

NEW HAVEN INDEPENDENT

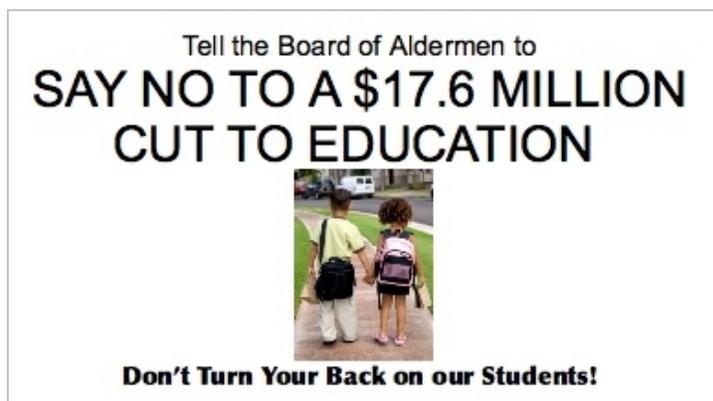
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School Reform Rescue? Or "Fearmongering"?

BY **Melissa Bailey** | APR 28, 2010 7:29 AM

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A faceoff is brewing tonight between parents organized by school officials to rally for public education, and tax-weary watchdogs looking to cut the city budget.

The showdown is set to take place at City Hall, where aldermen will convene at 6:30 p.m. for a final public hearing on the mayor's proposed [\\$476 million budget](#) for the upcoming year. (If you're not attending the hearing, you can follow it and comment on it as it happens, right here. The Independent plans to live-blog the event.)

At 6 p.m., parents and school officials are holding a rally at City Hall to protect the Board of Education's [portion of that budget](#), which is \$176 million.

The schools rally comes in response to a call from the citizen budget watchdog group [New Haven CAN](#), which is asking aldermen to cut spending in each city department by 10 percent. School officials and parent groups have been sending out flyers, letters, and emails urging parents and their children to turn out tonight to protect education funding. The messages warn that a 10 percent cut would blow a \$17.6 million hole in the schools budget, forcing layoffs and hampering the chances for the city's nationally recognized [school reform drive](#).

"Tell the Board of Aldermen to SAY NO TO A \$17.6 MILLION CUT TO EDUCATION," declares one flyer circulated among the schools. "Don't turn your back on our students!"

The flyer warns of the following consequences of a \$17.6 million cut: "NO SCHOOL CHANGE INITIATIVE; Larger Class Sizes; Fewer teachers and para[professional]s; Closing schools; Cuts to Afterschool Programming."

The flyer was sent out via email to school principals and parent leaders of the [citywide Parent Teacher Organization](#). The school system also posted the "call to action" on a [long dormant school change Facebook page](#).

The public information campaign is a joint venture of school officials and the citywide PTO, said Laoise King, the school system's chief of external affairs. She said she emailed the flyers to the schools, where the flyers were printed out and sent home in students' bookbags or with report cards.





THOMAS MACMILLAN FILE PHOTO

NHCAN's Jeffrey Kerekes (pictured) called the flyers "propaganda." He accused the school system of "fearmongering" and pitting New Haveners against each other instead of working together to find ways to spend money efficiently.

"The Mayor is clearly attempting to pit families with school-age kids against other residents, who simply say we cannot afford exponentially increasing property taxes," he said. Many of the taxpayers fighting the mayor's budget have kids in the public school system, he said.

"How many more times can the Administration try this triangulation strategy of setting community groups against each other so as to avoid making tough decisions?" Kerekes asked in [an open letter on the group's website](#). He said the mayor tried that tactic last year, when [closing senior centers](#) and cutting library hours "became the focus of community discussion in a \$600 million plus budget." The year before that, he spurred community groups to support his budget by suggesting [Stetson Library might have to be closed otherwise](#).

"When citizens ask their elected leaders to consider change, they demonize them," Kerekes wrote.

