

UPDATE: How and Why Education Spending Is Up by 2.16% — Explanations From Town Officials

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Editor's note: Here are three more statements from Monday's votes approving the town education budget. All are marked "Update" below. They give a better picture on what town officials think of school spending.

Several town officials spoke with prepared comments to the Representative Town Meeting about the education budget, with all of them defending it as, overall a good budget.

The 2016-2017 education budget, which was approved by the RTM without changes, is up 2.16 percent from the Fiscal Year '16-'17 budget passed last year, although it will be \$2.2 million in the hole if the state eliminates all of its Education Cost Sharing grant to the town.

(In that case, money for some projects could be bonded and the money used to fill the hole, Board of Finance Chairman Jon Zagrodzky said.)

Several town officials spoke to the Representative Town Meeting about the proposed education budget before the RTM discussed it further voted on it. They all had prepared statements, including the two published in full, below.

In addition, Zagrodzky had a lot to say about the education budget ([his speech is here](#)), and RTM Education Committee Chairman Dennis Maroney gave his committee's reports on the education operating budget and capital projects budget (now included in this article).

Maroney's statement — which was the Education Committee's report on the budget — was much less supportive of some parts of the budget, even though the report recommended approval.

These are the full texts (with slight changes, as noted at the bottom of this article):

UPDATE: Dennis Maroney, RTM Education Committee Reports on Education Budget

Good evening, I am Dennis Maroney of district 3 and Chairman of the Education committee of the RTM. I would like to move 17-15c, an appropriation in the general fund to the Education operating budget of 95,874,776, may I have a second.

The recommended budget for 2017-2018 is the lowest increase in recent memory. In the last five years the lowest budget was 2.93 percent and an average of 4.42 percent.

The proposed budget is a 4.5 percent increase over last years budget, but that number includes monies for the State of Connecticut proposed adjustments that may eliminate \$2.2 million of excess cost reimbursement. If that number would be removed from the proposed budget the actual increase would be 2.16 percent, the lowest amount in at least 5 years.

Staffing Way Up

In analysis of since 2013-2014 which is the year before the Special Education crisis there have been 53.94 new hires — 75 percent or 40.41 positions are directly attributable the special ed — including teachers, nurses, para professionals and secretaries.

This leaves 13.53 positions left in general ed — 3 teachers, 2 athletic trainers, 2 curriculum, and 3.3 administrators. The remaining are nurses, paraprofessionals and secretaries. The major driver for the increase of the Education budget is primarily special education along with personnel salary increases and Health and insurance.

This budget has a number of the new hires. In this budget are seven new department chairs, an athletic trainer, and a new full time counselor at Darien High.

New Spending in Other Programs

Also in this budget are increases to the technology plan of \$624,575. This includes monies for new smartBoards, wireless upgrades, professional development and software subscriptions to support instruction.

The district is in Year Two of a planned four-year rollout plan, and as such Chromebooks for elementary and iPads for high school [students] are slated to be purchased. This will expand the 1:1 initiative for Grades 4 through 9 in 2017-2018.

The proposed budget also includes a plan to create an alternative high school, Fitch Academy, located off campus at the Darien Library teen room for Year One. Two teachers, who will be relocated from both Middlesex Middle School and Darien High School, will staff Fitch Academy.

This new alternative high school will address children who are having difficulty coping with the HS be it for medical or social reasons. This program is a pilot for this year, but hopefully this program will prosper and help kids who may be having difficulties in the larger school setting.

Darien continues to track below its District Reference Group in per pupil spending. Darien spends approximately \$363 less than New Canaan, \$234 less than Weston, \$1,425 less than Westport and \$300 less than the DRG average.

Highlighting Four Items

The committee had a difficult year this year even with the low percentage increase. There were basically four items that drew our attention during the budget cycle that I will highlight.

1. Another High School Counselor

The first was the additional counselor at the high school. The committee felt that this position is needed not only to help with the difficulty in the college process but teenagers today face more emotional and social pressure with the influx of social media.

2. Alternative High School

Another item that drew the focus of the Education committee was the alternative school. This plan was not shared until the night the proposed budget was voted on by the Board of Education.

At that meeting the plan was to roll out the Fitch Academy as a pilot program for a small number of students. Dr Brenner has previously worked with two other alternative programs at previous districts and believes Darien would be very well served by having a similar program.

