

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Maturo Submits Revised Budget – Calls for \$900k increase to Education

On Monday, Mayor Joseph Maturo, Jr. sent a revised budget packet to the Town Council Budget Subcommittee, maintaining no tax increase, but calling for an increase in funding of \$900,000.00 for the Board of Education.

Maturo explained, "Throughout the past week, I have been contacted by numerous residents with concerns about the level of education funding in my initial recommended budget. As a result, and thanks to a likely increase in state ECS funding this year, we are able to allocate an additional \$900,000.00 to the Board of Education this year."

Specifically, the Mayor's revised budget calls for total education funding of \$45,210,357.00, an increase of \$900,224.00 from the \$44,310,133.00 in the current budget. Of the \$45.2 million, \$19,253,992.00 is expected to come from the State in the form of ECS funding.

Maturo continued, "When a Town receives an increase in ECS funding, state law prohibits a Town from supplanting local funding with the additional state funding. As a result, the Town must make the same local contribution to education as it did the year prior. The result is an increase in education funding of approximately \$900,000.00."

Maturo explained, "This increase represents the largest increase to education in 3 years. With this increase, we've significantly helped the Board bridge its \$1.5 million dollar gap. The Board must now take a hard look at its own budget and find savings to make its budget work."

In order to increase funding to Education, the Town looked for savings in several line items. However, three primary line items provided the bulk of the savings:

Legal Services/Insurance

Reduction of \$200,000 in the "Self Insurance" line item used to pay settlements and claims against the Town.

Employee Benefits

Reduction of \$320,000 from five line items including the Town's expected retirement contribution, unemployment benefits, retirement payouts, and health insurance including heart and hypertension claim payments.

Fund Balance Contribution

Reduction of \$100,000 from the \$1 million dollar planned payment to the Town's rainy day fund.

However, Maturo cautioned, "While the Town is committed to properly funding education, we are committed to keeping taxes affordable. In the next year, the Board must drastically revise its town-wide school organization plan to reduce its cost of operations. As the Town has done, the Board of Education must learn to do more, with less."

Maturo concluded, "My budget continues to be responsible, conservative, and fair. Even after shuffling all of these monies around, we're still planning to make a \$900,000 contribution to the Town's rainy day fund. Most importantly this budget continues to call for no increase in taxes."

For more information, please contact Frank Gentilesco at 203-468-3204.