Kerekes said his group is not "singling out" the Board of Education when it calls for a 10 percent cut across the board. NHCAN has not detailed specific cuts to the BOE budget. "In fact," Kerekes noted, "the BOE budget [was passed with ZERO public input](#)."

"It is an insult to the intellect of the voters to engage in such diversionary and us versus them tactics," Kerekes wrote. "NHCAN is all for effective spending on Education with accountability and performance based budgeting. It dodges intelligent debate to request citizen input and then attempts to use good faith inputs from groups such as ours to demonize those offering inputs."



MELISSA BAILEY FILE PHOTO

King (pictured) said the district isn't trying to demonize anyone.

"I wouldn't say that we're pitting parents against New Haven CAN," she said. "We're defending and standing up for our budget."

"We have a lot at stake," King said.

A 10 percent cut would mean laying off 300 teachers, she said. "We'd have to dramatically cut back on arts and music, after-school programs, and paraprofessionals." And most important, she said, the district would not be able to carry through its school reform goals, including working to boost scores with the [seven pilot schools](#).

"We absolutely are not going to be able to do it if we take a 10 percent cut," she said. "It's going to be a major roadblock to being able to look forward to school change."

She added that the school board took a zero-percent increase last year, and in past years, contractually required expenses have been rising faster than the budget has increased.

King said parents became active on this issue after Mayor John DeStefano, Jr. presented his budget at a

meeting of the citywide PTO on April 1. He told them that NHCAN wants to see 10 percent cuts across the board. She said a group of parents decided to rally other parents to protect the budget.

In past budget presentations, the mayor has repeatedly couched any attempt to decrease the budget—including getting rid of his \$50 million parking meter monetization deal—as [an impediment to school change](#).

Mary Rosario, co-leader of the citywide PTO, is part of a handful of parents who took the lead in organizing the defense of the budget.

She sent out an email on Friday to the nearly 100 members of the citywide PTO. She asked them to attend tonight's rally, pass out flyers, speak at the public hearing, and "Bring Signs! (We Want School Change; Save our Schools; Don't Cut Our Schools, or whatever creative slogan you can think of)." She attached the above-mentioned flyer and [this budget fact sheet](#).



MELISSA BAILEY FILE PHOTO

Teshia Todman (pictured), a parent representative from the John Martinez School on the citywide PTO, said she was concerned when she read the email.

"It talked about how they want to cut teachers" and some programming, she recalled in a conversation Tuesday. She said news of the possible cuts made her "nervous." "If the funding is cut, what will be left for the future generations? What kind of teachers will we be left with?"

"I'm thinking about going" to the hearing, she said, "because on my dad's side of the family, all his sisters are teachers." She said she has eight aunts who are teachers, though none teaches in New Haven. Because of the family connection, she said, she knows where teachers are coming from.

"As a parent, I think it's so important to maintain funding for schools," she said.

Erik Clemons, the other co-leader of the citywide PTO group, said he asked parents from each school to commit bringing at least 10 parents to the rally—and their children, too.

"It's gravely important right now because we're in the throes of education reform right now. There's so much momentum" with the reforms, he said. "You can't diminish the education budget and expect that we're going to be successful."

Clemons, the executive director of the LEAP youth program, has three daughters currently in the New Haven public schools. He rejected the notion that the administration is pitting him against anyone.

"No one can coerce me to advocate for my child," he said. "Education is at the top of the list. To say that one is coerced into this type of action by a power structure is to assume that parents have no sense of agency outside of that power structure."

Meanwhile, budget watchdogs continued their own a last-minute push to get people out to the hearing.

In a Facebook message Tuesday, Rebecca Turcio geared her rallying call toward struggling taxpayers.

"Want to know we are fighting so hard? Because this is just the start of [this](#)," she wrote, linking to an Independent report that the city initiated foreclosure on 99 homes in the past year.

"Are you or do you know anyone that is barely paying [their] rents or mortgages?" she asked.