At previous schools this entails the program not being on the high school campus to allow those who may have difficulty with the mass of the high school or commotion to learn at a different pace and/or structure.

The committee ultimately felt the pilot program is a good idea, though we are guarded on the future costs of the program. Having said that, if we can help children who would then be placed out of district it may end up being a cost savings program as well as a needed educational program as well. A win-win for all.

3. Tech Spending

The technology plan also has concerns from the committee. There are concerns the amount is too much for the difficult times in the state. Also there are concerns with too much screen time with elementary students and questions of why iPad for Darien High School students.

4. New Department Head Positions

The final program that the committee wrestled with was the department head chairs. There is one each for the major academic subjects — math, English, social studies, World Language [Program] and science and two for special education one each at Middlesex and Darien High School.

The goal of the chairs is to stabilize the teaching across classes, so that students who take the same class with different teachers will have the same educational experience.

These chairs will teach one class per year alternating between Middlesex Middle School and DHS and also will have supervisor responsibility to teachers in the discipline. So a science teacher will be evaluated by the science chair, which hopefully will lead to a better evaluation and better ways to deliver content.

Also, the chairs will help with the transition from middle school to high school.

The committee had a difficult time with adding seven new additional heads.

There was concern that this was a luxury that was not needed in this uncertain time by the state. Others felt that the administration is trying to innovate by providing better and deeper instruction to teachers, which will lead to a better classroom experience for students.

Many felt that seven was too much and would be better to do a pilot program with one or two, but the administration did a fantastic job with the budget that the increase of the seven new positions is only \$240,000.

On 1 May 2017 the committee met to vote on the education operating budget. Present were Dr. Brenner, superintendent; Michael Harman, Board of Education chairman; other members of the Board of Education and many parents. (See the video of the meeting, just below.)

We discussed the topics I have gone over previously. There were two amendments to reduce the proposed budget but both failed. One motion was to reduce the operating budget by \$390,000 with failed 4 in favor 10 opposed and one abstention.

The second amendment was to reduce 200,000 which failed 8 opposed 5 in favor and 2 abstentions. The committee voted 11 in favor 3 opposed and one abstention to support the recommended budget to the RTM and recommends the RTM do the same.

Those in favor of the budget believe we need to continue to support the initiatives and trust the administration. They believe that the Board is trying innovative solutions to educate in financial prudent manner and provide a richer educational experience. Those opposed feel that with the financial difficulties in the State that this is not the year to try new initiatives.

Friction in the Process

This was not the best budget year. The percentage increase is one of the lowest in recent memory as stated before, but there was a lot of animosity.

We are normally in agreement with the board, but this year whether due to the single day budget process or our questions and sense of the meeting vote in January where we were unanimously opposed the three new initiatives, this was a very trying year.

We plan on discussing how to work better with the Board in the future. We would like to thank Dr. Brenner and the administration and the members of the Board of Education as well as members of the Council of Darien School Parents for working with us this budget cycle.

[RTM Education Committee 5-1-17](#) from [Darien TV79](#) on [Vimeo](#).

UPDATE: Education Committee Report on Capital Projects

Good evening I am Dennis Maroney of District 3 and chairman of the Education committee.

On Monday, 1 May 2017 the Education Committee met and voted on the \$3,254,653 that is part of the capital budget pertaining to the schools.

- The larger capital items are replacing two older trucks with an estimate of \$48,500 for each,
- updates to **Royle School** such as upgrading the fire panel, digital heating controls, and replacing the boiler room sump pump totaling \$226,302.
- At **Ox Ridge** a backflow preventer is needed at a cost of \$43,974.
- **Holmes** is requesting to replace doors from the 1933 original building and swapping fixed windows on the second floor for ones that can provide ventilation at a cost of \$36,000 for both.

- **Hindley** has window replacements and a backflow preventer at a cost of \$312,029.
- **Middlesex** has repairs to the parking lot, a backflow water preventer, new gas burner, and fix floor expansion joints — total estimated cost is \$259,989.
- At **Darien High School** there are a few projects — asphalt repair for \$65,000, replace oil burners with natural gas for \$160,000 a storage facility for athletic equipment for \$250,000, repair the track for 100k and expand the cafeteria for \$1,689,359.

Cafeteria Expansion and Friction in the Budget Process

The committee has had difficulty with the cafeteria since it was proposed last year. This could be the major reason for the difficulties with this budget cycle. It seems that every meeting we were given a new piece of information.

