

PUBLIC HEARING of the Town Council held Thursday, May 26, 2011 at 7:00 P.M. in Town Council Chambers, 105 Harrisville Main St., Harrisville, for and within the Town of Burrillville.

PRESENT: Council President Nancy F. Binns, Councilors Wallace F. Lees, Edward J. Blanchard, Margaret L. Dudley, Kevin D. Heitke, David J. Place and Stephen N. Rawson

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: School Committee Members Dorothy Cardon, Joan Cote, Peter Lambert, Mary Margaret Karmozyn. Budget Board Members Arthur Hurley, Judy Aubin and Mark Brizard. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Frank Pallotta; School Department Business Manager Robin Kimatian; Director of Assessment, Curriculum and Professional Development Lois Short and Director of Technology Paul Barrett.

Relative to discussing the School Department Budget

NOTE: The public hearing was duly advertised in the local section of the Woonsocket Call on May 6, May 9 and May 11, 2011.

1. Comments from the Budget Board

Arthur Hurley, Chairman of the Burrillville Budget Board, commented

on the School Department budget. Mr. Hurley reiterated the Budget Board's recommendation that the School Department establish and support an unfunded liabilities fund, commented that some side funds are not being used, and questioned the status of an abandoned bus on the Steere Farm Elementary property.

2. Comments from Debra Stockwell-Cavanaugh, Chair, Burrillville School Committee

None

3. Comments from Dr. Frank Pallotta, Superintendent of the Burrillville School Department

(a) Relative to the School Department Budget

Dr. Frank Pallotta, Superintendent of Schools, presented an opening statement summarizing the responsibilities of the School Department, commenting on the School Department's budget management and supporting the relationship between the municipal and school. Dr. Pallotta provided examples of budget saving devices employed at the School Department.

Dr. Pallotta referred to a May 2, 2011 memorandum from Town Manager Michael C. Wood. Dr. Pallotta clarified the School Department surplus as a result of good management, commented on municipal surplus, and took exception to any implication that some of

the fiscal issues were a result of School Committees' influence over state law. Dr. Pallotta discussed the issue of health insurance expense. Dr. Pallotta remarked on the gains made by the School Department due in part to the cooperation of teachers.

Dr. Pallotta presented the School Department FY2012 budget request using a PowerPoint presentation. A copy is on file with the record of the hearing.

(b) Relative to the June Rockwell Levy Rink Budget

Dr. Pallotta had no comments on the rink budget.

Councilor Margaret L. Dudley posed questions related to salary increases, funding for curriculum development, per pupil expenses, funding of debt service, School Committee consideration of state legislation, health savings accounts and unfunded liabilities. These matters were discussed.

Councilor Steven N. Rawson asked about school population projections. Dr. Pallotta reviewed adapting the School Department Budget when experience differs from the predictions.

Council President Nancy F. Binns asked about per pupil expenses, statewide per pupil expenses, prepurchase of consumable supplies, and curriculum development. These issues were reviewed and

discussed.

Councilor Edward J. Blanchard asked for a list of programs that have been eliminated. Dr. Pallotta noted that the business department had been affected by low enrollment.

In response to a question, Dr. Pallotta said that the student/teacher ratios were 20 to 22 children at the elementary school level, less at the high school.

4. Comments from Michael C. Wood, Town Manager

Michael C. Wood, Town Manager, discussed the budget process: the Town Council's, School Committee's and Town Manager's roles. Mr. Wood detailed issues relevant to the FY2012 budget, including loss of state funding, loss of other revenues, tax cap issues, health care costs, the effect of labor on state law and anticipated pension increase. Mr. Wood reviewed his concerns related to the School Department health care costs and commented on changes that could relieve the financial distress.

5. Public Comment:

Note: Persons who wish to address the Council shall state their names and addresses

Dennis Anderson, 593 Whipple Road, asked the extent of the tax rate increase necessary to fund the School Department at the level requested by the Department. Councilor Place indicated that an additional amount of approximately 53 cents per thousand would be required. Mr. Anderson commented on the School Department's adequate budget management, recognized that taxpayers' struggle, and commented on the difficulties of balancing community's needs with taxpayers' ability to pay.

6. VOTED to close the public hearing.

Motion by Councilor Wallace F. Lees. Seconded by Councilor Kevin D. Heitke. The vote was unanimous. Voting in favor of the motion were Council President Nancy F. Binns, Councilors Wallace F. Lees, Edward J. Blanchard, Margaret L. Dudley, Kevin D. Heitke, David J. Place and Stephen N. Rawson.

7. Town Council deliberation

Members of the Town Council reviewed the budget, areas of concern, areas of possible change, the rationale behind budget decisions and the current financial standing of the Town. The Town Council discussed budget matters' impact on services, education and quality of life. The effects of budget and revenue decreases and increased expenses were reviewed. Council President Binns concluded with assurances that the Town Council is dedicated to the least amount of

harm to all taxpayers and providing the best solution for the School Department and the entire community.

8. VOTED to adjourn at 8:37 P.M.

Motion by Councilor Margaret L. Dudley. Seconded by Councilor Wallace F. Lees. The vote was unanimous. Voting in favor of the motion were Council President Nancy F. Binns, Councilors Wallace F. Lees, Edward J. Blanchard, Margaret L. Dudley, Kevin D. Heitke, David J. Place and Stephen N. Rawson.

The hearing was recorded.

Louise R. Phaneuf, Town Clerk