"THIS IS THE LAST meeting for your voice to be heard!," reads a note on that page. "We need everyone to come to this with friends and family and [their] community! If we do not make a stand, the budget may go through as is. If you can afford the extra Property tax or rent increase then you do not need to come. But if you can not afford it YOU MUST MAKE THIS FINAL STAND!"

Comments

posted by: working(too hard) mom on April 28, 2010 7:51am

So, lets compare what is spent per student in New Haven vs other demographically similar cities/towns. School parents-please be realistic about this. More money is not the answer for New Haven's educational woes

posted by: Townie on April 28, 2010 7:58am

School Reform is the one issue that seems to evoke way too much emotion and not enough reason and logic. The fact is that pumping money into the schools is not going to fix the deficiencies of the city's school system. The city should make the needed cuts and look for alternative ways to increase student aptitude and performance. Usually the problems with the students reflect problems with the community and with the parents.

The teachers and school buildings have little to do with it. Until we address the larger problems of the community than any effort to rehabilitate our schools will be fruitless.

Meanwhile taxpayers suffer because of the twisted liberal ideology that seems to equate spending with reform. So, keep increasing property taxes and see how many people remain in the city, maybe when the nice new schools are half empty money pits the City government will realize the flaw in their logic and strategy.

posted by: taxpayer on April 28, 2010 8:02am

From the NHCAN response:

This administration refuses to take any responsibility in its reckless budget process and ignores the human side of what a 9-21% increase will mean on family incomes. Every parent with a kid in school knows there are tremendous inefficiencies in the schools such as leaving windows open all winter at Wilbur Cross, spending \$175 per hour for snow removal, and building a school in West Haven when there is declining enrollment.

In fact, the City agrees that savings are to be had in the BOE without effecting educational outcomes. The Mayor suggested several in his proposed budget on page 1-5 and 1-6; Management & Budget did as well in their brainstorm on the BOE budget; and staff BOE suggestions are published on the city website. Some of the City's BOE suggestions include: \$6M in saving from outsourcing custodians; End city wide school construction program; BOE Provide List of leased PP; Sell St. Mary's; School competition to reward schools who have the best energy performance (West Hartford achieved a 9.7% BOE reduction with a similar program).

posted by: streever on April 28, 2010 8:03am

I'm sure this tactic will work: The Mayor's propagandea piece doesn't actually address people like myself who are NOT against education or educational spending, but who question why one school costs TWICE AS MUCH as another to build, and why Wilbur Cross needs over 1 million dollars a year in principals.

I look at our schools and I see expensive boxes that lack substance. I see administrators with political connections to the Mayor making 120k and not even being present at work. I see disciplinarians who only give out 3 day suspensions—no detentions, no in-school suspensions, just 3 day vacations.

I talk to my friends who have children in these school: they rave about a few teachers, but uniformly claim that they've been disappointed in slow administration with poor leadership.

I talk to my friends who TEACH and work in NHPS & hear the same stories from most of them, about ineffectual administrators who neither support their teachers nor even show up for work half the time.

ALL I WANT:

Line item budget for Education like EVERYTHING ELSE and employee evaluations & public access to complaints filed by citizens. The City stopped doing employee evaluations when local reporters wrote about how poorly many employees were doing by the cities own standards. So instead of addressing the underlying issue of poorly performing employees, the City simply stopped evaluating them.

I'm not upset that they are spending money on education. I wholeheartedly support educational spending. I think we have no greater use of our money than to educate and enlighten our young people.