For four months many were under the impression that to remove the current tiers was a cost of \$550,000 as that was presented on a slide in December by the Board of Education and not corrected until the end of April.

At our last meeting, it was stated this project would not begin in 2017 but rather in the summer of 2018. At the tour of the schools on 18 March, we were having conversations saying it would be good to resurface the track and install the new storage facility at the same time of the expansion of the cafeteria and now that has changed.

There are some on the committee who feel a restructure of the current footprint could alleviate the problem for a fraction of the cost. There are others who believe the cost is too steep for the additional seats.

There was a motion made Monday 1 May to reduce the capital projects by \$1.4 million which was defeated 8 votes to 7. The majority of the committee believes the proposal put forth by the Board of Education answers the problem with overcrowding and will help with potential future enrollments.

The committee voted to approve the \$3,254,653 by a vote of 8 in favor and 7 opposed and recommends the RTM do the same.

UPDATE: Jack Davis: Finance & Budget Committee Report on Capital Projects

This statement, about capital projects for both the school district and the rest of the town, has more information on school district projects. The projects may or may not be bonded — town officials make tactical decisions on that later, based on where they think the town will save more money.

I am Jack Davis, District 3 and Chair of the **Finance and Budget [F&B] Committee**.

I move “Section B” of RTM Resolution (17-15) Appropriation in the Reserve Fund for Capital and Non-Recurring Expenditures.

If there are no objections, I propose to waive the reading of the Resolution.

In the past capital was discussed as part of the Board of Selectmen operating budget and again in the Other Appropriations for Funds. Technically all of the individual projects approved reside in this Fund's appropriations and the Board of Selectmen capital line item is a mere transfer to this Fund. We will see how it goes.

The total appropriation for capital and non-recurring items for the current budget is \$6,710,656. On a quick blush, it appears to have a year to year increase of \$1,530,429 or 23 percent.

However, included in this year's budget are four projects that were deferred last year the Town Hall generator for \$260,000 in the Board of Selectmen capital budget and the Darien High School cafeteria (\$1.7 million), the DHS storage shed (\$250,000) and replace of a truck, which by next year would qualify for antique plates (about \$50,000).

Those initiative total \$2.26 million — which means new capital projects for the current year is less than what was originally proposed during last budget cycle.

The rationale for moving forward on these project this year is that both Board of Selectmen and Board of Education operating budgets are lower resulting allowing the Town to move forward with a reasonable tax rate and still make infrastructure investments.

The proposed capital from the Board of Selectmen is \$3,456,000 — increasing \$292,000 or 9.2 percent from the prior year. Again, that increase includes the deferred Town Hall generator for \$260,000 — significantly reducing the increase had it been moved forward last year.

Within the Board of Selectmen capital request is the funding of several key reserve accounts — examples being:

- \$200,000 for the total cost of the five-year revaluation services;
- \$475,000 for fire company apparatus replacements (we do not bond for replacing our fire engines);
- \$185,000 for replacement of Department of Public Works equipment,
- \$210,000 for dredging sedimentation basins and
- \$885,000 for repaving of our roads. The repaving is a capital expense that will not be bonded and done on an annual basis.

Within the F&B Committee, there was a discussion regarding the Town Hall generator but the committee, as a whole, strongly believed this was necessary.

The next part of the capital is the Board of Education capital improvements. The amount is \$3,255,000 or a \$1,238,000 increase or 61 percent.

Again over \$2 million of requested increase included in the budget request was deferred last year — meaning the current years request for new capital projects is effectively down \$762,000 or 38 percent from the prior year's amount.

Key projects discussed were the Darien High School Cafeteria and the DHS storage shed.

Also included in these capital projects are:

- replacement of oil burners with natural gas at Darien High School and Middlesex Middle School totaling \$250,000 — that will yield significant future cost savings
- backflow preventors on water service at several schools for about \$130,000,
- resurfacing the Middlesex Middle School [parking lot] (\$135,000) and
- repairing the oval track at Darien High School (\$100,000).

Last year the Board of Finance requested the Board of Education provide greater information on the cafeteria expansion. With the bubble classes currently in seventh and eighth grades, the potential for additional high school students due to the three developments and the prior conversion of the cafeteria annex several years ago to classrooms.

The current sitting for students does not meet the number of students having lunch, which varies within the four shifts. The acoustics in the cafeteria is terrible — about the same as attending a NASCAR race.

