

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
May 22, 2006

Executive Session

RIGL #42-46-5 (a) (1) (2) (5)

- *Relating to Bennett/Yarger Associates re Town Manager Search*
- *Regarding Coventry Land Trust per request of Walter Mc Laughlin regarding purchase of Stella Hall property on Route 117*
- *Regarding Boyd Brook LLC requested by John Pagliarini, Esq.*

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Gregory Laboissonniere to go into executive session. All voted Aye. So voted.

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Robert Thibeault to come out of executive session. All voted Aye. So voted.

Motion made by Justin Pomfret seconded by Frank Hyde to seal minutes of executive session. All voted Aye. So voted.

Work Session

- *Discussion with Town Engineer Relating to Sewers*

Ms. Barrett requested some guidance in relation to the completion of Contract 4. Some building permits have been issued, 12 in Phase 1A and one in Phase 1C. Hopkins Hill line cannot handle the additional flow. The building permits that have been issued are conditional in that sewer and water is not available. Certificates of occupancy will not be issued until this resolved.

Amgen is filling that line to capacity. Recommend putting a moratorium on the Hopkins Hill line. Amgen is gearing up to significantly increase their output. That is another reason why Contract 4 is urgent. Contract 4 will handle all of Amgen plus Pine Ridge, Ramblewood and Tiogue Avenue. It's is urgent to push through that legislation for Contract 4.

Mr. Thibeault asked if Amgen recycles their water to reduce their flow through that line.

Ms. Barrett is not aware there are any plans to do that.

Mr. Hyde also said there is need of a line on Wood Street for the Senior Center. He also spoke with George (Melanis) from Europa and he is eager to hook up, has even offered money up front to get this in the works.

Mr. Thibeault: Once Contract 4 begins, how long will it take before the senior center is hooked up?

Ms. Barrett: Six to eight weeks maximum.

President Jendzejec: Need to get the legislation to the General Assembly. Right now the House bill that was introduced passed and is currently in the Senate waiting to be put on the calendar. I believe the Senate bill is waiting to be put on the Senate floor calendar, need to check on it. Until that legislation is put through, we can't do this, so I suggest that we all start calling the legislators to see what they can do to push that through for us.

Mr. Hyde: What if the tenants want to start construction? What if they put up the money to get it going, would they get reimbursed?

Ms. Barrett: We don't have the funding to begin any of this. That would be up to the Sewer Commission or the Town Council.

- PUBLIC COMMENT

John Leighton
5 Cinnamon Drive

Mr. Leighton thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to address them tonight. He explained that he is an independent computer consultant, teaches karate and is the writer of a local blog, "Fuzzy Rabbit". Mr. Leighton stated that he is neither Democrat nor Republican, but unaffiliated, and chose to exercise his first amendment right to express his dissatisfaction and his right to disagree with the electorate.

I am a private citizen. I do admire and respect the councils' commitment, conviction, and dedication to service. You should all be commended for that. Agrees this will be a very difficult budget. The Council is not responsible for this crisis.

Taxes increase; the School Committee deals with unfunded mandates, increase in salaries and fringe benefits. What is lacking is a solid, long term plan.

Perhaps not in the best interest of this town to slash and burn the budget. Maybe we should support an aggressive tax rate. I will support your budget if you will also deliver a comprehensive plan to get the town back on track.

Mr. Leighton submitted his application for TIF and Charter Review Commissions.

Wayne Asselin

Would like work session on Center of New England and to see a legal team dedicated to this issue; another topic is the drainage system on Hopkins Hill Road and the access road to CONE through Hopkins Hill playground.

Jan Jendzejec
2387 Plainfield Pike

Mrs. Jendzejec: Questioned Mr. Leighton as to when he registered to vote?
Mr. Leighton: Last summer.

Michael Reeves, Coventry School Committee

Commented on school budget. Shocked and dismayed to read the proposed budget cuts. We have kept the salaries down with teachers in steps 1-9 accepting a 0% increase and a 1% increase on step 10. We have a significant increase in health care over which we have no control. Co-pays are 15%, one of the highest in the state because West Bay Collaborative said we will get a 10% increase. Also, a certified retirement payment that we have to make to the state represents a \$600,000 line item that we also have no control over.