The problem is that the mayor's office all too frequently is enlightening it's constituents with the money that SHOULD be used to educate children.

posted by: budget cut #1 on April 28, 2010 8:04am

No more color printing overblown hype on school printers.

posted by: Threefifths on April 28, 2010 9:06am

Again this is what happens when you vote for the two party system.King john knew he did not have the money for this so call school reform.I told all of you that this school reform is nothing more than a pozi scheme.You see when king John leaves office,I will bet you that new haven will be just like west haven,Full of debt.Forget about the Board of Aldermen the major of them are taking the kings meat and when you take the kings meat you must do his bidding. As I said before we need proportional representation now.

posted by: streever on April 28, 2010 9:15am

Mary, Tesha, Erik:

NONE of us want to cut teachers. If you look at the administrative costs of Wilbur Cross for instance & compare them to any other school in the region, you'll see something is up. There are people who make 120,000 / year and are never at the school or able to return phone calls/communicate. They are not helping the children of New Haven learn.

Most of us just want performance reviews for these administrators *much like what is suggested for teachers by the Mayor* and think that the administrators making over 120k/year should be willing to take a 3% pay cut.

If the mayor's tax increase goes through, you may find your children have a worse situation, as their friends leave town with their parents & homes get boarded up on your street.

posted by: me on April 28, 2010 10:12am

The Purpose of "Good to Great"

The Good to Great Initiative sets the guidelines needed for effective teaching and learning in New Haven Public Schools. To achieve this mission a vision was needed. The vision for New Haven was to create a nurturing, healthy, safe school environment.

New Haven Public Schools want to make sure that each student has been given the materials and the teaching required to succeed academically. To ensure that the academic demands of all students could be met, five "Bold Goals" were established to set standards for the future. This is what we expect as a result of the Good to Great Initiative:

~95% of students will be ready to succeed by the end of kindergarten.

~95% of students meet literacy and math standards.

~The achievement gap will be no more than 5% for defined subgroups.

~95% of students will demonstrate necessary social skills for success in school and life.

~95% of students entering 9th grade will graduate ready for college, post secondary education, the military, or workforce.

These goals will not only ensure that no student is left behind, but will also ensure that all the kids in New Haven will succeed to the highest expectations. By using data and observing CMT scores, the City of New Haven has been able to determine what needs to be done to improve our students' academic results.

The Good to Great Program is basically the response of New Haven Public Schools to meet the challenges of the No Child Left Behind Act. The No Child Left Behind Act is a landmark in education that is designed to help improve student achievement and close achievement gaps. This act is built on four common sense pillars:

~accountability for results

~an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research

~expanded parental options

~expanded local control and flexibility

To check the Good to Great Programs efficiency, data is used to graph the improvement. The data comes from pre-tests and post-tests taken before and after each lesson unit.

Students first take a pre-test to determine what strengths the students have. The test can also pinpoint the questions that were most frequently missed, and thus find out what areas are most important to cover. The results will help the teacher to better understand what he or she needs to accomplish in order to help the students understand the given assignments. The post-test can then prove what the students have learned, what needs to be done in the future, and also how students responded to the lessons.

Overall, through careful observation, New Haven has made active the Good to Great Program, hoping that it will provide the students with what they need to keep their grades up, thrive academically, and improve their learning skills.

posted by: NHPS = CYA on April 28, 2010 10:22am

Let's print the salaries of Mr. Mayo, Mr. Harries, and the other cronies downtown, shall we? Hint: Their combined salaries go well into the million\$.

Meanwhile, New Haven schools are severely short-staffed.

There are many special needs students who do not receive the small group/1:1 instructional time mandated in their IEPs because there simply isn't enough staff to meet the mandate.

Paraprofessionals are routinely pulled from their own classrooms to cover other rooms because the district does not consistently, if ever, hire substitutes. How is that fair to the students who need the paras for their small group instruction?

In my school, a K-8 school, my special needs children haven't even come close to receiving the hours required in their IEPs. Teachers are told to cover those hours because the SPED teacher has a work overload. Well, tell me, how is a head teacher supposed to cover the special needs HOURS, often requiring 1:1 work with the child, AND the other 23 students in his room?

Sorry, but this isn't focusing on the "negative." It's focusing on REALITY. New Haven does a fine job of covering up its dirty laundry and then turning the tables back on teachers and what little support staff there truly is.

It's sickening.

