

Email from Winslow School Board Member Nancy Aldrich to School Superintendent Eric Haley:

As a Winslow board member I find it disconcerting that you would speak for me without my approval. Further, this budget has changed so much since the board voted on it, I do not believe it is our budget, but rather, Paula and yours.

I have taken the responsibility given to me by the people of my district very seriously, but, I feel I can no longer participate as a board member and therefore, please accept my resignation effective immediately.

In closing, I have learned a great deal concerning the governance of a school system and appreciate the opportunity.

Nancy Aldrich

Aldrich was responding to the following email from AOS 92 Superintendent Eric Haley to Town Councilor Ken Fletcher on which she and others were copied:

On Thursday, April 16, 2015, Eric Haley <ehaley@aos92.org> wrote:

> Good afternoon Ken, I can't tell you how disappointed and concerned the Board is about the action the Town Council took at this past Monday's Council meeting. We held two public budget sessions with you and the Council to explain the rationale for our draft 2015/16 budget. After the first session you asked us to present again with two scenarios 1) a list of cuts in priority order that we would make if we were mandated to keep our expenditure increase to \$200,000 and 2) a list of cuts in priority order that we would make if we were mandated to flat fund the school budget. We did that on Wednesday the 1st of April and after the council processed the information the Board provided, we were notified by Michael Heavener that the Council would support our original budget and the mil increase would be .26. Apparently over the weekend you decided to change your mind and emailed the council to let them know you were going to seek an amendment to the school budget asking for another cut of \$97,000 at the Winslow Town Council meeting scheduled Monday April 13, 2015. Having a Waterville Board meeting scheduled for that same night and time neither Paula nor I were available to voice our concerns

about this action. You cited the history of the schools expenditures as your rationale for this action which you have fixated on for the past two years.

> By doing this you give no consideration to what the schools are facing financially in this year's budget or the coming year's budget. You give no consideration to the revenue side of the budget and you give little if any consideration to the hard work by the Board and administrative team in bringing the Council a fiscally responsible budget year after year. The decision to cut the school's budget by looking at past year's expenditures is like driving one of our old busses by looking in the rear view mirror! Unlike lots of budgeting that you probably have done during your lifetime, school budgeting is very volatile, thus the reason we anticipate a shortage in revenues this year of approximately \$200,000 in tuition. When twenty more students are projected to come to Winslow High School than actually do, at a cost of \$9,300 per student, you have a major revenue hole to fill. If one child with special needs shows up on our doorstep after the budget is passed and we need to hire a 1 on 1 ed tech for him/her we have a major hole on the expenditure side of our budget. These things happen all the time. It is for this reason that I have been answering your questions about actuals with a cautionary word to make sure to look at the whole picture (revenues) before deciding if we budget too much. The bottom line is if we are budgeting too much why don't we have an undesignated fund the size of the towns.

> Council Chair St. Amand is quoted as saying to you during the Town Council meeting that it appears you are "targeting the school budget" and I have to tell you that it sure feels that way to the Board, the administrative team and me. We were asked to pick up 3/4 of the cost for the school resource officer this year, up from the 1/4 cost we were paying and agreed to do that. Legitimately we use the school resource officer for 3/4 of the year so we should pay that fair share. However, in looking at the proposed police department budget for next year, their proposed spending is \$53,511 more than this year. When you add the savings from them only having to pay 1/4 of the school resource officer's cost (\$37,500) they now have \$91,011 more money to spend. That amount of money \$91,011 divided by the 14/15 budgeted amount of \$668,945 equals a 13.6% increase. In contrast the school's budget, if forced to cut an additional \$97,000, will be an increase on the expenditure side of 1.01%. I find it distasteful to pit one town department's budget against another. The work the police do is very important and the added expenses are surely needed and I am glad you saw fit to support their request for another officer but it does leave one wondering why you are being so hard on the schools. Could it be that you do not trust my administration and the Board to present an authentic picture of the financial needs the school face from year to year. It feels like that but I can't for a minute imagine why you would feel that way. In the 2009/10 budget which was built by the previous superintendent before we consolidated the schools expenditures were budgeted at \$14,735,420. In the next year, 2010/11, the first year my administration built the budget we reduced the budget to \$13,795,075.71, a \$940,344.29 decrease. As a matter of fact, if you compare our proposed school budget for 2015/16 of \$14,203,283.94 to the 2009/10 amount of \$14,735,420 we are \$532,136.06 less and this is six years later! I know, I know you are going to say we lost debt service of \$506,789.78 during this time. You are absolutely correct but that means we are still \$25,346.28 less than our expenditures six years ago. Is that not enough to convince you that the Board and my administrative team has been and continues to be fiscally responsible. We take

umbrage with your innuendos that we have slush funds and overages purposely built into any of our budgets and I think budget history accurately reflects this Ken. What should be, in my opinion, accolades and appreciation for being able to hold the line on spending when revenues are not what they were projected to be we get chastised for having enough money left on the expenditure side to offset the corresponding loss of revenues.

> Your actions and words regarding the school's budget and the work done by the Board and my administrative team are divisive. I pride myself with being completely open and transparent about budgets. I also think my track record proves this Ken. One of my common mantras with the administrative team is, if we can't justify/rationalize why we are doing something than we need to ask ourselves why we are doing it. This holds true for budgeting too.

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> In closing Ken, let me say I have always appreciated your interest in the school's budget and the attention to detail you give it. However I am less than lukewarm to the way you do it. Not everyone likes numbers so it is understandable why some councilors and some Board members are more interested in budgets than others. Teddy Roosevelt had a quote I like and perhaps applicable here.... The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it.

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