Feasibility Study³ used a 30 year bonding period. The MSBA and some legislators are currently attempting to change bonding from 20 years to 25 years.

Question: School Committee Chairman Scott Chapman was quoted in the papers that the Selectmen have 30 days to approve the request for \$500,000 bonding

(Continued to Page 4)

Where Does The School Money Go...



By Robert L. Page Jr., *Chairman CCW*

I was sitting at my kitchen table with my checkbook the other day taking a closer look at where I was spending my money. Several of the answers were quite surprising. That got me thinking about our current town budget particularly the largest portion of that budget: The School District.

The proposed budget for our District Schools for 2009 – 2010 is \$38,604,622. Let's change that to a number that we can all wrap our mind around. Our School District has a current enrollment of 3,567 students. That translates into \$10,823 for each student.

Stay with me now. How does the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District spend that \$10,823 on each child? Listed below is the amount allocated for each student for the top dollar 14 line categories.

Budget Line #	Category Description	Per Student Allocation
2305 Func:	Classroom Teachers	\$3,501

5200 Func:	Personnel Insurance Costs	\$ 953
3300 Func:	Student Transportation (Buses)	\$ 824
2310 Func:	Teachers Specialist	\$ 516
4110 Func:	Custodial Service (Janitors)	\$ 466
2210 Func:	School Leadership (Principals)	\$ 451
9300 Func:	Tuition Non-Public Schools	\$ 413
9400 Func:	Tuition to Collaborative	\$ 398
5250 Func:	Insurance Ret School Emp.	\$ 394
2330 Func:	Paraprofessional/Instruction	\$ 334
5100 Func:	Employee Retirement	\$ 267
4130 Func:	Utility Services	\$ 244
2320 Func:	Instructional Therapeutic	\$ 187
2800 Func:	Psychological Services	\$ 175
All Other	Miscellaneous-all others	\$1,700

TOTAL **\$ 10,823 per student**

What does this all mean? It is merely illustrated here to show where and how much we are spending to educate one student. Observation number 1: 12.4% of every dollar is used to pay for current and retired school employee's health insurance. Observation number 2: School Bus Transportation costs 7.8% of every dollar. Observation #3: We spend as much on janitors as we do on school leadership (Principals). Hope you find this chart interesting and informative.



Governor Patrick Announces \$280 Million in Federal Recovery Funds for Massachusetts Schools

Friday, March 20, 2009 - As part of his Massachusetts Recovery Plan to secure the state's economic future, Governor Deval Patrick announced \$280 million in federal education recovery funds will go to school districts to assist with costs for special education, care and support. The Governor also announced an additional \$10 million for preschools special education services.

Funding will be available to all school districts over the next 27 months. Districts will receive half of the funding by the end of the month - \$140 million through the

individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), with \$5 million dedicated to preschools programs. This fall, the remaining \$140 million will be allocated to districts with another \$5 million for preschool programs;

The amount to be received by the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District as IDEA funds is \$233,913 this month and \$233,913 this fall. In addition the HWRSD will receive \$9,100 this month and \$9,100 this fall dedicated to preschool programs.

Eagle Eye News is a bi-monthly public service newsletter published by Concerned Citizens of Wilbraham, a taxpayer watchdog group dedicated to keeping Wilbraham citizens informed about important matters. Articles may be submitted for consideration, but are printed at the sole discretion of the editor and may be edited if too long. All submissions must be signed by the author.

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School Superintendent Presents \$38,604,622 School Budget

As we all know, the current economy is tough on everyone and the HWRSD is no exception. Here are our notes from the school budget meeting on March 10th and March 17th presented by Superintendent Dr. Paul Gagliarducci.

The State contribution to our schools, Chapter 70, was exactly the same amount for next year as is for this year, or as it's called, level funded. The estimated State reimbursement for transportation was cut by \$433,603. The assessment to Hampden and Wilbraham went from \$23,761,385 to \$24,575,381, *an increase of \$813,996.*



After 7 years as Superintendent of HWRSD, Dr. Paul Gagliarducci is retiring on June 30th.

The Superintendent's office and the School Committee budget Sub-committee took some serious steps provide the same service to our students. The initial budget proposed in December of 2008 for the Fiscal Year 2009/2010 budget

illustrated *an increase of \$2,668,171 or an overall increase of 7.00%*. Since we were already well into the recession-depression, those numbers clearly were unrealistic.

During the months of January and February of 2009, reductions in the budget brought the School District spending down to a much more realistic 1.28% increase. Here are some of the measures taken to bring us a balanced budget for services:

1. District staff reductions of 42+ employees
2. Increased athletic fees of \$50 average increase per student per sport
3. No summer school
4. No new textbooks
5. Furloughs for hourly employees
6. No raises for administration staff or independents
7. No late bussing and reducing fleet by 1 bus
8. Reduction in student activities
9. An increase of 17 students for the out of district "Choice" program for a total of 114

Considering that revenues from all our sources are getting smaller every day, you have to wonder what 2011 look like. Our schools, our town, our state are going to be facing reduced spending challenges that will make this year look like a Sunday school picnic.

