



# Town of Sterling

Town Hall  
1183 Plainfield Pike  
P.O. Box 157  
Oneco, Connecticut 06373-0157

Assessor: 860-564-3030  
Building Official: 860-564-2275  
Economic Development: 860-564-4752  
Library: 860-564-2692  
Recreation: 860-564-2136  
Registrar of Voters: 860-564-2654

Revenue Collector: 860-564-7563  
Selectmen: 860-564-2904  
Town Clerk: 860-564-2657  
Treasurer: 860-564-8488  
Wetlands Agent: 860-564-2275  
Zoning Official: 860-564-2275

Legal Notice  
Town of Sterling Board of Finance  
Public Hearing  
7:00 p.m. – May 9, 2018

The Sterling Board of Finance will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday May 9, 2018 at the Sterling Town Hall/Municipal Building Gym, 1183 Plainfield Pike, Oneco, CT at 7:00 p.m. to obtain written and/or verbal comments on the following:

- Item 1. Itemized Estimates for Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Board of Education Budget
- Item 2. Itemized Estimates for Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Board of Selectmen Budget
- Item 3. Estimates of the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Local Capital Improvement Plan and Budget
- Item 4. All persons will be heard regarding any item of expenditure they may wish for the Board of Finance to consider for inclusion in the 2018-2019 Budget

Copies of the proposed 2018-2019 Budgets are available at the Sterling Town Hall, 1183 Plainfield Pike during normal business hours. Copies may also be obtained on the following web sites:

[www.sterlingschool.org](http://www.sterlingschool.org)  
[www.sterlingct.us](http://www.sterlingct.us)

Dated this 24<sup>th</sup> day of April 2018 at Sterling Town Hall, 1183 Plainfield Pike, Oneco, CT.

David Shippee, Chairman  
Sterling Board of Finance

May 9, 2018

The Board of Finance Public Hearing was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman, David Shippee. Other members' present-Bruce Lindberg, Neil Cook, Peter Rabbitt, Robert Salisbury, and Neil Delmonico.

Staff present-Joyce Gustavson.

David Shippee thanked everyone for coming and introductions were made.

D. Shippee stated that if the proposed budgets were passed as they are submitted tonight, it would mean an increase of two tenths of a mil (0.2). This would increase the mil rate from 31.80 to 32.00 mils.

D. Shippee also stated that this hearing is to discuss budgets only. Any other town or school issue should be brought to the proper board or administration. This is a not a meeting for those purposes. Everyone who wishes to speak will be able to. However, there will be a time limit of three (3) minutes and each speaker will be allowed to speak twice.

D. Shippee stated that the Board of Education will present their proposed Fiscal Year 2018-2019 budget first and after the presentation we will have a question and answer period.

**Item 1: Itemized Estimates for Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Board of Education Budget:**

Gail Lanza, Acting Superintendent presented the Power Point presentation for the 2018-2019 proposed Board of Education Budget.

Items Covered: Overview of budget expenses for Fiscal Years 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019. This proposed budget is \$8,195,417, a 0.76% increase from the 2017-2018 budget. Anticipated State revenue is \$3,254,704. Additional grant revenue sources were also explained. G. Lanza also explained the data and details of the proposed budget followed by the proposed expenditures, budget assumptions, enrollment, preliminary high school acceptances, staffing levels, and per pupil cost comparison.

G. Lanza asked if anyone had any questions or comments.

Patricia Ball, 15 Sawmill Hill Road asked if the Power Point presentation was available as handouts.

G. Lanza stated no, just the Board of Finance received copies.

Dana Morrow, 65 Gibson Lane stated that he is wondering why the State is going away from per pupil cost comparison and what are they going to.

G. Lanza stated that she thinks the State is going away from the per pupil cost comparison because it is not a very accurate comparison. At this point it is uncertain what the State will go to. She could investigate it further.

Frank Bood, 230 Harris Road asked if the per pupil cost numbers are realistic and accurate and what are they reflecting. Is this the whole budget, is transportation being deducted?

G. Lanza stated this is a district comparison of other towns.

Deana Chrzan stated this includes high school and special education children.

G. Lanza asked if anyone else had any other questions or comments.

Mark Hirschboeck, 257 Snake Meadow Hill Road inquired about raises stating that the superintendent is getting a raise and why such a substantial increase to the principal's salary.

G. Lanza stated that a part-time administrator's salary was added to the principal's salary line item. The duties of the clinical supervisor have been split. Discussion was held and it was explained that part of the salary has been moved. The principal's increase is 2 percent; the administrator's increase is 1.5 percent.