Let's also hold accountable the parents who fail to do their part—instead of making excuse for them by making scapegoats of responsible teachers.

posted by: Taxpayer on April 28, 2010 10:23am

Three-fifths:

Got news for ya. New Haven is a one-party system. Green and Republicans need not apply.

posted by: NHPS Staff on April 28, 2010 10:25am

The problem is...you know THIS regime won't cut the administrative bloat. They'll cut people on the ground working with kids. It would require regime change to get rid of the bloat. NHPS faculty CAN'T WAIT for administrators to be validly and broadly evaluated. It is very necessary.

Education costs in NH are comparable to cities of similar size and demographics - if there is overspending, it is "downtown." As long as schools are being asked to teach thousands of children with unmitigated personal, social and psychological problems and play surrogate parent/social worker, urban education will be expensive. If we had kids come to kindergarten ready to learn through a mammoth social change a la the Harlem Children's Zone, small class sizes might be gravy rather than a basic necessity. The only alternative is to throw away an entire generation.

posted by: concernedwestvilleres on April 28, 2010 10:49am

Education is important and funding needs to be there to provide education. New Haven spends over \$12K per student and yet proficiency percentages are low. For sixteen years, DeStefano has looked the other way focusing on building and facilities without focusing on how to help students perform better. Now he is focusing on improving the schools. At this point I am sure the Board of Ed could find areas to cut expenses that would not significantly harm the ability of students to learn. There is bloating at the top and they can start cutting there. Teachers are paid for 9 months of work- maybe the district can go to year-round schools with the breaks distributed evenly and staggered throughout the year. If the district is paying to keep the buildings maintained year-round why not put them to use. There are 4 decent universities in the New Haven area- maybe students could "intern" and volunteer instead of some paraprofessionals- learn from experience as well as the classroom.

While NHCAN does keep these issues at the forefront, they need to see that an across the board 10% budget cut would not serve the city well. There are areas where cuts can be made in City Hall and other departments. Additionally, the city needs to explore recouping costs from free riders- non-residents who work in the city and head out without spending a dime in the city or college students who require use of public safety and don't pay for what they receive. A \$500 security fee per year per student could generate \$5,000,000 per year. Yale employs 8,000 people and I'd venture about 50% don't live in the city. A \$500 per year tax would generate an additional \$4 million per year (and that does not include other employers with employees residing outside the city). Worst case is suburbanites won't work in the city freeing jobs for city residents.

These times require creative solutions. Cutting education harms the city in the long run. Look to raise other sources of revenue and cut other areas.

posted by: Townie on April 28, 2010 10:55am

To "me": All of the goals presented by the good to great program are admirable, but why does this improvement have to come at such a high cost? I am certain there are creative and inexpensive ways to improve the academic performance of the City's youth. Instead the Mayor and City Hall seems to interpret "school reform" as a means to funnel tax payers' money to valuable campaign supporters i.e. teachers' union, construction union(s), etc. It is a trend in the nation, if a problem exists, throw money at it and it will get better. However, significant problems like the ones facing our youth, call for significant and radical changes to the system. A new coat of paint will not keep afloat the sinking ship.

I think it is time for the Mayor to face reality, if property taxes go up (which they probably will) than we should remove Destefano and the Board of Aldermen from office with special elections and referendums. This city is shamefully mismanaged and only democratic action can save it from collapse.

posted by: Vinny G on April 28, 2010 11:01am

There is a huge bloat at 54 Meadow St. Start cleaning up there first. Administration's making over \$100K a year for what? Campaign contributions to John?

The media reported last year the City graduated 1000 High School students. Why do we have 13 plus high schools that can accommodate 300 to 400 students. The Administrations are extremely costly not just now but in the long run. Pension and health care for life. Take a look at Destefanos campaign contributions, a majority of the donaters work for the board of education.

posted by: Michaelangelo on April 28, 2010 11:10am

PTO Parents.....if you think about your past interactions/disputes with the NHBOE on your various just concerns regarding your child's education...tell me you don't you see the convenience in the NHBOE rallying your support

for this crucial hearing?

