

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
May 23, 2011 – 7:00 p.m.

Present: President Gary Cote, Ted Jendzejec, Kerry McGee, Raymond Spear, Carl Mattson, Jr.

Town Manager Thomas Hoover
Town Solicitor Frederick Tobin

Pledge of Allegiance led by Town Sergeant
Invocation by Dennis Derocher from Knotty Oak Baptist Church
Review of Emergency Evacuation Plan

President's Comments

President Cote reported that last week Senators Shibley and Kettle took our charter changes to the State House for hearing, without first informing the Town Council. A resolution dealing with those changes should have been on the agenda tonight and inadvertently was not, but a letter will be sent to the State House to accompany these changes through Committee. Councilman Spear offered to sign letter along with President Cote.

President Cote also apologized for the confusion surrounding last week's meeting and will do his best not to let it happen again.

Approval of Town Council Minutes - April 28, 2011

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman McGee to approve minutes of April 28, 2011. All voted aye.

RECONSIDERATION OF BUDGET RESOLUTIONS

Councilman Mattson stated that Council may have made a hasty decision last week with regard to the budget and believes the Town Manager's recommendation of Resolution #3 should have been approved. Approving Resolution #2 would be a leap of faith.

Councilman Spear summarized that after much discussion, going back and forth several times, he made a suggestion that we might want to look at going to the full \$1.2 million so that the schools are not put in a position of making drastic cuts to eliminate \$600,000, conditionally upon an agreement from the School Committee and CTA that any new contract negotiated after this one would definitely reflect an elimination of \$600,000 of expenditures within the contract. Meaning, that in the end we would be giving the schools the \$1.2 million that they said is needed to get by instead of \$1.6 million, eliminating any drastic cuts. At the end of the fiscal year when they negotiate a new contract, that \$600,000 would come out of their expenditure base from within the contract. In the end we would only have \$600,000 going in as future maintenance of effort.

That would seem to be a pretty good deal as it is a motivation to be able to provide the full programming needed by the schools this year. It also eliminates \$600,000 from maintenance of effort the following year.

Councilman McGee indicated after listening to the public at the last Council meeting, we took the human aspect into consideration and didn't want to have to eliminate jobs. However,

although the council meeting didn't go quite according to plan, we are accomplishing what we set out to do.

Councilman Jendzejec agreed the last meeting was hectic, but everyone on the Council had a chance to go through the motions in their head and look at their packets. No one spoke out or voted against this and I think to reconsider is a waste of time. The money isn't coming out of taxpayer money and I would like to see this part of the agenda tabled.

President Cote stated he would not consider level funding. The school budget originally began at \$1.6 million, came down to \$1.2 million after we met with school officials. The Commissioner of Education denied a maintenance of effort waiver for \$1.2 million and then denied \$600,000 of the \$1.2 million. Had that been granted, \$600,000 of the \$1.2 million would be maintenance of effort. Although the denial letter clearly stated that the Commissioner's office would be glad to look at this again in the future, they wouldn't approve it at this time as they felt the listed one time expenses were purely speculation. Council then decided to fund the School Department \$600,000, and that's what we voted on and it passed.

At public comment we listened to what people had to say, in particular a lady who lives in Coventry who will lose her job and maybe her home. We listened to CTA President Erinakes talk about all those who would lose their jobs. No one on this Council came into office to put people out of their jobs. We voted to reconsider with a stipulation that this council receive an agreement signed by all three entities, the School Committee, CTA and Superintendent, guaranteeing that the question would never be called on the additional \$600,000. We received those agreements.

So even with the confusion of last week's meeting, I believe we ended up right where we wanted to be, which was to fund the schools the additional \$1.2 million with a guarantee to this council that the current contract will come to a natural close in August of 2012, allowing for the School Committee and CTA to negotiate a new fair and equitable contract. In summary, we did vote to fund \$1.2 million to the schools, with \$600,000 to maintenance of effort and with a guarantee that school administration will continue to seek an exemption from the Education Commission in the future for the other \$600,000, since she did leave the door open for reconsideration. We will continue to seek that waiver.

President Cote asked for motion to reconsider budget resolution adopted last week. No motion.

Manager Hoover asked that a motion be made to revoke Resolution #1 (60-11-4118 whereby the Commission of Education would approve variance for \$600,000 not being included in maintenance of effort) from last week as it conflicts with Resolution #2 (62-11-4120) which was adopted.

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to repeal Resolution 60-11-4118 from the May 18, 2011 meeting. All voted aye.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Resolution approving sewer tie-ins for properties located at 752 Washington Street, 2044 New London Turnpike, 2285 New London Turnpike and 613 Tiogue Avenue
2. Resolution approving Town Council summer meeting schedule

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to approve Consent Agenda. All voted Aye.

LICENSES

1. Application for victualling license by Main Street Donuts, Inc., dba Dunkin Donuts, 24 Coventry Shoppers Park
2. Application by Charles Hawkins, Hawkins Machine Co., Inc., 374 Hopkins Hill Road for Firearms license
3. Application for Hawker's license by S & T's Fireworks, Tammy Rokowski, 35 Roath Street, Norwich, CT

Motion made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Councilman McGee to approve all licenses. All voted aye.

RESOLUTIONS

1. Approving a policy that all General Fund balances over ten (10)% of the General Fund be added proportionately to the Police and Municipal Pension Fund Annual Required Contribution (ARC)

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Mattson to approve resolution. All voted aye.

2. Requesting the Rhode Island General Assembly oppose 2011 – S 413 and H 5943 that mandate expired teacher contracts must continue at the existing terms and conditions

Councilman Jendzejec stated that by continuing a contract the money will go back into the town, rather than to an arbitrator, negotiator or lawyer. It keeps both parties at the table, moving forward on the contract.

Councilman Spear believes if this passes it eliminates the incentive to agree at the bargaining table, and you can just sit and keep going on the way you were going.

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Mattson to approve resolution. Vote taken: (4) Aye, (1) Abstain by Councilman Jendzejec.

3. Awarding a contract to Baxter Dansereau & Associates, a certified public accounting firm to perform the independent audit of the Town of Coventry's financial records for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2011 for a fee of \$51,500

Baxter Dansereau was the low bidder of three bids received. Manager Hoover recommended approval..

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to adopt resolution. All voted Aye.

4. Authorizing a purchase and sales agreement for acquisition of Plat 317 Lots 71 and 74, known as the Beaudoin property, adjacent to Stump Pond, by the Coventry Land Trust at a cost

of \$650,000. Further authorizing an application to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management for an Open Space Grant for \$350,000 to pay for half of this cost.

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to amend resolution to reflect Assessor's Plat 317 instead of 318. All voted aye.

Motion made by Councilman Spear seconded by Councilman Jendzejec to approve resolution. All voted Aye.

5. Awarding a contract to Ocean State Transit for bus transportation for the Dept. of Parks and Recreation summer playground program at a rate of \$47.50 per hour and \$.59 per mile.

Motion made by Councilman McGee seconded by Councilman Mattson to approve resolution. All voted aye.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Helen Quinn, Hunters Crossing, is disappointed that Dunkin Donuts was allowed a victualling license; she is concerned about fumes from the cars and how it will impact the daycare center next door.

School Committee member Judy Liner expressed thanks to the Town Council for their decision tonight not to reconsider previous judgment made on the budget at the meeting of May 18.

Motion made by Councilman Jendzejec seconded by Councilman McGee to adjourn meeting. All voted Aye.

Town Clerk