Whether you want to call it a mandate or not, it is money that is needed in order to operate the schools and that we have to have in place. We could end up cutting programs. The rest of the money we requested includes capital needs and I urge you to take a look at the recommended cut to the school budget. If this goes through at this level, it will destroy the Coventry School District.

Ron Ghizzarelli

Happy to see level funding. Council has no control over that 70% of the budget, which is education.

Raymond Spear, Coventry School Committee
261 Phillips Hill Road

Extremely shocked when I read the proposed town manager's budget. There are some things that need to be done regarding school funding and things that need to be done in the community. The Financial Town Meeting has to provide for the needs of the community for the ensuing year. The Town Manger has recommended a budget cut to you. Have not heard a word from him mouth as to why, no suggestions from him as to how the school should balance the budget. We need dialogue in order to make decisions. There is a serious problem, and it will be more serious without dialogue to get us through this next Financial Town Meeting. This is a three million dollar cut. I've seen a lot of tough decisions in my sixteen years, never have I seen a suggestion for a three million dollar cut in the budget.

The needs of the school district are extreme. We need to take a look at teacher salaries. Level funding of the school budget would place us in position where we would have to violate state regulation and law. Want to know how your folks feel.

Nancy Sprengelmeyer, Chairperson, Coventry School Committee

Thanked the Town Council for the money to put roof on Oak Haven School. I see a one million dollar increase in municipal. Appears you are trying to catch up on some municipal things. I understand that. In the past we have made every effort to be respectful of the council and manager and what you allow us. Have tried to make the least invasive cuts. Last year you fought for the restoration of \$580,000. and I appreciate and respect you for that. Every cent was spent in the direct education of children and updates of materials and text. Whatever you decide here tonight, we have no choice but to abide by it, that's the way the town functions. You don't have line item veto with the school department, however, we will make whatever cuts we are demanded to make after the Financial Town Meeting.

If we sustain close to a three million dollar cut, the cuts will be devastating and will directly impact children. But because of contractual obligations, the cuts we make will impact the children.

Scott Duckworth

On page 5, request a clarification of numbers. Over in the left hand column, still over 7%?

Mr. West: That's .7%, yes. The fiscal year that ended last year 05-06, projection is that they will not overrun their budget; the year before would overrun \$400,000 .

Pat Lefebvre
41 Ginger Trail

Ms. Lefebvre – Three million dollar cut in one year is atrocious, but we need to do something. My taxes have gone up every year. Go back to negotiations, get a better person in there, and I hope this cut doesn't effect the kids. Everyone's heath care is going up, need to make some changes. Renegotiate.

Diane Paul
Colvintown Road

Ms. Paul: Questioned where water ordinance stands

Mr. Pomfret: Being reviewed now.

Mr. Hyde: Want to set the record straight about an article in the paper, in error. Want to make it clear that I do not support paying for your bag of garbage to be dumped. What I am supporting is white goods, refrigerators, stoves, and a fee being charged for that.

- **Town Council Meeting**

Present: Gregory Laboissonniere, Robert Thibeault, Ted Jendzejec, Justin Pomfret, Frank Hyde

Acting Town Manager Richard Sullivan
Town Solicitor Patrick Sullivan

Pledge of Allegiance led by Town Sergeant
Invocation led by President Jendzejec
Town Sergeant reviewed Emergency Evacuation Plan

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Gregory Laboissonniere to approve minutes of Town Council Meeting May 8, 2006. All voted Aye. So voted.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Resolution affirming award of contract for Gervais Street stone masonry walls
2. Resolution appointing Edward S. Inman, III, Moderator for Financial Town Meeting
3. Resolution approving Town Council summer schedule
4. Renewal of Second Hand license for Little Pumpkins, Cynthia Sullivan, 759 Tiogue Avenue
5. Application for Renewal of Pool Table license for Harris Bar and Grille, 666 Main Street
6. Application by Rockwell Amusements for Exhibitions & Performances License and Fireworks License at Rebuilders Automotive Supply, 1650 Flat River Road for carnival on June 15-18.
7. Application for Sewer Contractor's license by Robert A. D'Ambra, Rico Corporation, 800 Jefferson Blvd. Warwick
8. Application by National Grid for approval of pole locations

Councilman Laboissonniere requested removing #2 and #8 for discussion; Mr. Hyde requested removing #1, and #6.

