

Town Council Meeting

January 28, 2013

WORK SESSION - Pre-budget discussion between the Town Council and School Committee regarding anticipated expenditures, enrollment, staff and facility needs for FY2013/2014

Dr. Michael Almeida, Asst. Superintendent Michael Convery and Robin Pelletier, Finance Director presented early projections focusing on certified full time employees, school enrollment and capital requests.

Budget changes for 2013/2014 were discussed that included contractual certified staff salary increases of 2%; school related personnel salary increases as outlined in their contract at 3.5%; certified staff step increases amounting to \$284,000; health care and dental increases projected at 2% with an offset of 1% increase in the employee co-share bringing that projection to \$188,000; and an increase for certified staff pension from 14.01% to 14.86%.

An increase of \$570,324 is being requested due to step increases in salary and wages and 3.4% (\$488,209) increase in fringe benefits due to health care and pension, which is out of our control. Currently there is no increase in staffing, although it is very early at this time. We will be working on this through the school year.

Increases and changes were explained in purchase services and supplies. A \$400,000 increase is due to opening Oak Haven along with technology requests. The \$1.6 million increase (2.5%) will receive some additional funding formula to offset it. State aid of \$749,695 is expected, and that would help offset the \$1.6 mil request.

A review of past federal funding indicated a significant decrease of \$2,281,575 since 2009/2010. Enrollment in the schools between now and 2020 indicates approximately a 420 student loss. However, when you look at projected housing in Coventry, there could be issues with serious crowding in some schools. Hopkins Hill is the most difficult situation now with no space and no computer labs. We need to think about reopening Oak Haven.

Capital requests include fire code upgrades at Oak Haven, which won't be needed if Oak Haven does not open. We are in the process of working on school security and doing some work in the schools. There is a need for technology infrastructure, and all elementary schools need to be rewired. However, due to the bonding, the capital budget is minimal.

Further discussion took place and President Cote stated that he has a hard time understanding the request for a teacher salary increase of 2% in the contract, because we were both part of the team that negotiated this contract and it was made clear that the teachers came into negotiations with a concession attitude and it was agreed on by everyone that no additional request would be made to the town for raises because the teachers were going to fund their own raises through their own concessions. Dr. Almeida responded that if the town can't cover that \$570,324, then we can cover it with the additional \$700,000+ state aid money. We figured that in to make sure we could cover what we were negotiating.

Finance Director Pelletier remarked that the step increase was only frozen for one year and in 2013/2014 would cost \$284,000. However, we will also be looking at attrition and layoffs.

President Cote commented that when the budget was originally done, you didn't know about the \$749,695. Ms. Pelletier commented that because Coventry is underfunded, it will receive \$700,000+ for ten years in order to bring it to full funding. In addition, she stated that the Governor does not support acceleration of the school funding.

Manager Hoover commented that when you talk about the give-backs governing the raises, he understood that was supposed to cover the benefits too. Salaries and benefits are about \$1 million, and you are only getting about \$ 750,000 from the state. We also have to consider the debt from the bonds that were approved. And with the bonding, I really didn't expect to see much in capital requests.

Ms. Pelletier stated that the numbers presented this evening are the same as the three year projection. As far as the benefit increase, the state has increased the pension from 14.01% to 14.86%, which is about \$300,000.

Manager Hoover remarked that on tonight's agenda the Council has a resolution asking that the general assembly and governor accelerate the funding. Considering the 4% cap that is on all of us, and considering the fact that both the schools and town have submitted financial improvement formulas for pensions, what would be the impact on the schools if we only funded

the debt retirement for the bonds and the pension increases, that are pretty much a state mandate, and do nothing more. The school and the town both need to meet their pension obligations and we also have to fund the bonds. Dr. Almeida replied that it would mean that we would not be able to fund technology.

When asked about capital requests and school security Dr. Almeida stated that \$36,000 would be for high school surveillance and \$20,000 to re-do the front entry way of Oak Haven. If Oak Haven doesn't happen, then that \$20,000 would be removed. The cost to open Oak Haven would be about \$274,000 and the school would be used for Pre-K and K classes, morning and afternoon sessions.

Also discussed was the impact that would be felt by schools if housing developments are completed, another reason for opening Oak Haven, as it would create more room in schools. Dr. Almeida advised that this evening's request has not changed since the first meeting with the Town Council. It is a \$900,000 request for the same items, but presented in a little different way, a little more in depth, but our focus and priorities have not changed.

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Present: President Gary Cote, Vice-President Kerry McGee, Councilman Jendzejec, Councilwoman Carlson

Town Manager Thomas Hoover, Town Solicitor Frederick Tobin

Absent: Gregory Laboissonniere

Pledge of Allegiance led by Town Sergeant
Moment of Silence in memory of the 233 lives lost in the recent Brazil nightclub fire
Review of Emergency Evacuation Plan

President's Comments

President Cote advised the public that there is an approved budget schedule for the next fiscal year and he invites the public to participate. It will be a challenging season, this Council doesn't have all the answers and ideas, and will listen to you, take your ideas into consideration and implement them when possible.

