

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
Public Hearing – Proposed Municipal Budget  
Coventry Town Hall Council Chambers  
1670 Flat River Road, Coventry, RI  
April 15, 2008

Present: Anthony Colaluca, Justin Pomfret, Bruce Thompson, Frank Hyde

Acting Town Manager Paul Sprague  
Asst. Town Solicitor Richard Sullivan

Absent: Kenneth Cloutier

Presentation of municipal budget by Town Manager Sprague.

Manager Sprague began by stating that he has met with department heads in a work session. What is presented tonight is the department heads' and manager's budget requests. After Thursday night, April 17<sup>th</sup>, (public hearing regarding School Department budget) we will have approximately one month before the Financial Town Meeting.

Manager Sprague also explained how the tax cap on property taxes, resulting from Senate Bill 3050, is 5% this year and will continue to decrease for a few years.

This year actuaries defined a \$45 million deficit in pension plans. Now, as of June 2007, there is a \$37 million deficit. The Capital Improvement Program was level funded last year. There is approximately \$5.5 million in the reserve fund.

Regarding growth in the commercial tax base, results reflect fewer revenues due to fewer building permits issued and related construction costs.

President Pomfret – I still see a lot of things in the budget to cut. It's still not good enough, have to come down a bit.

Charles Vacca  
124 Fairway Drive

Should look at the town like a company. We do have to cut back. Concerned regarding overtime in municipal, police and building maintenance. Believes building maintenance overtime should be cut.

President Pomfret – Much of the overtime involves fixing the building across the street.

Wayne Asselin  
Lorraine Ave

Questioned why sewer project isn't in the budget.

Mr. West – The sewer is an enterprise fund, separate and distinct from the town operating budget.

Mr. Sprague – In this budget there are an additional two dispatchers in the police budget, one additional worker in sanitation and one in parks and recreation.

Mr. Pomfret – This is a wish list and will be trimmed back.

Laura Flanagan  
Knotty Oak Lane

Ms. Flanagan – Questioned the increase in building maintenance budget and was this only because of the building across the street. Also, why is there overtime in ground maintenance and parks and recreation?

Mr. Lefebvre – Due to the property across the street and with the five athletic fields there, we don't have the resources to do this in a 40 hour week. Overtime is cheaper than full time, with approximately \$8,200 in overtime vs. maybe \$58,000 full time with benefits.

Mr. West stated that there are also utility costs, heat, gas, water, power to be considered.

Ms. Flanagan – What are you doing with the engineering department since that was cut?

Mr. Sprague stated that the town has hired a person daily from 8:30 - 12:30, 20 hours a week, based on an hourly rate.

Ms. Flanagan – Wanted to know what areas the council might be looking at to make cuts.

Mr. Hyde – This hearing is for public comments. We have to make our decisions and we have another month left to do that.

Ronald Gizzarelli  
50 Harrington Road

Suggests ad hoc committees for ideas as to where to cut budgets, what priorities are. In agreement that the town needs a new police station, should expand the library, necessity for school roofs and a new sound system in the Council chambers.

Mr. Hyde – We are trying to expand our commercial base. Can't do that without the sewer lines; without them there wouldn't be growth coming in to town.

Charles Vacca – Need better managers here. Also should look at changing the pension system.

President Pomfret announced public hearing for school department budget on Thursday night, April 17 at 6:00 p.m.

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Town Clerk