This is a hearing, where your friends and neighbors will be expressing their dissatisfaction with an unreasonable rise in taxes (8-15%) during these truly strenuous economic times. All of a sudden an email gets sent out and fliers get posted saying your neighbors and fellow citizens want to cut the school systems funding.

C'mon, stop and think about it...a rise in taxes will mean we all have to work longer hours to provide for our families. Less time for your children will have more of an impact on their academic success than any teacher or new school building.

posted by: John A on April 28, 2010 11:12am

I am a taxpayer in the city who does not have children. I want the schools to be the very best they can be, and I oppose cutting the board of education budget.

At the same time, the previous comments seem to be all over the board, each group pointing fingers at the others as overpaid, underworked, inefficient, absentee, or felonious.

What's the truth?

Surely money could be spent more intelligently, and surely we don't have a spare dollar to waste.

What's going on with instituting a "Harlem Children's Zone"-style system in New Haven? THAT seems like a very, very good idea. Ideally, we would have schools, not giant remedial social services agencies trying to educate disfunctional kids.

posted by: sjob on April 28, 2010 11:49am

NHPS parents—ask your "colleagues" at the NHPS to simply show you their budget, broken down by in-school-building vs. not-in-school-building staff. You'll see where they are spending your/our money. These folks are getting fat off of our children and our money. And then blaming children and teachers when performance is less than expected.

posted by: Doyens on April 28, 2010 12:19pm

Wanton spending of money on education is no guarantee of performance outcomes. We have been spending massively on education for decades and where has it gotten us? NHPS is in the bottom 10% of the state. We're nationally known for drop out factories.

NHPS is paid a 35% premium on all our kids attending interdistrict magnet schools which is almost all the schools; it is paid even if the student attends a charter school and they have zero cost basis in that student while, student enrollment has actually declined across the last several years.

The problem with this budget is that not one city department was asked to cut their budget. None. There was no creative thinking; no alternatives were explored. Zero. Zip. Zilch. Why do that when you can just pilfer the public pocket? Why attempt that when you can say you're doing it for the children at school and taking it from the children at home?

Reform is one of the most overused words in the in the public lexicon today mostly by politicians and public employees with a vested interest in the money. Less so the outcomes.

As for the hysteria being ginned up, it's pathetic. NHPS could achieve savings if they wanted to and most likely not lose any teachers. Hartford found \$12.5 million in savings in their school budget, but then, they also are honest about their drop out rate, cut staff in the central office, made other strategic staff cuts, embraced charter schools and re-worked their transportation program. Amazing what can happen when motivated by real reform and lead by real reformers.

posted by: LOL on April 28, 2010 12:22pm

I know...let's hire a 120k/year administrator for Wilbur Cross High School. His/her title would be Vice Principal of Energy Awareness and that person would be tasked with closing the windows on subzero nights...think we'd break even?

posted by: Threefifths on April 28, 2010 12:35pm

posted by: John A on April 28, 2010 11:12am

What's going on with instituting a "What's going on with instituting a "Harlem Children's Zone"-style system in New Haven? THAT seems like a very, very good idea. style system in New Haven? THAT seems like a very, very good idea.

Because the Harlem Children's Zone is load with corporatist vampire money. Did you know that they got money from Bernard Madoff's

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123275804805311965.html>

Did you also know that Mr Canada and four others co-signed for this crooked corporate vampire by the name of Raj Rajaratnam \$100 million bail and he sits on the school board of the harlm zone. Check out whatMr. Canada said.

Speaking of trouble, in October 2009, HCZ board member, investment manager and donor Raj Rajaratnam was arrested and charged with participating in multi-billion dollar insider trading. You and four others co-signed for

his \$100 million bail. Does that make you responsible for \$20 million?