M. Hirschboeck also stated that when his daughter started school, the enrollment of the school was approximately 525 students and last fiscal year the enrollment was 375. How do you explain that salaries keep increasing but the responsibilities and duties of the teachers are decreasing with fewer students in the classroom? How are raises justified?

G. Lanza stated that salaries are negotiated.

D. Shippee asked if the raises went to arbitration and stated these raises are from three years ago and we are in the third year of the contract.

G. Lanza stated yes.

M. Hirschboeck stated that it is frustrating to taxpayers as the quality of the school is going down and so isn't property values and making it difficult for homeowner's to sell.

Tracie Sneed, 69 Newport Road stated that her concern is the amount of budget the school is reflecting when the census is down. It is not proportionate, there is no comparability.

G. Lanza stated that classrooms are down to two sections per grade level except for one grade level. You still have the operating costs and the cost to maintain the building, regardless on the number of students.

T. Sneed asked if the school and town have looked to high deductible health plans which the majority of employers are going to because of the cost of benefits.

G. Lanza stated we are part of the Connecticut Partnership Plan.

D. Chrzan stated that when the school signed up the Partnership Plan it was for a three year commitment and we are entering the third year.

D. Shippe asked if anyone else had any other questions or comments.

Sherri Hirschboeck, 257 Snake Meadow Hill Road stated that the census is down and the school employs a superintendent, a special education director, a principal, and a social worker all of whom deal with disciplinary issues at the school, and with the census down, we have more people dealing with the disciplinary structure of the school. After doing research, do we need a superintendent being a small sized school? Extra duties have been added to the social worker who is now also handling disciplinary issues, taking duties away from the principal and switching things around, the administrators should be doing the jobs they were hired to do and get rid of the superintendent. S. Hirschboeck also stated the school should hire someone at a lower salary to handle some of those things and let the principal handle the discipline as she is supposed to.

D. Shipped stated it is State law to have a superintendent. There was a state bill proposed allowing schools with an enrollment under 500 pupils to be exempt from this requirement, but that law has not passed yet.

S. Hirschboeck also stated that we spend a lot of money on salaries, but that there is no money available to do science experiments.

D. Shippee stated that this is a school issue, not a budget issue.

S. Hirschboeck stated priorities need to be considered as far as where the money as a town is spent on the school budget as to what goes to the employees versus the kids. The kids need to be the priority.

P. Ball questioned the year-to-date certified personnel expense through April 30 in the amount of \$877,964.87 and the budgeted amount is \$1.5 million. Why would there be so much money left if you paid ten (10) months and have two (2) months left.

D. Chrzan stated that the year to date expense is actually through April 9 and the year to date expense is over \$1 million.

P. Ball stated there is a difference between instructional supplies, testing supplies and textbooks going down. Do you have a replacement in mind?

G. Lanza stated there are an ample amount of textbooks, a contract to keep them updated, and a surplus of supplies. Some electronic formats are also being used.

P. Ball asked in regards to the IT budget, last year the repairs and maintenance and computer hardware dropped significantly. Are you buying new computers? Last year the budgeted amount for repairs and maintenance was \$6,500 and this year's budgeted amount is \$1,000 and for the hardware, last year the budgeted amount was \$33,000 and this year's budgeted amount is \$15,000.

G. Lanza stated the school is using Chrome books for grades three (3) to eight (8) and tablets for the younger ages.

P. Ball stated that she did not understand what E/B stands for and E/B Insurance (Page 5 of the Board of Education's Budget) is listed twice. Are you doubling the insurance or a misprint?

D. Chrzan stated that the duplicate E/B insurance is an error.

P. Ball also asked about legal services and if the school has pending litigation and what is community engagement in the amount of \$4,000.

G. Lanza stated that the legal services are for negotiations and the community engagement expense is a picnic and an event welcoming families.

P. Ball asked if the director of special education is also the acting superintendent. Is the salary in line and are you anticipating hiring another superintendent?

Leatrice Shippee stated that this has not been discussed yet.

D. Shippee asked if anyone else had any other questions or comments. There were none.

**Item 2: Itemized Estimates for Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Board of Selectmen Budget:**

Lincoln Cooper, Selectmen, stated that Russell Gray, First Selectmen is not feeling well tonight and he with John Firlík shall present the budget.

