

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
May 17, 2010

Present: President Raymond Spear, Vice-President Laura Flanagan, Glen Shibley

Absent: Kenneth Cloutier and Frank Hyde

Town Manager Thomas Hoover
Town Solicitor Patrick Rogers

Pledge of Allegiance led by President Spear
Invocation by Dennis Derocher of Knotty Oak Baptist Church
Review of Evacuation Plan

President Spear opened meeting, commenting that this evening gives the Council a chance to finalize its position for a recommended budget to be considered at the Financial Town Meeting. There will be some ramifications with the proposed budget, we have tried to look at various things and their impacts on our community, municipal and school operations, but the end result is a budget that will not require a tax increase, but does provide what would be essential for the efficient operation of this community.

Town Manager Hoover summarized the proposed FY 2010-2011 municipal budget.
(See entire budget summary in Council folder)

Councilman Shibley supports the proposed budget and acknowledged that every community is being hit with the same dilemmas, after five months we still don't know what the General Assembly is going to do.

Vice-President Flanagan asked Manager Hoover if he is confident that services we provide to our citizens would be generally the same as last year, or should our citizenry expect to see some decrease in some areas?

Manager Hoover responded that he hopes to provide a level of service equal to this year. If there is any difference, it will probably exist in the police department with community police, training, ancillary areas. It is difficult to see how we can support some of these needs within the department because certainly the main priority is to provide officers on the street. Besides that, I think you will pretty much see no decrease in service. You may see it with the town employees, but the citizens probably won't recognize any change whatsoever.

Vice-President Flanagan asked if we were to be reimbursed more in the auto excise tax payment than we anticipate, would we be in a position to fill those two positions on the police department? Manager Hoover would have to check on the mechanics of utilizing that money, but public safety is one of the highest priorities.

Resolution adopting budget for FY 2010-2011

RESOLVED:

That the Town Council hereby accepts and amends the Town Manager's Proposed General Budget and recommends to the Financial Town Meeting the following actions:

SECTION 1. That \$21,562,787 be appropriated from tax revenues, federal and state aid and other revenues for the operation of the Municipal Government as set forth in Exhibit "A", which is attached.

SECTION 2. That \$41,580,728 be appropriated from tax revenues for the operation of the School Department. These funds shall supplement state aid to education grants and other school revenues to provide an operating budget of \$62,371,189.

SECTION 3. That \$3,055,574 in tax revenues, interest earnings, and state aid be appropriated for the retirement of principal and interest on outstanding bonded indebtedness.

Juanita Roberts, 60 Murray Street asked if the teen center and hours of operation would be affected. She also commented that the center is in need of furniture.

Guy Lefebvre, Recreation Director, advised that the budget does not include any new furniture. This year the teen center will close for the major part of the summer.

Gary Beaudoin, 45 Fairview Avenue, does not believe a tax freeze is appropriate again this year. Just a .50 cent increase would allow the town departments to run and would also help the schools. Our employees have contracts, are entitled to a contract, and you are hurting a lot of people. It is very important that the town is funded properly. Have some courage and do the right thing to fund the budget. You need to problem solve, not just sit here and say no to a tax increase. People in public service don't have to necessarily vote for what the constituents want. Do it because you believe in it.

Louis Diamonte, South Main Street, asked why the town will pay over \$4,200 for the Town Manager's attendance at a conference in California, including flight, hotel, means and registration. Feel that money could better be used somewhere else, for example fixing the roads.

President Spear responded that a conference is a vehicle through which Town Managers throughout the country obtain the knowledge and info that they need to fulfill their duties and responsibilities to the communities that they serve.

Ron Gizzarelli, 50 Harrington Road, would like to see the Charter Commission look at the attendance policy regarding boards and commissions.

School Committee Chairwoman Kathy Patenaude, 38 Fieldstone Drive, feels the schools should not be level funded for the second year in a row. School Dept. will be forced to cut people from the budget, and in addition, some of these one-time fixes create a structural deficit. I believe that people could handle a small tax increase. Superintendent Ken DiPietro regrets the cuts they will be forced to make.

Mr. Spear closed public comment.

Motion made by Laura Flanagan seconded by Glen Shibley to adopt resolution provided that we can have some discussion before taking our vote.

Mrs. Flanagan remarked that our state is in trouble because we have continually spent more than we have, both at the state and local levels. This is the only way to correct the overspending. The Council has a duty to deliver a budget that represents what the taxpayers

want. The purpose of an FTM is to allow the public to come out and have a voice and I think we have a responsibility and duty to bring this budget to the taxpayers. This budget forces accountability and I stand by this budget.

Councilman Shibley doesn't think next year will be any better. Maybe the Fair Funding formula may bring Coventry some money, but our state pension system is broken and costing taxpayers \$1 million a day, upsetting cities and towns.

President Spear agrees, stating that we're not getting new money from the state and don't feel it's fair to stick it on the local taxpayers. When looking at the big picture, we can make it through another year at this level.

Vote taken on resolution: President Spear, Vice-President Flanagan and Councilman Shibley all voted Aye. Motion passes unanimously to adopt budget resolution for FY 2010-2011.

Motion made by Laura Flanagan seconded by Glen Shibley to adjourn meeting. All voted aye.

Meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Town Clerk