Within the F&B committee, all agreed that there is a need for additional seating and a need to fix the acoustics. The Board of Education reviewed various options and decided that the option that best met their needs was to expand the existing cafeteria.

The guidelines from the Board of Finance were straightforward — if you do propose a fix to the cafeteria — do it right, there was no appetite for the Board of Education to come back later requesting additional funding or fixes.

Most within the Finance & Budget Committee agreed with the plan selected and presented at numerous Board of Education Facilities Subcommittee meetings and at the Board of Education meetings.

A member of the [RTM] Education Committee has proposed the elimination of the elevated tiers suggesting that it might reduce the total cost by \$700,000 to \$1 million, based upon the cost of removing tiers at \$450,000 as presented in a BOE document. There was discussion by a Finance & Budget Committee member that the \$450,000 was not the total cost.

At our meeting on April 23, 2017 with 13 of 15 members present, the RTM F&B committee voted 10 in favor, none opposed, and 3 abstentions to approve the full capital proposed for both the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education and recommend the same to the full RTM. No motions were made to cut any capital.

The three abstentions represent a minority opinion and their rationale for abstaining was:

- While they like other capital projects there was concern on the cafeteria
- While the cafeteria needs acoustics, better seat design might solve the problem

An additional note, subsequent to the RTM Finance & Budget Committee vote, the original architect document surfaced that was discussed at previous Board of Education Facilities sub-committee meetings however never posted to the Board of Education website.

That document (option A1) showed that the option to remove the tiers was \$450,000 but it was only part of the full project — other costs such as floor replacement, fixing loose connections, contingencies brought the full project cost to about \$1.5 million — resulting in a savings of not \$700,000 to \$1 million but only \$150,000. The lapse of not brining this document forward sooner created some angst — to say the least.

Jack Davis, RTM Finance & Budget Committee Report on Education Budget

Darienite.com editor's note: Keep in mind that when Darien was found to have been providing less than necessary special education programs several years ago, the town was ordered by the state to improve them, which forced increased spending.

Thank you Mr. Maroney and the Education Committee for a very thorough report on the Board of Education budget. I will try to repeat as little as possible.

A Bit About the Process and Rules

As there are new RTM members as well as reminding existing members, I wanted to remind everyone about the uniqueness of the Board of Education operating budget.

In the state of Connecticut, Boards of Education are elected by the local citizenry and their operating expenses funded by local tax dollars but their authority comes from the state. As such, the Board of Finance and RTM do not have line item veto as we do with Board of Selectmen and Board of Education capital [budgets] and the Board of Selectmen operating budget.

We approve an aggregate amount for expenditures — the line items that both RTM Education and **F&B [Finance & Budget]** committees reviewed are placeholders. An extreme situation to show as an example is:

- If in the budget the Board of Education has purchase of football uniforms for \$1,000
- And you don't like that the Blue Wave has black uniforms
- You could propose a \$1,000 cut trying to stop the purchase of black uniforms

- But even if the cut passes, the Board of Education could still buy black uniforms and reduce another part of the budget by \$1,000 — they are not beholden to the rationale of any proposed reduction
- We simply do not have line item veto

This gets into the purview of the Board of Finance and RTM. We approve an aggregate budget, it's not our purview to determine the minutia.

We can discuss, influence, cajole, disagree or agree during the budget discussions but at the end of the day it is up to our elected Board of Education members to determine how that aggregate amount is distributed within the goals that they, the Board of Education, establishes every August/September.

How Much the Education Budget Has Been Growing

A bit of background prior to getting into the discussion of the actual budget. There has been a great deal of discussion regarding the growth in the aggregate total Board of Education budget within the F&B committee. A frequent question is “*What are the drivers of the increase?*” — especially as the total school population appears to be level or showing only minor increases.

An analysis of the five-year **CAGR** [[compound annual growth rate](#)] for the various components of our budget indicated the following:

- The Board of Selectmen specific operating budget has grown by 1.88 percent
- The library operating budget has grown by 2.02 percent
- The Board of Education operating budget has grown by 3.25 percent
- But if you look within the Board of Education budget — the main budget without special education has grown only 1.99 percent — consistent with the Board of Selectmen and close to the five-year inflation rate of 1.61 percent.