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Robert Thibeault to approve item numbers 3, 4, 5, and 7 on Consent Agenda. All voted Aye. So voted.

- Resolution affirming award of contract for Gervais Street stone masonry walls

Mr. Hyde questioned price and when project would be finished.

Ms. Barrett: Only received one bidder, came in at more than we thought. Should

be completed in a couple of months.

Mr. Hyde: So this will be done by the end of summer, I'm a proponent for that.

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Gregory Laboissonniere to approve resolution. All voted Aye. So voted.

Resolution # 38-06-2563 affirming award of contract for Gervais Street stone masonry walls

RESOLUTION
OF THE
TOWN COUNCIL
NO. 38-06-2563

RESOLVED:

That the Town Council hereby affirms the award of a contract by the Town Manager pursuant to Chapter 2, Section 2-191 of the Town Code of Ordinances for Gervais Street stone masonry walls:

STEPHEN'S MASONRY, INC.	\$29,300.00
P.O. Box 19704	
Johnston, RI 02919	

Funding for this service is provided for in the Department of Public Works Roads & Bridges Account No 830.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 22nd day of May 2006.

APPROVED Thaddeus Jendzejec
Council President

ATTEST: Cheryl A. George
Town Clerk

- Resolution appointing Edward S. Inman, III, Moderator for Financial Town Meeting

Mr. Laboissonniere : Stated that Mr. Inman has done a good job in the past, and has been very fair. But would like to know how we arrive at the decision for moderator. Is it automatic or up for discussion?. The first I see of it is when it is on the agenda.

President Jendzejec: I was under the assumption that I just choose the person, and chose Mr. Inman seeing that he has done it for the past few years.

Mr. Laboissonniere: Just to make a point, we do have other qualified people, but I am fine with the choice, Mr. Inman has done a terrific job in the past.

Motion made by Gregory Laboissonniere seconded by Frank Hyde to pass resolution. All voted Aye. So voted.

RESOLUTION
OF THE
TOWN COUNCIL
NO. 39-06-2564

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF COVENTRY, STATE OF
RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS,
APPOINTING MODERATOR FOR THE ANNUAL
FINANCIAL TOWN MEETING TO BE HELD ON JUNE 13,
2006.

SECTION 1. The Town Council of the Town of Coventry hereby appoints Edward S. Inman, III, Moderator for the Annual Financial Town Meeting to be held at 7:00 p.m. on June 13, 2006 in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 9, Section 2 of the Public Laws of Rhode Island approved May 25, 1958.

SECTION 2. That any action contemplated herewith that may be in contravention with Council action previously adopted be, and the same is hereby repealed.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 22nd day of May, 2006.

APPROVED Thaddeus Jendzejec
President

ATTEST: Cheryl A. George
Town Clerk

- Application by Rockwell Amusements for Exhibitions & Performances License and Fireworks License at Rebuilders Automotive Supply, 1650 Flat River Road for carnival on June 15-18.

Mr. Hyde: I believe this is going to be held at the Rebuilders Auto Supply, not having a Celebrate Coventry Carnival this year. This will be Rockwell Amusements with someone else doing the fireworks display. I was informed by a member of Celebrate Coventry Committee that they have no affiliation with this event. Want to make sure that the proper insurance is in place, everything in order and police concerns are addressed.

Present: Harold Fera
Rockwell Amusements

Mr. Laboissonniere: Are you raising funds for the Coventry High School Band?

Mr. Fera: Talked with William Smith at high school. Will guarantee him \$1,000. and more if the weather is good.

Mr. Laboissonniere: Vendors?

Because of show promoters permit, all encompassed within that license.

Mr. Hyde; Do you have a license and insured pyrotechnician?

Mr. Fera: Yes.