Approval of Town Council Minutes January 14, 2013

Motion made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Vice President McGee to approve minutes. All voted Aye.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORT

The School Committee will give a monthly report to the Town Council. This month, Kathy Patenaude, Chairwoman of Coventry School Committee, advised that they will share their initiatives and updates with the Council. She gave an overview of the school safety and security action plan, stating that there will be a presentation on Wednesday, January 30 at Coventry High School at 6:30 p.m., which will include an overview of procedures and a panel discussion.

PROCLAMATIONS

1. The Coventry West Greenwich Lions Club in honoring the following outstanding individuals of the Coventry community:

- Detective Steven Gabriele – Police Officer of the Year
- Deputy Chief Kelly Guastini – Firefighter of the Year
- Tara D'Aleno – Teacher of the Year
- James Spearman – Citizen of the Year

President Cote presented a proclamation to Ray Adams of the Coventry Lions Club. He also recognized Jim Spearman and Kelly Guastini, both present at the Council meeting.

PRESENTATION

1. Presentation and consideration of a Resolution regarding beneficial use determination (BUD) materials to be used in the remediation of the Coventry landfill

Attorney Richard Sherman and Environmental Consultant Richard Hittinger presented a follow-up to their December 10, 2012 presentation with regard to remediating the landfill . A lengthy discussion took place beginning with the location of the approximately 17 acre site of the existing landfill.

The town is obligated to remediate and close the inactive landfill on Arnold Road and this obligation is shared with several other responsible parties, entities that previously disposed of waste at the landfill. The landfill has been examined, the status of the landfill and extent of contamination has been determined and a letter from RIDEM approving a proposed remedy has been issued.

The proposed remedy is to cap the landfill with a thick clean soil cap, incorporating gas vents, actively treating contaminated soil and groundwater. There will also be post-closure monitoring of the landfill gas and groundwater. The estimated cost of the remedy is approximately \$6.5 million with the town's share of cost at 60%.

An explanation was given of the capping process, including reshaping the existing landfill before the cap is installed. A very detailed discussion took place of grading and shaping materials, material chemical characteristics, material physical characteristics. Included in that discussion was a detailed explanation of on-site material management including sediment and erosion controls, site access, weighing procedures, on site inspections, materials stockpiling and cover materials, grading, shaping and materials placement.

The final cap includes a 6 inch plantable soil/topsoil and will be seeded. The state has a program identified as "BUD", where they encourage facilities such as this to take in materials with very low amount of contamination. BUD programs involve the reuse of certain types of solid waste in lieu of new materials for certain purposes, such as landfill closure. To qualify for a BUD program, a detailed application must be filed and approved by RIDEM after a public hearing is held. BUD materials would incorporate urban fill from construction and/or excavation projects, catch basin cleanings, street sweepings and dredged materials. Currently there are three existing RIDEM approved BUD programs in Rhode Island: the Cranston Sanitary landfill closure, the Portsmouth landfill closure and the former East Providence landfill closure.

Procedure is that an application is submitted to RIDEM proposing the use of BUD materials. Mr. Hittinger explained the BUD program in more detail with diagrams showing the final site shape with a sequence plan and a plan showing truck routes. He talked about testing that will be required, no materials classified as hazardous waste will be utilized. We would average 15 trucks a day on a small section of Arnold Road. Incoming trucks will be examined at a registration location with also an on-site inspection of materials.

There will be minimal stockpiling of materials on site. BUD materials once tipped will be used to grade and shape the site; calcium chloride or sprayed water may be used as a temporary cover to reduce wind and blown dust. There will be no night operations.

Interim stormwater management will occur during construction. There will be recordkeeping and reporting requirements and during hours of operation a gate attendant will be on-site to record weights and material deliveries. Once completed, the site will require maintenance of the final soil cap, stormwater management, continued soil/groundwater treatment as necessary, continued landfill gas monitoring and continued groundwater monitoring.

Materials will be accepted from out of state; this won't be restricted to RI since they will be paying to bring material in. Hours of operation will be 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., Mon through Fri; Sat mornings, no evenings or Sundays.

Councilwoman Carlson asked about monitoring and Attorney Sherman explained that monitoring is built in over 20-30 years in the \$6 million figure.

Vice-President McGee had questions about the methane gas on the property. Mr. Hittinger advised that the new materials will not produce methane gas. The gas is being produced from the materials there now with some leakage through the surface. The methane is not toxic and is odorless. The capping materials will not produce more gas, and the venting will give the gas that is there a place to go, providing an escape otherwise it will build up and come out as a puff, moving the cap. The vents will be monitored.

Vice-President McGee also raised the issue of testing and monitoring, and what measures would be taken to make sure that no contamination is brought in with a load of materials. Mr. Hittinger replied that the "generator" of the soil has to certify what they are

sending. They would only put themselves at jeopardy to try to bring in contaminated materials. There is an economic incentive for that “generator” to comply by the rules, and it is cheaper to dump here than at the Johnston landfill.