Long-Term Growth in Special Education Costs

So what is driving the special education budget? You heard in Dennis' [Maroney's] Education committee report that since the year before the special education crisis — of the 53.9 new **FTEs** [[Full-Time Equivalent job positions](#)] 70 percent are directly attributable to SPED — including teachers, nurses and para professionals.

A further analysis shows significant growth in **[OOD] Out-of-district placement** — as our district did not have in-house capacity to meet the needs of students. These CAGR over five years are stark:

- Fully loaded SPED five-year CAGR is 7.03 percent
- OOD tuition five-year CAGR is 11.6 percent (from 4.0 million to 6.3 million)
- OOD tuition with OOD transportation CAGR is 11.4 percent (\$4.6 million to \$7.1 million)
- The 10-year CAGR for OOD tuition is a whopping 34 percent (from \$4.5 million to \$6.3 million)
- The total cost for OOD and OOD transportation represents 7.3 percent of the BOE's total operating

budget — and we are out of whack when compared to OOD expense and number of students out-placed in comparison to our peer communities.

Some Factors in the Rise of Special Ed Costs

These are the costs that are driving the Board of Education budget increases. Having been involved with the Board of Education budgets and specifically understanding the related costs associated with special education — it is important to know that there is no statistical or empirical data that shows a correlation between the growth in the district's total student population and the number of special education students.

And more importantly, there is no correlation between the total student body and the mix of special education students' needs. That is similar to the growth in total student population [and] has no correlation to the number of bright or athletic students or students with blond hair with blue eyes — it is driven by other factors, not growth in student population.

The drivers of Board of Education budget growth are important to understand. It is the underlying basis for two of the more discussed initiatives in this budget — the Fitch Academy and the department chairs.

Both were created to address building in-house capacity; delivering services and reducing future costs as well as improving the overall quality of education. And we can't keep asking for the Board of Education to make financial changes but require them to stay a rigid non-innovative course — you can't have it both ways. Life and business doesn't work that way.

One other thing about the special education cost center expenses. Not all expenses are attributable to special education students. Mainstream students use the services of social workers, school psychologists and other services. There is another classification as well — 504 students that aren't considered special education.

Those students also access paraprofessionals, social workers, school phycologists or may receive homebound tutoring or a slew of other services included in the special education cost center.

Initiatives That May Lower Costs

The Fitch Academy is not a new educational concept — it may be for Darien — but it has been successfully implemented in many highly regarded Long Island and Westchester schools for some time. It has also been implemented within our own state.

Dr. Brenner has been associated with two successful programs — one as an administrator and the other as superintendent. There is a difficult concept with the Fitch Academy — it's not special education but it can have a direct impact on future special education costs. It is a volunteer participation; it addresses a specific need identified as having sufficient critical mass within the district to address; and it is a pilot program that

can be unwound if necessary.

Have all the *i*'s been dotted and the *r*'s crossed? No. Would the Board of Education, Board of Finance and RTM Education and F&B committee members like a bit more long-term financial detail? Yes. But it will be ready for prime time come September. And the long-term financials will follow.

Let me add one more thing. The cost of this pilot is \$24,000. If just one Darien student doesn't need to be out-placed because the Fitch Academy exists, because there is a place for that student to land — the return on investment is a whopping 300 to 400 percent of the pilot's cost.

New Department Chairs Positions

The department chairs [proposal] that was discussed by the [RTM] Education Committee is the next biggest area of discussion. No one is happy with adding seven new administrators, but the net addition is only 3.3 due to reorganization and elimination of other administrative positions.

The total cost is approximately \$300,000, as there are reductions in curriculum positions and stipends, and they will all teach one class a semester and other associated costs. This is cost deferral, a middle-management issue and a quality of education initiative.

The current system of peer department heads does not work — it is not currently accepted best practices in education. And it needs to be done and has needed to be done for some time.

There are changes in our education system — some of our teachers are resistant to change be it consistency and continuity between curriculum and testing within a grade or subject matter; implementation of the new One-to-One technology tool or simply compiling with **IEPs [Individual Education Plans for students who get special education services]** and ensuring what has been promised to the student is actually being implemented. And this latter one has the capacity to create financial havoc if IEPs are not compiled with.

The department chairs address these issues with the authority to take corrective actions. Simply put, it ensures continuity and a consistent quality education for all students and facilitates our students smooth transition from grade to grade and from Middlesex Middle School to Darien High School regardless of which teacher a student had prior to their next level.