Motion made by Gregory Laboissonniere seconded by Robert Thibeault that application be approved. All voted Aye. So voted.

- Application by National Grid for approval of pole locations

Ms. Barrett: Usually these don't go to council, just formality. Dennis Smith went out and looked at them and approved it.

Motion made by Mr. Pomfret seconded by Frank Hyde to approve application. All voted Aye. So voted.

Resolution approving Town Council summer schedule

RESOLUTION
OF THE
TOWN COUNCIL
No. 40-06-2565

RESOLVED:

That the Town Council summer schedule for meetings during the months of July and August 2006 will be as follows: July 24 and August 28, 2006.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 22nd day of May, 2006

APPROVED Thaddeus Jendzejec
President

ATTEST: Cheryl A. George
Town Clerk

• **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Ordinance amending Zoning Ordinance and Map for property located at New London Turnpike and Crompton Road, Assessor's Plat 7, Lot 34 currently zoned Residential 20 (R-20) to Planned Business Park (BP)

Motion made by Robert Thibeault seconded by Gregory Laboissonniere to open public hearing. All voted Aye. So voted.

Attorney Peter Ruggeiro represents applicant, Hecht Corporation, a contract purchaser of land at the corner New London Turnpike and Arnold Road. This is now zoned R-20 and we are seeking a zone change and zoning map amendment to Business Park (BP) designation.

One third of the property is in the Town of East Greenwich, 2/3 in Coventry. Received master plan approval from Planning Board. Have been to East Greenwich and also received master plan approval.

Have Matt Smith, Civil Engineer; Paul Bannon, Traffic Engineer and Ed Pimental, land use expert in planning and zoning matters here to testify.

Mr. Smith, engineer with Bohler Engineering: Have been involved since inception. The property is undeveloped 5.7 acres, 3.4 in Coventry. Gave overview of the plan that received approval from Planning Commission. Currently is R-20, want to change to Business Park. We are proposing 15,000 square foot pharmacy with drive-thru; a 5,100 square foot building of mixed use, then south is a 3,000 square foot bank. Two entrances off New London Turnpike.

Mr. Thibeault: Is the restaurant completely in E.G.?

Mr. Smith: Yes.

Mr. Thibeault: Will this road handle 18 wheelers?

Mr. Smith: Have designed so that full size trucks can service the buildings without having to back up on site or within the roadways.

Mr. Thibeault: Planning Board wanted sidewalks included along portion of Crompton Road.

Mr. Smith: We agreed to that at the Planning Board meeting.

Mr. Hyde to Ms. Barrett: Any concerns about this project?

Ms. Barrett: Initially yes, but it has been revised. All concerns have been addressed.

Mr. Hyde: I have a problem with this project; the owner has threatened my family and myself, don't think that I should be voting on this.

Mr. Paul Bannon, Civil Traffic Engineer: Have been involved from initial stages of development. Looked at several design options, coordinated with Department of Transportation regarding access to their maintenance facility. Will make improvements to Crompton Road, will be no internal congestion. There will be no left turns onto the turnpike. Driveways have been designed to be right turns onto New London Turnpike.

Ed Pimental: More acreage in this area is recommended for zoning change; the site is viable for commercial development.

Mr. Thibeault: Is the owner getting a tax treaty?

Mr. Ruggiero: No, this is a market rate development.

Mr. Ruggiero explained that the applicant of this petition for a zone change is his client, Hecht Corporation; the owner of the property now is Eagle American.

Mr. Hyde: Replied that he cannot vote without prejudice.

John Hughes
310 Arnold Road, East Greenwich

Mr. Hughes would like to see developer held to a high standard, do this nicely. Glad to see sidewalks on Arnold Road, does not want to see a 24 hour business and is concerned about odors that would come from fast food restaurant.

Mr. Ruggiero: Most of these building renderings already have approved loading area for trucks.

Scott Duckworth: Is it a requirement of the business park zone for bonding? What about the lights?

Solicitor Sullivan: If it's public like these are, it has to be bonded.

Mr. Bannon: Regarding lights, the improvements that are proposed will include the relocation of one head with an additional lens, and all those improvements will be borne by the developer, no cost to the Town of Coventry. State of the art system, both signals work together.

