

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT

SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

ROBERT F. PARISI COUNCIL CHAMBERS

THURSDAY

April 20, 2017

6:00 P.M.

PUBLIC HEARING

BUDGET

FY 2017 – 2018

MINUTES

The Special Meeting of the Wallingford Town Council on Tuesday, April 20, 2017 was called to order at 6:05 P.M. There was a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were: Chairman Vincent Cervoni, Craig Fishbein (arrived at 6:31 p.m.) Thomas Laffin, John LeTourneau (arrived at 6:11 p.m.), Joseph A. Marrone, Christopher K. Shortell, John J. Sullivan (arrived at 6:24 p.m.), Vincent F. Testa, Jr. and Jason Zandri. Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr. and Comptroller, James Bowes were also present at the meeting.

1. Moment of Silence
2. Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call
3. **BUDGET WORKSHOP**

Mayor Dickinson addressed the public on the 2017-2018 Budget and remarked that it is not what he would like to see. He stated that it is a 2.4% increase in taxes or \$125 on the average tax payer's property. He then went on to say that it's not easy on many taxpayers to have any increase. He then indicated that 28.57 mills will be the new mill rate.

Mayor then talks about the lack of State funding and the prospect of towns having to pick up the cost of the Teacher Pension Fund. He stated that we have to resort to using 7.2 million from reserves. He then asks the public to read the budget document and welcomes questions.

Chairman Cervoni welcomes everyone and explains that this is a Public Hearing and the Council is here to listen to the public's concerns regarding the different departments' budget requests, not ask questions. The council will have their workshops at a later date.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

*In Attendance: Dr. Salvatore Menzo, Superintendent of Schools
Roxanne McKay, Board Chairman*

Don Kennedy, 2 Bull Avenue, commented that the budget went up again and then asked how did you do with your efficiencies effort?

Dr. Menzo answered that we saved over \$300,000 in those efficiencies and used it elsewhere in the budget.

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, asked if there is any discussion on consolidating to one high school.

Dr. Menzo answered that our goal is to look at immediate solutions to save money. He then stated that building a new school or consolidating would be long term.

Bob Gross asked if the waiver for insurance is a cost savings and Dr. Menzo answered that the waiver for insurance is a \$610,000 reduction.

Barbara Kapi, 6 Demi Road, questions if civics can be made a mandatory class and Dr. Menzo replied that it already is a mandatory class.

Ann Cosentino, 17 South Whittlesey Avenue, commented that the budget gets larger every year. She then asked if we ever go out to the schools and check how many children are actually in the special education programs.

Dr. Menzo replied that they have developed a plan and have seen children with increased needs, both social and educationally. He commented that the children seem to be coming at younger ages with several more issues. He then stated that they try to work with the children and their families.

CAPITAL AND NON-RECURRING

*In Attendance: Henry McCully, Director, Public Works
Steven, Palermo, Foreman
Kathy Johns, Executive Secretary
Robert Baltramaitis, Town Engineer*

Don Kennedy, Bull Avenue, asked why they are requesting more money when they still have not used last year's money. Henry McCully replied that they are still paving up until July 1, 2017 so that money will be used. Mr. Kennedy then asked why money is still there from three years ago for paving. Mr. McCully answered that some projects get delayed but the money will get used up.

Paul Chiardello, 2 Bayberry Drive, questioned why we transfer funds from the Electric Division to Cap and Non-Recurring and Mayor Dickinson responded that State law allows this and it insures that we do annual local improvements. He went on to say that it is a choice we have made as a town.

PUBLIC WORKS

*In Attendance: Henry McCully, Director, Public Works
Steven, Palermo, Foreman
Kathy Johns, Executive Secretary*

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, inquired about the line item for garbage removal and asked if this is for the transfer station. Mr. McCully responded yes and explained that we only get charged for the senior citizen program plus Public Works garbage. Mr. Gross then asked if we ever looked into town wide trash pick-up and Mr. McCully answered that it would be complex to accomplish.

ELECTRIC DIVISION

*In Attendance: Richard Hendershot, General Manager, Electric Division
Thomas Sullivan, Office Manager, Electric Division
Bob Beaumont, PUC Chairman*

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, asked how much for conservation fees. He then asked what they do with them in every month's bill. Rick Hendershot responded 1.5 million is collected for conservation programs. Mr. Gross then commented that it would be nice to see some green energy projects.

Paul Chiardullo, 2 Bayberry Drive, commented that we should study green energy.

Larry Morgenstein, South Main Street, Stated that the electric light program is great and then asked Mr. Hendershot if the money is really utilized in that program. Mr. Hendershot answered mostly, yes.

EMPLOYEE INSURANCE AND OTHER BENEFITS

*In Attendance: James Hutt, Personnel Director
Ric Livingston, Assistant Personnel Director
Kurt Treiber, Risk Manager*

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, inquired about insurance for the buildings and Kurt Treiber responded that we buy insurance. Mr. Gross then asked if we ever looked into self-insurance and Mr. Treiber answered yes and went on to say that is was cost prohibitive.

INSURANCE – PROPERTY & CASUALTY

*In Attendance: James Hutt, Personnel Director
Ric Livingston, Assistant Personnel Director
Kurt Treiber, Risk Manager*

Mr. Gross, Long Hill Road, asked if we go out to bid for health insurance and Mr. Hutt answered yes. Mr. Hutt then stated that we went out to bid last year and we weigh the bids. He explained that it's just not the lowest bidder; there are a lot of complex issues that are part of the decision process. Mr. Gross then asked if Anthem has always been the carrier of choice and Mr. Hutt replied that it has been for as long as he has been here, 15 years.

PENSION FUNDS

*In Attendance: James Hutt, Personnel Director
James Bowes, Comptroller*

Paul Chiardullo, 2 Bayberry Drive, mentioned that we have a 65 million dollar pension liability and asked if we are successful with this plan? Mr. Hutt stated the Town is in negotiations with six pension contracts at this time and cannot discuss that.

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, stated that the upfront costs are more for defined benefits.

MAYOR

In Attendance: William Dickinson, Jr., Mayor

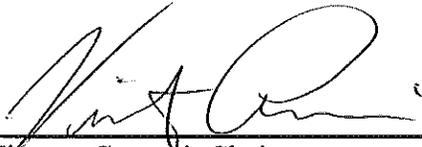
Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, asked the Mayor if the State of Connecticut should provide more funding than expected would he put it into taxes and bring the tax increase down. Mayor responded that it is hard to answer a hypothetical like that.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

MADE BY: LETOURNEAU
SECONDED BY: MARRONE
ALL AYES

Meeting Adjourned at 8:10 P.M.

Submitted by: Barbara Thompson, Town Clerk



Vincent Cervoni, Chairman

10 MAY 2017

Date



Barbara Thompson, Town Clerk

5-9-17

Date

RECEIVED FOR RECORD 5-1-17
AT 11:30 AND RECEIVED BY
Barbara Thompson TOWN CLERK

In accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act- Individuals in need of auxiliary aids for effective communication in programs and services of the Town of Wallingford are invited to make their needs and preferences known to the ADA Compliance Coordinator at 203-294-2070 five days prior to meeting date.