L. Cooper began the Power Point presentation for the 2018-2019 proposed Board of Selectmen Budget by stating that the budget is constructed of two components; money that comes in, mostly from taxes, and money that goes out. State revenue decreased in the amount of \$107,707. Anticipated expenses include twenty-nine (29%) of the budget going toward notes and loans for our schools. The Sterling Community School is ten (10) years old and the high school is fifteen (15) years old. Highways - Road Resurfacing expense has increased to allow for more roads to be paved or repaired and Public Safety – Street Lights expenses decreased as the Town is moving towards replacing the street lights with LED lights. Other items that were covered include: Grand List Components, Revaluation Information, which is mandated every five (5) years, Key Budget Information, School Related Expenses accounting for 33.78 percent of the budget, Bid Information, Library and Recreation Programs, and Capital Improvement Projects.

L. Cooper asked if anyone had any questions or comments.

F. Bood asked if the Town has any plans on how to address the pothole situation which is progressively getting worse and worse every year.

L. Cooper stated that additional money has been added to road resurfacing. Potholes are filled one by one. Hopefully, with extra money in the budget, perhaps the Town can grind up some of the roads and do an overlay coat. The Town employs two (2) highway workers and they maintain fifty (50) miles of road. Marlene Cook, 541 Gibson Hill Road asked if the Town could employ two (2) more highway workers.

L. Cooper stated that would cost the Town approximately \$100,000 for each employee including benefits.

M. Cook also asked if the Town could employ part-time workers to address the tree limbs that are hanging over many of the roads.

L. Cooper stated that he realizes there is tree cleanup to do resulting from the last storm, but the highway crew's first priority right now is filling potholes.

T. Sneed asked if we are working with the State regarding the tree limbs hanging over Route 14, Route 14A and the bridge on Route 14A.

D. Shippee stated that this is handled by the State, as they are State roads.

T. Sneed stated she heard the repair of the bridge was taken off the list of bridges to be completed.

D. Shippee stated that he believes that the bridge work has been restored to the State budget and the State is working on the bridge near the ball field.

L. Cooper stated that the Town was told that the bridge on Route 14A was scheduled to be replaced as well as the bridge on Route 14. The State held a public hearing at the Town Hall and when money was tight in Hartford, the Governor stated that all bridge work would be suspended. A bridge that needed to be replaced yesterday because it is dangerous, all of sudden is no longer in need of repair. This week the State was at the bridge doing test borings. The Town's engineer inspected both bridges and he deemed them both to be safe.

Jackie Angelone, 879 Gibson Hill Road stated she is happy that Gibson Hill Road will be getting paved, but would like to address the issue of adding law enforcement back in the budget.

J. Firlík stated that the Town had a resident trooper for several years and it did not work out well for us. It was not the right fit. The salary was outrageous; the hours they gave us were less than exemplary; we never knew when they would be here and when they were here it was when nothing was going on; and as a Town, we deemed it appropriate to not have that program. In return, the State Police in Danielson promised us they would step up patrols and we would be covered.

J. Angelone stated knowing that is not the case; what do we need to do to support the increase of law enforcement in our Town?

J. Firlík stated you brought it up, it is a subject we can put back on the table. It's not going to be inexpensive, but we can discuss it. If that is what the Town wants then that is what we will talk about.

D. Shippee stated that if the Town decided to go with a constable, the cost of the insurance alone would be one million dollars per year.

L. Cooper stated that the Board of Selectmen can look into it.

L. Cooper asked if anyone else had any other questions or comments.

F. Bood asked for clarification on how many miles of road the Town maintains.

L. Cooper stated 49 miles. Discussion followed and the consensus was between 46 and 50 miles.

L. Cooper asked if anyone else had any other questions or comments.

P. Ball asked if the money for filling potholes comes from road resurfacing or from the Local Capital Improvement Plan.

L. Cooper stated that the Local Capital Improvement Plan is going toward Gibson Hill Road.

P. Ball stated that Pine Hill Road and Ledge Hill Road are scheduled to be resurfaced. Is that money coming from Capital Improvement or is that part of road resurfacing.

J. Gustavson stated from the Board of Selectmen's budget, Road Resurfacing.

L. Cooper stated that a portion of Pine Hill Road shall be paved, not the entire road and Ledge Hill Road.

P. Ball asked what the cost is to pave.

D. Shippee stated that it is very expensive. One mile is about \$100,000.

F. Bood asked to weigh in on the matter as it was discussed earlier tonight at the Board of Selectmen's meeting. Frank stated that Gibson Hill Road is 4.88 miles. The surface shall be grinded down to twelve (12) inches to give a brand new base, re-grade, new driveway aprons to every driveway, and there are 100 driveway aprons. The cost per mile is \$178,266; that is compacted to four inches with a lifespan of about twenty-five years. To fix other roads is a temporary measure, good for about ten to fifteen years with a significantly lower cost. The \$100,000 per mile is not there anymore. The reason the rate on Gibson Hill Road is so high is because the Town is using grant money which requires prevailing wage which adds another \$172,000 to the bill.

