

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
PUBLIC HEARING ON FY 2012-2013 BUDGET  
April 12, 2012

Present: President Gary Cote, Vice-President McGee, Councilman Mattson.

Town Manager Thomas Hoover  
Town Solicitor Frederick Tobin

Absent: Councilman Spear and Councilman Jendzejec

Motion made by Vice-President McGee seconded by Councilman Mattson to open public hearing. All voted aye.

Manager Hoover began public hearing with a presentation reflecting both a 5% and 10% reduction to the FY 2013 proposed budget and has indicated the impact of reductions (See Town Manager's budget presentation). All department heads were present to answer questions.

Police Department

Chief Brian Volpe advised that a 5% reduction would represent \$467,000, cutting eight police officer positions and two full time equivalent civilian positions. The result of such a reduction on the police force would mean a reduction in training, protective equipment, wearing apparel, the emergency operations center, discontinuance of the traffic division, community policing and the school resource officer. Vehicles of first responders would all have over 100,000 miles on them.

Manager Hoover added that next year's police contract is still being negotiated, so there are no final answers or numbers yet.

Department of Public Works

Mr. Bob Clarkin, Public Works Director, indicated that a 5% cut would result in \$263,000 (four full time personnel); a 10% reduction \$526,240 (four full time personnel). Impacts of such a reduction would be seen with regard to street and sidewalk repair, potholes, grading, catch basin and manhole repair, minor building repairs, vehicle repair and yard waste pickup. Reduction of contracts regarding street sweeping, catch basin cleaning, pavement painting, non disaster tree removal and electric, plumbing and HVAC repair. We already have men doing double duty.

Parks and Recreation

Mr. Lefebvre presented a 5% reduction amounting to \$52,837 (involving 58 part time employees) and a 10% reduction reflects \$155,674 (involving 74 part time employees and cutting one full time employee to part time). Further reductions in programs would affect the Clean Team Program, beach supervision, lifeguards, camp supervision, summer camp program to be shortened by one week, lessen Teen Center hours, physical fitness programs, summer camp arts programs, tennis program, materials for grass and fields, stone and gravel, fertilizer and seed.

In summary a 5% reduction results in 16.5 full time employees and 68 part time and temporary being removed from the budget; with a 10% reduction, 19.5 full time and 92 part time and temporary employees being removed.

Vice President McGee remarked that Coventry has the best Parks and Recreation program in the state, but if the taxpayers want to cut the budget in order not to raise taxes, then we have to listen to them.

There was discussion with regard to the length of the summer program, how many weeks to operate, how many days in a week to operate, the current cell phone situation at Parks and Recreation pertaining to who uses them and whether the town should pay for the cell phone usage. Councilman Mattson suggested the use of advertising at the fields by way of signage on the fences, as a source of revenue.

### Human Services

In the Human Services Department a 5% reduction reflects a \$40,467 cut and a 10% reduction would be \$80,934. The impact would be reduction in social work services to the community anywhere from 8% to 24%, depending on the percentage of the reduction.

### Library

A cutback in the library budget of 5% would be \$43,757 (8 part time employees) or 10% reduction of \$87,514 (16 part time). Council felt it was not wise to reduce the library budget due to the fact that it will cause a loss in state aid. If the library remains level funded, it will maintain state aid money.

### Planning Department and Associate Boards

Planning Director Paul Sprague has indicated a 5% reduction at \$15,341 impacting .5 full time employees; a 10% reduction of \$30,682 (represents one full time person). In addition, reducing the budget will impact the services of seven boards and commissions, including grant services. The Planning Department has suffered the largest percentage of cutbacks over the past three or four years, having gone from six full time people to four.

### Finance Department

Finance Director Ted Przybyla advised that a \$34,728 (5%) reduction would represent the loss of one part time person and reduce another full time to half time; a 10% reduction would eliminate one full time position and one part time. Such changes will increase the backlog in recording payments, wait times, reduce customer service at the counter, reduce field inspections and cause slower payment of invoices.

### Town Clerk

A five percent (5%) reduction of \$14,210 in the Town Clerk's Office would make it necessary to reduce a full time position to part time; a (10%) reduction of \$28,420 eliminates one full time position. Impact to citizens include slower response times for licensing, research and counter service, all cause for error; slower minutes preparation and Probate Court support.

### MIS Department

IT Director Ed Warzycha advised that a 5% reduction (\$12,938) would eliminate some software maintenance agreements and support, replacement and repair of computer equipment and supplies. A further 10% reduction (\$25,876) would double the impact on all aspects of computer networks and systems.

### Town Manager

Manager Hoover explained that reductions in the Town Manager's Office, whether 5% (\$14,825) or 10% (\$25,651) would involve personnel, either by one full time position or half a full time position. In addition, it would be cause for a slowed response time to Town Council and citizens inquiries, correspondence, sewer related issues and employee related issues.

### Town Solicitor

Solicitor Tobin described a 5% reduction and a 10% (\$20,745 - \$41,490) as impacting contractual services.

### Town Council

Reduction of 5% ( \$1292) or 10% (\$2,584) would involve annual Town Council stipends.

### Board of Canvassers

A 5% cut would reflect \$5,736 and a 10% cut \$11,473, eliminating one temporary worker.

Manager Hoover explained that overall cuts of (5%) constituted \$987,306 and (10%) \$1,507, 294, resulting in the loss of 16.5 to 19.5 full time positions, 68 – 92 part time positions with many reductions in services. He strongly suggested that these 5% and 10% cuts are not implemented. The budget originally proposed by Manager Hoover provides for no tax increase.

### Public Comment

Charles Devine, 1 Audubon Lane, represented a group of people who use the Parks and Recreation summer camp programs. It would be beneficial to have the full 7 week program. Parents would much rather pay an extra \$25 or \$30.00 to have the 7<sup>th</sup> week provided. He also spoke in favor of no cuts to the police department.

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

Motion made by Councilman Mattson seconded by Vice-President McGee to adjourn meeting. All voted aye.

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Town Clerk