

**Notice: Date change to March 22.**

A message from Superintendent of Schools, Eric Haley. This message is intended for any resident of the City of Waterville. Please feel free to forward it to those in your circle of contacts that live in Waterville.

The Waterville Board of Education is sponsoring a Community Educational Forum on [Wednesday, February 15, 2017, at 6:00 p.m. in Trask Auditorium at the Waterville Senior High School and you are invited.](#)

### **What is a Community Educational Forum and why is the Board of Education sponsoring it?**

#### **First the Why...**

**Live Stream available at <http://ustre.am/1n33U> starting at 6:00 p.m. and later as archive at the same web address.**

Last spring, at the same time as budget deliberations with the City Council, the city's tax re-valuation analysis report came out and shifted a significant amount of value away from the business sector and onto the private property owner. Individual tax bills were adversely affected with some folks reporting 50% increases in their property taxes. As you can well imagine, this issue filled the city council chambers at every meeting. Most folks attending those city council meetings demanded reduced budgets and reduced taxes culminating in a petition to put the city council's vote to pass the 2016/17 budget out to referendum. In the end, this did not happen as the city council reconsidered their vote of approval and reduced the city and school budgets enough to satisfy this group. However, that was not done without a lot of angst and hard feeling. It also left the school budget in a perilous situation where revenues that were in reserve for the 2017/18 budget had to be used to keep the 2016/17 budget afloat. Those revenues are now not available to help support the development of the 2017/18 budget leaving the School Board \$600,000 in the hole before even starting to build the 2017/18 budget.

#### **Now the What is it....**

This Community Forum has been designed to offer historical information about the Waterville Public School's budgets, the present situation of public education and the issues that our public schools are facing. We are at the breaking point and it is critical that the citizens of Waterville weigh in on what they want for a public educational system. This city has some very exciting things happening that lead some of us to believe that we are on the cusp of things turning around but in order for that to happen we also believe the public schools need to be vital, alive and have the ability to serve all students needs, whether special education or advanced placement. We presently have a strong curriculum, well-educated teachers but what is absolutely critical moving forward are parents and the public support for funding the needs of our children. Without that voice, I fear we are heading to an assigned seat in the back of the budget bus. Please join us on Wednesday, the 15th of February at 6:00 p.m. in Trask Auditorium at the Waterville Senior High School to hear information about the schools and to find out how you can help keep education a priority in this community.