More or less. The way the law goes, if Raj leaves the country, the five of us are responsible for the \$100 million. And they can take all of your assets, until you have nothing, which they would obviously have to take, to satisfy those requirements. There's no one of the five has that kind of money.

... It was a personal gesture. I had to sign for it personally, it had nothing to do with the Harlem Children's Zone. I would do it again. In a heartbeat, I would do it again.

And check out Raj Rajaratnam,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/02/business/02insider.html>

What good role models for our children.

posted by: Alphonse Credenza on April 28, 2010 12:36pm

No regime will cut the bloat. Who ever willingly reduces his headcount and the budget that comes along with it? Unless the public puts very great pressure, votes them out and votes new blood in.

posted by: The Proletariat Exiled Italian Shill on April 28, 2010 2:02pm

... I find it to be quite empowering that parents are being moved from apathy into motion. A lot of working class/working poor families might not have ever attended a meeting like this. This is very empowering to them and the city as whole.

While you do not want them at the meeting because they don't pay the same type of taxes as do you it is wrong to blame the city for fear-mongering. These parents have a right to be there the same as you sharing their thoughts and concerns - no matter who turns them out. ...

Your claim of the city enticing fear amongst the masses just to set them off against other neighbors is the pot calling the kettle black. Take a look at your petition and plot the addresses on a map - East Rock, parts of Wooster, parts of Westville and the East Shore are where the signers originate. Not Dixwell, not Newhallville, not Fair Haven. Yet those neighborhoods, many residents of color, have home owners as well. Cuts in school budgets or services disproportionately hurt the working poor worse than others.

Perhaps you might be right and the city and school board are using fear tactics to mobilize people and to create diversionary tactics to put neigh against neighbor. Perhaps there needs to be some intellectual honesty here and call it for what it is and what the city is doing with parents.

But are all of your motives truly clear here as well?

You ask for \$47M in cuts to a budget that contains, by my understanding, \$11M in tax increases to pay for services. Why not ask for 0% growth and rollback \$11M in expenditures? A \$47M cut in the budget would only lead to very bad things - but you already know that at NHCAN, don't you? You participated in the budget panel stuff last year and heard from city managers. You at NHCAN know what these cuts will do in NH. NHCAN knows full well what a 10% cut to any urban budget would do and what the results really would be. But that would lead to some political opportunity if massive cuts occur.

When a shooting happens and there are less cops to patrol the streets - blame the aldermen as they voted for it. Firemen take 10 mins to respond to a heart attack - no problem, call the president of the board as they passed it. Parks are closed because no one cuts the grass - send your outraged email to your aldermen because they voted for a crap budget that slashed services. Tired of still paying tuition at a private school because you don't like NH schools? Just blame your elected official for voting for a bad budget that cut too many school change! In fact people should vote them out of office because they cut too many services.

I point these things out as a casual observer and fan of politics. Nothing more and nothing less. You decry the city empowering residents/parents to turnout and say they want services. Yet you champion your own cause as grassroots and your movement as being "of the people and by the people." Truth is both groups belong there at the meeting no matter how they got there. Its wrong for just one group to have the microphone - its called democracy Mr. Kerekes.

Hopefully the NHI will post the comment . . .

posted by: streever on April 28, 2010 3:39pm

@The Proletariat Exiled Italian Shill:

You make a lot of incorrect assumptions in your opening statement. I actually want EVERYONE in the city here, because I want them all to demand that the city becomes open, transparent, and does employee evaluations on all employees, LIKE ANY COMPANY OR CITY OR TOWN FOR THAT MATTER. I have never lived in a town where employees did not receive performance reviews.

... The 10% figure was arbitrary: if the Mayor/BoA can find creative ways to not run citizens out of town, I'd rather that than a cut.

The problem is that the Mayor's office has not been forthcoming about costs/budget issues & has forced citizens to make demands and in effect do their work for them.

