

PUBLIC HEARING of the Town Council held Thursday, May 20, 2010 at 7:00 P.M. in Town Council Chambers, 105 Harrisville Main St., Harrisville, for and within the Town of Burrillville.

PRESENT: Councilors Wallace F. Lees, Robert A. Bishop, Margaret L. Dudley, Kevin D. Heitke, John M. Karmozyn Jr. and Norman C. Mainville

MEMBERS ABSENT: Council President Nancy F. Binns was excused

OTHERS PRESENT:

Budget Board: Arthur R. Hurley, Mark Brizzard, Aaron Coutu, Dan Joubert, David Ketcham

Relative to discussing the Municipal Budget

NOTE: The public hearing was duly advertised in the Woonsocket Call on May 11, 2010

Council President Pro Tem Wallace F. Lees called the hearing to order at 7:00 P.M.

1. Comments from the Budget Board

Arthur Hurley, Chair, noted that the current-year cap is 4.5%, commented on the difficulty of avoiding a tax increase, and discussed the proposed cuts in state aid. Mr. Hurley suggested that the budget process is an opportunity to review expenditures, and that the Town had reviewed and implemented many options to help control expenditures.

Mr. Hurley spoke of controlling rubbish and recycling expenses and noted that a report was expected from the recently established Rubbish and Recycling Committee. Mr. Hurley indicated that the Budget Board supported surcharges to quasi-municipal agencies that use Town services such as dispatching and gasoline procurement. Mr. Hurley noted that the Budget Board had discussed outsourcing but recognized the difficulties involved.

2. Comments from Michael C. Wood, Town Manager

Michael C. Wood, Town Manger, provided an overview of the budget proposal, as described in his budget message, dated May 3, 2010 (a copy of which is on file with the record of the hearing). Mr. Wood summarized the proposal, which was within the 4.5% levy cap

Mr. Wood explained the effect of the 2010 statistical revaluation. Mr. Wood said that the proposed tax rate represented an average decrease in real estate taxes, with the difference made up in motor vehicle taxes. The budget, as presented, did not include a tax

increase.

Mr. Wood explained that the proposal was driven by major cuts in revenues, most of which are related to state aid. Mr. Wood indicated that the proposal was based on a worst-case scenario that might or might not improve. Mr. Wood detailed proposed revenue losses.

Council President Pro Tem Wallace F. Lees asked the Department/Division heads to recess to the lobby.

Mr. Wood reviewed changes to the line item budget, discussed how those figures had been established, explained steps taken to reduce expenditures. The revenue reductions, he said, had been proportionately budgeted between the School Department and Municipal Departments.

Mr. Wood reviewed debt service and discussed the issue of the upcoming conclusion of the Ocean State Power payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreement.

3. Public Comment:

Note: Persons who wish to address the Council shall state their name and address.

Katie Franklin

Katie Franklin, Director of Development and Public Affairs at WellOne, Bridgeway, Pascoag, (formerly Northwest Community Healthcare)

provided an update of the service provided by WellOne. Ms. Franklin acknowledged the challenging economic times for the Town, noting that those same factors make WellOne service critical to town residents.

Ms. Franklin asked whether WellOne funding had been eliminated. Mr. Wood indicated that the operating budget did not include funding for several of the special appropriations, including WellOne, but that he suggested that the Town Council consider these needs separately and, if they chose to fund them, alternate funding should be identified.

Mary Ryan

Mary Ryan, of Victory Highway, asked the town council to consider adding a public hearing to their schedule. Ms. Ryan claimed that the budget proposal had been unavailable and objected that the department/division heads had left Council Chambers. Mr. Wood indicated that the budget had been available. Council President Pro Tem Wallace F. Lees said the department/divisions heads were available to answer questions.

Ms. Ryan asked for explanations of the overlay variance, the value of uncollected tax, the bond rating, and the fund balance. John P. Mainville, Finance Director, explained how these items were presented in the budget.

Ms. Ryan suggested that the fund balance was excessive. The extent and purpose of maintaining the fund balance were discussed.

Ms. Ryan asked about the use of PILOT money from Ocean State Power. The agreement and the use of the funding was reviewed.

Ms. Ryan commented on the economy, and on salaries and benefits of municipal employees.

Jacqueline Zahn

Jacqueline Zahn, Camp Dixie Road, Pascoag commented on the Town's fiscal responsibility, and supported the continuation of sound financial practices.

Alan Gerew

Alan Gerew, Sherman Farm Road, Harrisville, Chairman of the Recreation Commission, commented on the importance of funding youth programs. Mr. Gerew indicated that there was a five-year reduction plan in place, but that completely eliminated funding in one step would be detrimental to the programs. Michael C. Wood, Town Manager, indicated that his recommendation was not to eliminate funding but to consider an alternate source.

Mr. Gerew raised the questions of lighting at Hauser Field and asked that Raymond Daignault address the matter.

Raymond Daignault

Raymond Daignault, Rolling Meadows Road, Pascoag, President of the youth football and cheer league,

explained the necessity of practicing football at after dark. Mr. Daignault indicated that the association had been working with Cheri R. Hall, Director of Parks & Recreation, to help fund the lighting. Issues related to lighting at Hauser Field were discussed. There was discussion of whether using a generator would alleviate the problem.

David Marcotte

Dave Marcotte, 595 Wallum Lake Road, Pascoag, voiced concern that the Department of Parks & Recreation might eventually become self-sufficient. Mr. Marcotte indicated that the proposal was tantamount to eliminating the department. The possibility of self-sufficiency and of the revenues generated by the Department of Parks and Recreation were discussed.

4. VOTED to close the public hearing.

Motion by Councilor Norman C. Mainville. Seconded by Councilor John M. Karmozyn, Jr. The vote was unanimous by the six members present. Voting in favor of the motion were and Council President Pro Tem Wallace F. Lees, and Councilors Robert A. Bishop, Margaret L. Dudley, Kevin D. Heitke, John M. Karmozyn Jr. and Norman C. Mainville. Council President Nancy F. Binns was excused.

5. Town Council deliberation: None

6. VOTED to adjourn at 8:17 P.M.

Motion by Councilor Norman C. Mainville. Seconded by Councilor John M. Karmozyn, Jr. The vote was unanimous by the six members present. Voting in favor of the motion were Council President Pro Tem Wallace F. Lees, and Councilors Robert A. Bishop, Margaret L. Dudley, Kevin D. Heitke, John M. Karmozyn Jr. and Norman C. Mainville. Council President Nancy F. Binns was excused.

The hearing was recorded.

Louise R. Phaneuf, Town Clerk