Perspective on This Year's Budget Growth

As for the overall budget, the budget is \$95.9 million, up \$2.0 million or 2.16 percent from last year. Not only is the increase in terms of percentage smaller than in prior years but the total dollar increase is smaller as well.

This is the lowest budget increase in at least 15 years and it is being accomplished with the 3 percent teacher salary contract increase approved by the RTM earlier this year.

There are risks in this budget. The budget assumes a continuation of the safety net reimbursement to towns by the state referred to as Excess Cost Reimbursement. That has been under attack as Hartford continues to look to cut all educational payments to financially well managed communities.

Hartford seems to believe that there is a correlation between wealthy communities and their lack of special education students. The current budget includes reimbursement of approximately \$2.3 million. The Board of Finance is aware of this risk as are the RTM committees.

How the F&B Committee Voted

At our meeting on Monday, April 23, with 13 of 15 members present, the F&B Committee voted to approve the education operating budget with 10 in favor; none opposed and three abstentions.

The abstentions representing a minority opinion were related to:

- The growth in the overall Board of Education operating budget with little or no growth in total student population
- The lack of a fully defined Fitch Academy without long term financials
- The poor communication by the Board of Education during this budget cycle
- And lastly, as one member stated, they were not in favor of adding seven administrators but had difficulty voting against the budget as it was only a 2.16 percent increase.

Michael Harman, Board of Education Chairperson

Here's the full statement to the RTM from Michael Harman, chairperson of the Board of Education:

Mister Moderator, members of the RTM, elected officials and the town of Darien. Thank you for the opportunity to present the Board of Education recommended budget for 2017-2018.

Thank you to the RTM Education and F&B [Finance and Budget] committees for sharing your perspective and to the parents, teachers and administrators for your efforts and your commitment to our children.

It's Only Up 2.16 %

Tonight, I'd like to provide a high-level overview of the Board of Education's 2017-2018 recommended budget of \$95,855,777. As background, the Board of Education and this RTM voted to ratify the new teacher's contract which included a 3.4 percent increase.

Even with that increase, the administration and the BoE were able to capture efficiencies, create new programs affecting all learners, and lay the ground work for future innovations and savings all within a

2.16 percent budget [increase] —the lowest increase in more than a decade.

Darien High School Cafeteria Expansion

The Board of Education's capital projects request is \$3,254,653. As you are aware, unlike the Operating Budget, the RTM has line-item authority on these 24 projects.

Discussion at committee meetings generated the most questions concerning the cafeteria project so please allow me to provide some detail to your full body.

The Cafeteria expansion proposal was deferred by the Board of Finance from our 2016-2017 capital budget with the charge that we ensure that the project not be "value engineered" as In the Fall of 2016 we engaged an architectural firm and reviewed multiple options.

Darienite.com editor's note on "value engineered" — The term is used by engineering firms and architects to describe adjustments or even plans made with certain budget constraints in mind. In Darien government, it's come to mean removing beneficial features of town projects during the planning, design or even building phases of a project in order to meet budget goals in ways that cause future problems when those beneficial features need to be added back later — potentially at a much higher cost. Essentially, it comes down to being penny-wise and pound-foolish.

The option presented to you tonight meets the core needs of increasing capacity, designing a hospitable environment — which includes necessary acoustical upgrades and optimal seating for an educational environment, and creating flexibility for alternative use.

The final approved concept presented tonight represents the best solution from an educational and financial standpoint. This project is scheduled for completion by the start of the 2018-2019 school year. Approval of this project is critical to accommodate the large class arriving that Fall while also providing capacity for the projected future enrollment projections.

With our children as our first priority and financial prudence our guiding principle, I request that you continue to support this investment in the future of our community by supporting the Darien Board of Education 2017- 2108 budget.

Editor's note: Darienite.com added the subheadlines, made minor editorial changes for our in-house editorial style and added a few explanatory phrases or office titles within brackets ("[]").

Special thanks to Jim Cameron for making available to Darienite.com some of the photos he took for Darien TV79 tweets on Monday night.

Darienite

News for Darien

<https://darienite.com>

[RTM Budget Vote 5-8-17](#) from [Darien TV79](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Editor's note: This article originally was published on Tuesday, May 9. Dennis Maroney's two statements and Jack Davis' budget statement were added to this article at 10:50 a.m., Thursday, when the time stamp was changed for layout purposes on the home page.