Attorney Sherman advised that after the first initial approval by DEM, the bidding process begins and possibly we could begin by the fall of 2013.

Jeff Hakanson, President, Tiogue Lake Association, 30 Lakeside Drive, has concerns as to whether contaminated water will be released into Tiogue Lake, specifically stormwater runoff, until such time as the remediation is complete. The dump is 900 feet from a body of water. Rainstorms and hurricanes are a concern. He asked about stormwater retention, treatment and release. He has concerns with monitoring, oversight, dust control and odor. Need to keep storm water runoff at the top of the priority list. The next three or four years will be critical.

Mr. Hittinger explained that the final design will have a retention basin and everything will be grass. In the interim, the idea is to operate in small areas, directing that water toward the former compost site, the southeast side. It will be controlled with hay bales and silt fencing. The idea is to keep it at least as good as it is now.

President Cote commented that the BUD material is no more contaminated than what you have there on the ground now. The advantage is that you will have a site with monitoring. You don't have that now.

Ron Gizzarelli, 50 Harrington Road, VP Tiogue Lake Association, also has concerns about the lake, its location, and what could flow into the lake since it's a lot lower geographically than Centre of New England. He is also concerned about contamination of the acreage behind the dump site. You will be covering this dump without a solid membrane, how deep does the dump go? Originally the town was going to remove the materials in the dump and send it elsewhere. He would like to see the dump totally cleaned at some point, but not to fall on the backs of the taxpayers.

President Cote responded that the town was not found culpable, but a previous town council accepted responsibility for 60% of the landfill. Secondly, by today's estimate, to remediate the old landfill the way you are talking by removing all the materials would cost between \$36 million and \$40 million. It is my understanding that a study was done back in the 80's and it was recommended to not open the dump up. Apparently DEM doesn't think that is necessary and we haven't done anything without approval from DEM. If the cost of remediating the dump with the proposed system is \$6.5 million, why would the town voluntarily spend \$36 million to \$40 million to accomplish the same thing?

Gerry Narkiewicz, 21 Beach Street, asked about the 3% slope, had concerns about erosion, and asked what type of plantings would be on the top of the landfill. He also felt that fencing and hay bales would not be able to stop the runoff and asked the council to do their best to get as good of a containment system as they can during construction. Mr. Hittinger advised that it would be a natural grass mixture consisting of perennial grass native to this area that stays active all year.

George Caldow, Lakeside Drive, is also concerned with ground water, monitoring and the down-grade location of the lake from the dump.

After discussion, a motion was made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Councilwoman Carlson to approve resolution. All voted aye.

Petition by PIT Realty, LLC for abandonment of a portion of Bedroom Road

A motion was made by Vice-President McGee seconded by Councilwoman Carlson to open public hearing. All voted aye.

Attorney David Campanella represented petitioner Steven Cardi of PIT Realty. Mr. Cardi was sworn in by Solicitor Tobin.

The proposed petition asks to abandon a portion of Bedroom Road. The petition has already been discussed and approved by the Planning Commission. Planning Director Paul Sprague explained the location of the property, from New London Turnpike to the East Greenwich border. This property is unimproved and bisects property owned by PIT Realty.

Mr. Sprague stated that the town does not ever see it being used as a public right of way

and the Planning Commission has sent a recommendation to grant the abandonment petition.

President Cote read the Planning Board decision, further noting that the Planning Commission recommended that Mr. Cardi pay \$2775 as fair market value for the land. He asked Mr. Cardi if he agreed to tender that amount to the Town of Coventry if the abandonment is granted tonight and Mr. Cardi agreed.

Motion was made by Vice-President McGee seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to close public hearing. All voted aye.

Motion was made by Vice-President McGee seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to approve abandonment. All voted aye.

RESOLUTIONS

1. Authorizing the award of a contract to Santa Buckley Energy for ultra low sulfur diesel fuel and unleaded gasoline in accordance with the Town of Warwick's co-operating purchasing bid 2013-138

Motion was made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Vice-President McGee to approve resolution. All voted aye

2. Urging the Governor and members of the General Assembly to approve a plan to accelerate the allocation of the proposed phase-in of the state school funding funds

Motion was made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Vice-President McGee to approve resolution. All voted aye.

3. Authorizing the award of an emergency contract to Clean Care of New England, Inc. for the mold removal and east door renovation at the Coventry Police Department at a cost of \$9,130.81

Motion was made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Councilwoman Carlson to approve resolution. All voted aye.

ORDINANCES

1. Amending Chapter 217 of the Coventry Code of Ordinances with regard to exemptions for elderly or disabled property owners

President Cote explained that the purpose of this ordinance is to remove the sunset clause and make this a permanent town ordinance. The vote will be to advertise for public hearing.

Motion made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Councilwoman Carlson to advertise for public hearing. All voted aye.

Motion made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Councilman Carlson to adjourn meeting. All voted aye.

Town Clerk