Motion made by Robert Thibeault seconded by Justin Pomfret to close public hearing. All voted Aye. So voted.

Motion made by Robert Thibeault seconded by Gregory Laboissonniere to adopt ordinance. Motion passes 4-1.

Vote: Gregory Laboissonniere – Aye
Robert Thibeault – Aye
Justin Pomfret – Aye
Ted Jendzejec – Aye
Frank Hyde - Abstain

- RESOLUTIONS

Resolution Accepting and Amending Town Manager's Proposed General Budget

Acting Town Manager Sullivan: Want to clarify, this is not a budget cut. It is the same as last year. The school has the same money it received last year. Last year we took money out of the reserves, out of that 1.7 million went to the schools. By law we have to give the schools the same amount this year as last year.

The original budget was a 15.5% increase. Warren West and I had a directive from the council to get it down. We worked very hard, as you know, out of every dollar, 75 cents goes to the school district. The school budget is approximately three times the size of the municipal budget. My position is that something has to stop, and right now.

Finance Director Warren West: Referred to handout, which will explain what we have done. Mr. West gave overview. Last year there was a feeling that the process wasn't open enough, this year very open. Not an easy task. Kept 5 ½ % as a goal, maximum allowed under state law. Council wanted under 5 ½ percent.

We determined that the only course of action to get us down to guidelines was to level fund the schools. Not possible to increase pension fund this year, have level funded the pension funds. At this stage, no pay increases for municipal employees. Have reduced partial funding for the full revaluation. Have deleted the funding for the capital replacement reserve, and the request for an assistant in the Information Technology Department. Reduced request for police vehicles from three to two, along with the request for a new police dispatcher. Have also deleted ambulance reimbursement and reducing Conservation Commission requests. Have deleted civil defense material and capital requests. There are increases in the amount of money put aside for the Land Trust contribution to reflect budgeted revenue, increase also in fuel budget for public works, police and parks and recreation. This will require a 5% increase in both the commercial and residential tax rates.

Mr. Hyde questioned the \$50,000 increase in the Board of Canvassers.

Mr. West: Due to election this year.

Mr. Hyde noted that he is not pleased that we keep getting further behind in funding the police and municipal pension funds. Questioned whether there is enough to cover all pensions. Concerned that fund has will have enough money to continue to pay police retirees. Also, whether it is a wise move to cut civil defense.

Mr. West: Yes, we will be okay for a few years. As far as civil defense, in an emergency could use contingency fund.

Mr. Sullivan: Had meeting with auditor general, he wants us to put this extra money in, but it's just not there. Would raise us three percentage points.

Mr. Hyde questioned deleting ambulance reimbursement.

Manager Sullivan said the fire chiefs, except for Chief Mruk, feel there is no need for this.

Mr. Hyde to Chief O'Rourke: Reduced police vehicles three to two, is that okay?

Chief O'Rourke: Three would be better, but we can do two.

Mr. Hyde: Also, the dispatcher, you can get by?

Chief O'Rourke: We'll get by, right now we are down 50% on dispatchers.

Mr. Hyde: Costing overtime?

Chief O'Rourke: Yes.

Mr. Hyde: Wants to see that the Blackrock Road project gets finished.

Mr. Thibeault: Our health care benefits for municipal, are they limited in when and where they can buy these benefits? Can they automatically run to the emergency room, or do they have to go to primary care physician?

Mr. West: No requirement to go to primary care physician.

Mr. West explained our deductible as being \$50.00 - \$100.00 to use emergency room.

Mr. Thibeault: If we were to require those limitations on where and when the medical could be used, would our total cost of medical go down?

Mr. West: Don't believe so.

Mr. Laboissonniere: Any new positions?

Mr. West: Two new recruits for the police, expecting retirements.

Mr. Laboissonniere: When do these retirements occur?

Chief O'Rourke: January and April.

Mr. Laboissonniere: Hopefully these two new recruits will be trained by that point and can just step in. Then we'll have people at the lower end of the pay scale. Any part time positions anywhere?