No one that I know honestly expects that 10% can be met. But it's a starting point. A suggestion. I would personally be happy if the City came back with a different number, as long as there was SOME number, some alternative, some option to seeing my neighbors move out.

posted by: taxpayer on April 28, 2010 3:43pm

TO: The Proletariat Exiled Italian Shill

actually what NHCAN is saying is that there is 10% to cut without cutting services. as a casual observer of politics, you may be swayed by someone saying that "everything is being done to cut the budget", but those that are following closely know more and know better and are asking for the Aldermen to step up and force better results.

the city has played at the strings of parents' hearts by saying that a 10% cut in the education budget would result in "larger class sizes" & "program cuts" and a "growth of the achievement gap". the board of ed is using your casual observance against you. they are taking the math and saying that the 10% cut would equate to a \$400K cut to each school and that is the salary of 8 teachers. what they don't tell you is that they could cut \$6million in outsourcing the janitorial services or save millions by delaying the school construction process.

NHCAN is trying to allow middle class families a chance to stay New Haven residents. This is the feeling all over Dixwell (where I live) and Newhallville and Dwight and West River. I have not spoken to the Hill about it, but I am guessing that they are feeling the same. People don't want money thrown at problems, they want solutions. The current politics in New Haven is to pit one group or constituency against another, not to come together and solve the problems. You say it's called "democracy" - the current administration and board of education will not answer direct questions and will not provide information for the citizens to help themselves. If this were a democracy, the information would be out there and we would not be having this conversation online being fake names. There is a reason i do it. because i criticize, if my name were known, i wouldn't be able to serve my community the way i am able. i am not able, in new haven, to criticize (constructively might i add) and get things done.

this is not a democracy. this is a town owned and ran by the mayor. you cross him, and you're out. that's not a democracy. but that's where we are.

posted by: streever on April 28, 2010 3:48pm

I just found \$23 million for the city. Halt construction on new schools.
http://newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/entry/youre_invited/

Oh what's that? I found another 1 million in all administrators (people making 100k plus with benefits) taking a 3% cut or some furloughs. Let's let them decide if they want to earn less or if they want to take a furlough day or two a month.

Oh hey, look, I found another million in not hiring 12 firefighters this year. Fancy that. With one of the best response times in the region, our fire department is AWESOME, but I don't think not hiring 12 new firefighters this year is going to make us unable to keep having an awesome fire fighting force!

What's that, 25 million so far alone? Smells like 6% has been saved, for only a 4% increase. Not bad.

posted by: any speraner on April 29, 2010 5:39am

If you don't pay property taxes—DON'T GO TO THE HEARING. How many people fighting for the BOE budget don't actually pay taxes because they are on public assistance and/or don't own their home? You don't get to fight for a bloated budget if you don't pay property taxes! Find out where the BOE "scare" tactics started and you'll find Johnny D.

posted by: assumption on April 29, 2010 8:07pm

If you own a car in New Haven (and it is registered in New Haven) you pay taxes to New Haven....so don't think that the poor (unstated: black/Hispanic) welfare renters don't pay ... taxes.

If you pay to park in New Haven, I feel, that you are paying taxes to New Haven.

If you shop in New Haven, you are supporting New Haven.

By teaching in New Haven, I am supporting New Haven.

I had every right to be at that meeting last night.

posted by: streever on April 29, 2010 10:22pm

any speraner,

if you have tenants, than you know what all of my landlord friends have told me: renters pay taxes in New Haven.

Average rental prices in this city are exorbitant and out of line with reality of jobs & incomes, and it's because taxes are driving up the mortgages. A friend of mine who didn't raise rents last time they jacked up taxes is now looking at a FIFTY DOLLAR A MONTH INCREASE to not lose money on some of his properties. FIFTY A

MONTH. That's a 600 dollar rent increase for his tenants a year...

SIX HUNDRED DOLLARS

So if you honestly think a renter who is going to get hit with another 600 dollars A YEAR in rent is NOT PAYING TAXES than you clearly stole one of the doctors blackberries. Put it down and take your meds.
