

Letter to the Editor: How Much More Money Is Hidden?

At last night's Clifton Board of Education meeting, the school administration announced that "they had found money in the budget to hire a vice principal for 290 Brighton Road Annex". Wasn't it such a few months ago (when the council was cutting the budget) that they said that there was no extra money in this budget? What happened to the continued claims they would not be hiring a principal for 290 since we had no money for desks and chairs? Now, the "magicians" have managed to pull \$103,000 (salary for the assistant principal for 290 Brighton Road without the cost of benefits) out of their hats! Taxpayers must wonder how much more money is hidden in this failed budget!

Imagine this! One Board of Education Commissioner (John Traier) even stated that the board is there basically just to rubber stamp whatever the administration wants! Imagine that! A BOE Commissioner who feels he is only accountable to the administration, not the voters and taxpayers of Clifton! I guess this is why this same commissioner thought nothing of filing a lawsuit against the same Board that he is a member of so that he could hire "his friends" as BOE attorneys! I guess this is why this same commissioner failed to inform the public last night that his lawsuit seeks to get relief from the Court to pay "his attorney fees" for this litigation. I guess spending over \$300,000 for ethics charges on legal fees last year just wasn't enough for this commissioner so he wants the taxpayer to foot another huge litigation cost!

The school administration thought nothing of giving non-contract employees a 3.5% raise this year! This is while they are in contract negotiations with the teachers union for their contract renewals! No wonder the board told the public and the City Council that they would not reveal the amount of increases for employees that was built into the budget! We have one side of Clifton Avenue laying off employees and having salary freezes and the other side giving 3.5% raises and adding administrators left and right! Wouldn't it be interesting to learn just how many administrative positions the school administration has created over the last few years and how much money was spent on these "new hires of their friends"!

As more than one person who spoke during the public portion of the last night's meeting said, the Clifton taxpayers are broke! We want this board and administration to account for each and every dollar they spend! We can't help but continue to wonder how much more "hidden money" there is!

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