Guy Lefebvre, Recreation Director: We'll have 95 part time, same as last year.

Mr. West: All 95 are minimum wage.

Mr. Laboissonniere: Questioned fund balance?

Mr. West: Regarding the fund balance, you have restricted and unrestricted. You are talking about unrestricted. I'm projecting that we will be close. May need to go into our fund balance for another \$150,000 - \$200,000 for the current year for operations and expenses, this is reflected on page 6. The unrestricted fund balance as of the end of last year and at this point is about 5.5 million. It is important that we keep our bond rating intact.

Mr. Laboissonniere: My understanding is that we were going to under spend what we put in there last year.

Mr. West: There are only so many sources of revenue. We have projected non-tax revenues to the best of our ability as to what we are going to collect next year, then calculated our tax revenues, and with the current 5% tax increase, would mean that we have to look to the general fund for that other \$500,000. If we choose to leave that \$500,000 in the general fund and not use it, it would be a little more than one percentage point, which would make our 5% tax increase up to 6%.

President Jendzejec: Can you explain the proposed level funding for the schools? How the town has an increase of roughly \$959,000 and the school will be level funded, how does that equate to a 5% increase?

Mr. West: The issue that we have to deal with from last year. We used about 3 million dollars out of the reserves to finance the budget, to keep the tax rate as low as possible. Of that, approximately \$600,000 of that was used for capital, or non-recurring, one time items. Used about 2.4 million to fund operating expenses. If we level fund all the operations, would still need 2.4 million dollars from our taxes in order to level fund.

President Jendzejec: 2.4 million all towards the schools? What is the exact amount the schools got?

Mr. West: Schools got 75% (1.7 million). In order to level fund, we still have to give the school department what we gave them last year.

Mr. Hyde: Is the proposed budget a 5% tax rate increase?

Mr. West: Yes.

Acting Town Manager Sullivan: Have to give the school the same, by law, as we did last year.

Mr. West: That's what we are proposing.

Mr. Hyde: With a 5% increase, what would that do to the taxpayer?

Mr. West: The residential tax rate would change from \$14.94 to \$15.69 and the commercial rate from \$18.00 to \$18.90.

Mr. Hyde: Suggested re-addressing the tax freeze and see if they are based on income and then re-examine them, could off-set the tax rate.

Mr. Laboissonniere: Hoping that by next year we can make this TIF Commission and projects come to fruition. Last year that wasn't realistic, by next year hopefully can count on this. Would like to see some other things combined and cut more. This is very difficult. We all have children in schools, but if you want services, we have to pay for them. We need to add more to pensions, would love to see this down below 4%. But, to dig into fund balance anymore could put us in jeopardy of losing bond rating.

Ronald Ghizzarelli: Pleased that the council is hearing the public.

Superintendent of Schools Ken DiPietro: Would like you to look at page 5. Revenue for the town. There is almost 2 million more on the town side. Moved money to help out the police pension. Another significant amount from capital non-recurring.

I think that the public is hearing that you are going to cut 2.9 million dollars but you are still going to take 2.9 million in taxes, need to understand that the 2.9 million is going to the town side to pay for those things that came out of the fund reserve. You see \$758,000 coming from the state to the town to support education, but funding is flat-funded at \$37,851,000 and we are losing the \$175,000 that came from impact fees. So, we are losing the \$175,000, the state gave us \$758,000, we are going to be flat funded and you are going to tell me to educate 6,000 children in this town. I need to tell you that this is not because of the teachers, it is because you need to pay a debt. It is very upsetting for me to sit here and get a 3 million dollar cut, when we qualified for you what we did to have a 1% raise on top step teachers and 0 on other steps, and that we have a \$500,000 health care cost, and you put \$200,000 on the town side for health care and we are in the same partnership.

We both go to West Bay for help, you put \$200,000 more for the town and we have zero to pay the \$500,000 bills that we have to pay to the same company that we

are both insured by. We have a \$600,000 pension fund that we have to pay, and you have to pay a police fund. .