Schedule of Upcoming Meetings

Concerned Citizens of Wilbraham • Thursdays • 7:00 pm

- April 30 - Candidates' Night - Wilb. Middle School
- May 28 - Review Annual Town Meeting - Senior Ctr.

Board of Selectmen • Town Hall • Selectmen's Meeting Room • Mondays • 7:00 pm

- April 6, 13, 27
- May 4, 18

Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School Committee • Tuesdays • 7:00 pm

- April 14 - MRHS
- April 28 - MRHS
- May 12 - Mile Tree
- May 26 - MRHS

Finance Committee Meeting • Town Hall • Wednesdays • 7:00 pm

- April 1, 8, 15, 22 - Note: No meetings in May

Annual Town Meeting • MRHS • May 11-12 • 7:00 pm

Get Involved - Your Opinion Matters

SAVE THE DATE

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MAY 11TH 7:00pm MINNECHAUG

Note New Polling Places - Recently Selectmen voted to reduce the number of polling places from 4 to 2:

Precinct A: Wilbraham Middle School - 466 Stony Hill Rd. (Formerly the Senior Center at Post Office Park)

Precinct B: Soule Road School - 300 Soule Rd. (Formerly Stony Hill School - 675 Stony Hill Road)

Precinct C: Wilbraham Middle School - 466 Stony Hill Rd. (Formerly Memorial School - 310 Main Street)

Precinct D: Soule Road School - 300 Soule Road

Annual Town Meeting

Monday, May 11th • 7:00pm • MRHS



Currently there are 10,170 registered voters in Wilbraham. At last year's Annual Town Meeting, only 250 voters showed up. The year before, it was 412. Let's say 300 voters attend this year's meeting. If so, that represents only about 3% of the registered voters who would vote on this year's estimated \$35,500,000 town budget. All it takes is a simple majority of those attending to approve the budget. That's only 151 people in this example who ultimately will make this decision! Do you want these 151 voters to

decide how to spend *your tax dollars*? Well, they will if you choose not to attend. The Town Meeting is your opportunity to hear first-hand on how the town plans to spend your taxes. It's your last chance to ask questions, listen and make an informed decision. In addition, we'll be asked to vote on non-budgetary issues such as zoning bylaws. Articles may be placed on the warrant by the Selectmen, sometimes at the request of town departments, or by a petition signed by at least ten registered voters of the town. (*A final list was not available to us when we put this newsletter together.*) Too many people, not just in Wilbraham but throughout America, choose not to vote. Reasons range from voter apathy to I'm too busy to I'd rather watch the ball game on TV or play golf. And when taxes/fees continue to go up, it's usually this same group that's the first to complain. *Well, if you don't have a legitimate reason for not voting, you don't have the right to complain!* Plain and simple. You're just taking the easy way out and letting others decide for you.

Setting the Record Straight from Page 1

and Superintendent Gagliarducci was quoted in the papers that Selectmen have 60 days to approve the request for \$500,000 bonding. Is it 30 days or 60 days?

Answer: The correct answer is that the Selectmen have 60 days to respond⁴ with their approval for the request by the Superintendent. If they have not responded by the expiration of 60 days the approval is automatic.

Question: Superintendent Gagliarducci and Chairman Chapman have been quoted as saying the MSBA's contribution to our building project will be 62.73% of the project costs. Is that a fact?

Answer: The answer relating to the School Building cost percentage from the MSBA is this:⁵ *"The reimbursement rate pre-incentives is 53.73%. The Hampden-Wilbraham Minnechaug project "could" receive a few incentive points, such as, 5 points for a Model School; 2 points for going green/energy efficiency and; 2 points for maintenance. The final reimbursement rate is unknown at this time."*

Question: Reports in the newspapers state that the Executive Board of the MSBA will approve our project at their July 2009 meeting and that the two towns will vote on the project in October 2009. How certain are those dates?

Answer: Those dates are NOT certain and are at best educated guesses. Some very strategic and important deadlines must be met to hold to the dates put forward.

Question: The following remarks were made by School Committee Chairman Scott Chapman at the March 24, 2009 School Committee meeting: *"It is most important to note that any tax implication on the taxpayers will not occur until 2013 at the earliest, but more than likely not until 2014"*. Is that a fact?

Answer: NO. *"Interest will begin accruing from the first dollar of borrowing during construction."*⁶ That interest obligation will become part of the bond thereby enlarging the project bond. You either pay when it's due or you pay it later. Delaying payment only postpones and enlarges the obligation.

**"Never doubt
that a small
group of
thoughtful
committed
citizens can
change the
world. Indeed,
it is the only
thing that
ever has."**

Margaret Meade
American Anthropologist
1901-1978

1 Mass General Law, Chapter 71 Section 16 (d)
2 Mass General Law, Chapter 70B Section 6 (d)
3 Dore & Whittier Feasibility Study, December 21, 2004
4 Mass General Law, Chapter 71 Section 16 (d)

5 Mass School Building Authority, Carrie Sullivan, Public
Information & Press Secretary, E-mail, April 9, 2009
6 Information obtained from a former municipal finance officer.