

City of Bristol
Special Board of Finance Meeting
April 27, 2026

A special Board of Finance meeting was held by the Board of Finance on April 27, 2026 in City Hall Meeting Room 3-1, 111 North Main Street, Bristol, Connecticut at 5 p.m. The following were in attendance: Chairman Dave Maikowski, Mayor Ellen Zoppo Sassu, Commissioners Bill Campion, Mike Massarelli, Jon Mace, and Jane Murdock. Marie O'Brien and Dante Tagariello were on Zoom. Mark Peterson was absent. Also present from the Comptroller's Office: Diane Waldron, Robin Manuele and Jessica Pilgrim.

1. Call to order

Chairperson Maikowski called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. Public Participation

None.

3. Discussion regarding the 2026-2027 budget.

Chairman Maikowski discussed the following potential changes to the Capital Budget:

- Plan of Conservation & Development - \$255,000 split over two years, \$100,000 reduction for FY27
- \$135,000 PRYCS Pick Up Truck – Recommending the use of Trust Funds historically budgeted at \$400,000 annually in the General Fund. In FY26 \$260,000 in trust surplus funds was received
- Rockwell Roof Replacements pavilion – \$200,000 split over two years, \$100,000 reduction,

This is a savings of \$335,000 to the General Fund on City side. Mayor Zoppo Sassu stated they were all supportable reductions.

Chairman Maikowski stated in talks with the BOE they have agreed they would use the additional funds in the amount of \$54,131,775 for Special Education as outlined in his proposal to fund Education and fix their structural budget issue with Special Education. This would also help on the spending cap. Iris White, Superintendent, confirmed this amount for Special Education.

The new mill rate at this point is 36.45 just under an 8% tax increase. Hopefully, funding from the state for ECS or Alliance will come through. The City will use the extra money to offset the \$11.7 million increase, if it comes through in through ECS. Should it come through as Alliance funding the Education amount can be reduced accordingly.

Iris White stated the General Education increase request is \$12,365,068 over FY26's budget. This request includes ALL (Gen Ed) salaries and benefits for the newly requested positions. With the City recommending a budget increase of \$11,764,070, of which \$8,321,070 is allocated to Special Education, \$3,442,068 is remaining to allocate to General Education. \$3,442,068 is the amount

needed to maintain current general education staffing contractual wage increases. This results in a necessary reduction of \$8,923,000 in General Education.

Iris White discussed reductions with the largest fiscal impact:

- Closing of a school - \$1,000,000
- 180 days of school (reduction of 1 day) resulting in transportation savings of 275,000
- Elimination of Middle School Sports
- Step Freezes – to be negotiated with Unions (BAPS, Teachers, Secretaries) – approximately \$2.3 million in savings
- No new positions not related to SPED
- Retirement Savings – replacing at a lower step -\$304,000
 - The BOE will not be offering Retirement Incentives

The Mayor stated there are two pieces to the ECS funding, one portion is for all cities and towns, and the other is additional and is being targeted to the larger cities of which Bristol is not a part of. It is her understanding the additional ECS funding is not being run through Alliance. There are discussions of additional funding through the Volatility Fund, but there are no amounts or a formula attached to this at this time. While this recommendation is to balance the needs of the community, an 8% tax increase may not pass at the Joint Meeting since the Board of Finance is a Board of nine and will be joined by six additional council members.

Chairman Maikowski stated the \$11.7 million is an 8% mill rate increase with no additional funding from the State. Any additional funding would lower the current proposed mill rate but as that information is not yet available the Board of Finance needs to adopt a budget.

Commissioner Murdock asked if the City has looked at furloughs, layoffs etc. The Mayor stated the City departments are running as efficiently as possible. Commissioner Massarelli agreed. Public Works is driving around in rusted trucks that are falling apart while trying to plow the streets. Commissioner Campion asked if there are any other areas of the City to reduce. The Board further discussed capital and delaying projects.

Commissioner Mace asked for further clarification on the \$6 million increase from \$3.4, for General Education.

Amy Martino explained most districts under budget SPED, so it doesn't hold the City hostage on funding it.

Mayor Zoppo Sassu stated at the end of the day the Superintendent and BOE determine how to spend the funding they are appropriated during the budget process.

Commissioner O'Brien questioned how many other municipalities have adopted budgets in the 8%.

Citizen Eric Niedmann on Zoom questioned where does the BOF stand in the reduction of force of non-tenured teachers. Chairman Maikowski stated that is not the BOF's job and that it is up to the Board of Education to determine the allocation of funds. Mike Reynolds, BFT, explained the state requires all teachers be pink slipped by May 1. This notice is sent to all possible non tenured teachers that could be affected which is a blanket non-renewal of all non-tenured teachers.

Commissioner Campion stated he would like to reduce the \$11 million increase to the BOE. A mill rate increase of 8% is devastating to a lot of the seniors and taxpayers

Mayor Zoppo Sassu discussed there is time this year for the Board of Finance to adopt on April 28th and once state aid is announced the budget can be modified at a later date. Insurance increases for both City and BOE are manageable and much lower than in the past. She is not as concerned as in the past about the spending cap, and that the city may need to take a hit to retain the teaching workforce. In addition, while the City needs to maintain affordability it has added local options for 100% disability and extended veteran options. The City needs to be strategic, and be prepared to reconvene what that state aid number is, and almost immediately start working on next year.

Chairman Maikowski, said the \$11.7 million increase is the absolute lowest amount he would support for the BOE. He still doesn't think it's enough for the BOE to address their structural budget issues as well as he thinks the money could be spent more efficiently. That also needs to be addressed going forward.

Commissioner Massarelli supports the \$11.7 million increase with the caveat that any funds from the state should go back to lower the mill rate. The BOE needs to take a corporate standpoint, rather than a municipal standpoint. BOE holds the keys to the City with over 50% of the budget and needs to be more creative to save dollars.

Commissioner Mace stated there is always something else out there. There have been cuts to the City side and not much left to cut. There's definitely overspending on the BOE side and there needs to be a review to determine how things get spent going forward, with nice to have versus have to haves.

Commissioner O'Brien would like to see a mill rate less than 8%. Additional funds should be used to offset that. The BOE needs to be innovative in how they can better use limited resources. There is a revenue problem in the City. This year we have two to three Departments dipping into their foundations and trust funds to help with their budget requests.

4. Adjournment

Commissioner Massarelli made a motion seconded by Commissioner Mace

"To adjourn at 6:25 p.m."

Following a voice vote in which there was no opposition, the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

Attest:



Diane M. Waldron
Board of Finance Clerk