Mr. West: School budget went up 3 million dollars, which was paid for by the town. We see the 34 million on page 5 and the 37.8 million in the next column, that's an increase of 3 million dollars. The budget went up 3 million dollars, and the town had to find the money to fund it ,and that came from taxes.

Mr. DiPietro: We told you that we recovered a Gates grant. The Gates grant ended, and that was the end of a million a year. We lost a million from Gates.

Fred Tobin, Esq.
360 Town Farm Road

Mr. Tobin: Increase for this year municipal government 2.972 million, or 22% increase. The expenses for municipal government are projected at 1.193 million increase. That's a difference of approximately 1.8 million between the anticipated additional revenue and the anticipated expenses for municipal side. That means 1.8 million going someplace, most likely to replenish reserves. In additional \$790,000 of municipal debt that was spent last year and is not going to be spent this year. That brings you up to 2.5 million from additional monies that I think are available in this budget without any other changes in the tax rate. Apparently will show a surplus of 2.5 million dollars, which is good to replenish the debt, but not at the expense of the school department.

Mr. West: You are looking at one piece of the puzzle.

Scott Duckworth: Town can't afford higher tax increase, would like to see even lower rate. Maybe we have to pay for the sins of the past. I don't think I will see 5% extra in my paycheck. We have to make hard choices.

Raymond Spear, School Committee: I would first like to say thank you and I would like to say that I appreciate where you are at, only problem is that we have to educate, and it is not going to get done this way. Need to find a way to get together in this community, can no longer afford education in this town the way it is being funded. Whether it means getting into contracts, have no idea where it is going to take us. Think we need to sit down, something needs to be done, and say "we've got a bullet to bite, not the school committee, but the entire community". I know what is going through your minds, I can't understand how you can sit there and know what the school committee has got to do if this is handed to us following the financial town meeting. It will be devastation in our schools, and I mean that sincerely.

If you need to be reminded of where we can cut, go into that packet that we handed out at the public hearing and look at the things that we said are the mandatory increases and all the things that we would like to do. In order to do other things, we have to go into things that I have never considered in my career.

Mr. Hyde: The town expects a 98% tax collection rate?

Mr. West: It's possible, yes.

Mr. Hyde: Is that the same as it was last year?

Mr. West: I think in last year's budget, we used 97.6%.

Mr. Pomfret: Acknowledged the hard work put into this budget, does not like to see even a 5% tax increase. It's a tough thing to do.

Mr. Hyde: Not happy with 5% increase. Unfortunately we are in this unenviable position, not easy at all. People put a lot of work into this, fuel is rising, so is Blue Cross. At this rate, we'll all be in the poor house.

Mr. Thibeault: Sat with Warren two or three times. I don't see on the municipal

side where anything else could be taken out. Most increases were for medical, dental, insurance, gasoline, oil, things of that nature, and we went department by department. Not comfortable with 5%. Would prefer to see 3 – 4 ½ %, other than that would create a structural deficit.

President Jendzejec: This is one of the hardest decisions we will have to make. School Committee worked very hard, I understand that. Council has worked very hard, along with Mr. Sullivan and Warren West. I have seen Mr. Thibeault sitting and working diligently with Mr. West. 5% is hard to take. Even harder to take is not being able to fund the schools.

Motion made by Frank Hyde seconded by Gregory Laboissonniere to adopt resolution accepting Town Manager's proposed budget.

Mr. Laboissonniere – Aye
Mr. Thibeault – Aye
Mr. Jendzejec – Aye
Mr. Pomfret – Aye
Mr. Hyde – Aye

RESOLUTION
OF THE
TOWN COUNCIL
NO. 41-06-2566

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 \$ 20,413,955.00 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 \$ 37,851,498.00 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 \$ 59,957,198.00.

SECTION 3. That \$ 3,315,268.00 in tax revenues, interest earnings, and state aid be appropriated for the retirement of principal and interest on outstanding bonded indebtedness.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 22nd day of May 2006.

APPROVED Thaddeus Jendzejec
President

ATTEST: Cheryl A. George
Town Clerk

Motion made by Justin Pomfret seconded by Robert Thibeault to adjourn meeting. All voted Aye. So voted.

Cheryl A. George
Town Clerk