N. Cook asked what the total cost is to pave Gibson Hill Road.

F. Bood stated it is \$1,274,515.

P. Ball asked if all of that is grant subsidized.

F. Bood stated that \$400,000 is subsidized.

L. Cooper stated because it is State money it comes with strings; such as, paying prevailing wage.

P. Ball asked where the remainder of the money will come from.

L. Cooper stated that some of the money is grant money, some is coming from LoCIP.

J. Gustavson stated there is some money in Town Aid Highway that the Town will be using and some money remains in Road Resurfacing for Fiscal Year 2017-2018 that will also be used.

L. Cooper asked if anyone else had any other questions or comments. There were none.

**Item 3: Estimate of the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Local Capital Improvement Plan and Budget:** L.

Cooper explained that the Local Capital Improvement Plan and Budget is "free" money that comes from the State. The Town keeps a budget five (5) years out on the money with a spending plan. The money is not raised by taxes; it is money from the State of Connecticut to be spent on capital improvement projects.

N. Cook stated the Local Capital Improvement money is to be used one (1) time for non-reoccurring capital projects; a new building or paving and cannot be used for education.

L. Cooper asked if anyone else had any other questions or comments. There were none.

D. Shippee stated if the budgets as presented tonight go to a referendum, the mil rate would increase 0.2 mils. Prior to the public hearing tonight, the legislature passed the State budget and is giving some money back to the municipalities. Depending on how much money we get back, the Town could be looking at a zero (0) percent mil rate increase.

**Item 4: All persons will be heard regarding any item of expenditure they may wish for the Board of Finance to consider for inclusion in the 2018-2019 Budget:** There were none.

The Town Meeting for the proposed budgets is scheduled for Wednesday, May 23, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sterling Town Hall/Municipal Building Gym and the Board of Selectmen will adjourn the Town Meeting to a vote by referendum scheduled for Wednesday, May 30<sup>th</sup> from noon to 8:00 p.m. in the gym.

The public hearing closed at 8:07 p.m.

May 9, 2018

**Call to Order:** The special meeting of the Sterling Board of Finance was called to order at 8:10 p.m. Roll was called: David Shippee-present; Bruce Lindberg-present; Neil Cook-present; Neil Delmonico-present; Robert Salisbury-present; and Peter Rabbitt-present. Staff present-Lincoln Cooper, and Joyce Gustavson.

**II. Consider & Act on Public Hearing Comments on the Proposed 2018-2019 Board of Education Budget:** B. Lindberg made a motion, seconded by R. Salisbury to table any action on the Proposed 2018-2019 Board of Education Budget until we see what the State is giving back and to schedule a special meeting for Tuesday, May 15, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in Room #15 at the Sterling Municipal Building, 1183 Plainfield Pike, Oneco, CT. All voted in favor of the motion.

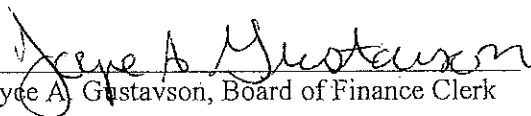
**III. Consider & Act on Public Hearing Comments on the Proposed 2018-2019 Board of Selectmen's Budget:** B. Lindberg made a motion, seconded by R. Salisbury to table any action on the Proposed 2018-2019 Board of Selectmen's Budget until we see what the State is giving back and to schedule a special meeting for Tuesday, May 15, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in Room #15 at the Sterling Municipal Building, 1183 Plainfield Pike, Oneco, CT. All voted in favor of the motion.

**IV. Consider & Act on Public Hearing Comments on the Proposed 2018-2019 Local Capital Improvement Plan and Budget:** N. Cook made a motion, seconded by P. Rabbitt to keep the proposed Local Capital Improvement Plan and Budget as it was presented this evening in the amount of \$369,282.02 and not make any changes to it. All voted in favor of the motion.

**V. Consider & Act on Public Hearing Comments Regarding Any Item of Expenditure to be Considered for Inclusion in the Proposed 2018-2019 Budget:** B. Lindberg made a motion, seconded by R. Salisbury to table this item to the special meeting to be held Tuesday, May 15, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in Room #15 at the Sterling Municipal Building, 1183 Plainfield Pike, Oneco, CT. All voted in favor of the motion.

**VI. Adjournment:** N. Cook made a motion, seconded by N. Delmonico to adjourn at 8:25 p.m. All voted in favor of the motion.

Attest:

  
Joyce A. Gustavson, Board of Finance Clerk