

May 20, 2008 - Special Town Council Meeting

At a Special Meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Middletown, RI, held at the Middletown Town Hall on Tuesday, May 20, 2008 at 6:00 P.M.

Council President Paul M. Rodrigues, Presiding

Vice Chair Shirley R. Mello

Councillor Barbara A. Barrow, arrives at 6:45 PM

Councillor Louis P. DiPalma

Councillor M. Theresa Santos

Councillor Edward J. Silveira, Jr., Members Present

Councillor Robert J. Sylvia, Absent

May 15, 2008

Wendy J.W. Marshall, Town Clerk

Town of Middletown

Town Hall – 350 East Main Road

Middletown, Rhode Island 02842

Dear Mrs. Marshall:

Pursuant to the provisions of Article II, Section 203 of the Town Charter and in accordance with Section 42-46-2. and 42-46-6. of the General Laws of Rhode Island, as amended, I hereby call a Special Meeting of the Council in order to formally discuss, consider and act upon the following items of business:

1. Public Hearing (Advertised)

An Ordinance of the Town of Middletown (First Reading)

An Ordinance in amendment to the ordinances of the Town of Middletown entitled “Appropriating Revenues of the Town of Middletown for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009, as amended”.

2. Public Hearing (Advertised)

An Ordinance of the Town of Middletown (First Reading)

An Ordinance in amendment to the ordinances of the Town of Middletown entitled “Appropriating Revenues of the Parks and Recreation Fund for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009, as amended”.

3. Public Hearing (Advertised)

An Ordinance of the Town of Middletown (First Reading)

An Ordinance in amendment to the ordinances of the Town of Middletown entitled “Appropriating Revenues of the Sewer Fund for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009, as amended”.

4. Public Hearing (Advertised)

An Ordinance of the Town of Middletown (First Reading)

An Ordinance in amendment to the ordinances of the Town of Middletown entitled “Appropriating Revenue of the Recycling Fund for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009, as amended”.

Said meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 20, 2008 at 6:00 P.M. at the Middletown Town Hall, 350 East Main Road, Middletown, RI 02842.

Paul M. Rodrigues,

President

Middletown Town Council

cc:

Town Council

School Department

Town Administrator

Senior Center

Town Solicitor

Police Dept.

Finance Director

Fire Dept.

Public Library

Public Works

Tax Assessor

Building Inspector

Town Planner

IT Director

Parks/Recreation

Town Engineer

Human Resource Director

This meeting location is accessible to the handicapped. Individuals requiring interpreter services for the hearing impaired should notify the Town Clerk's Office at 847-0009 not less than 48 hours before the meeting.

On motion of Vice Chair Mello, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to receive said communication.

Present, representing the School Department, were Superintendent Rosemarie Kraeger, Business Manager Catherine McLeish, School Committee Chair Michael Crowley, Vice Chair Liana Fenton and Member Theresa S. Spengler

1. Public Hearing (Advertised)

An Ordinance of the Town of Middletown (First Reading)

An Ordinance in amendment to the ordinances of the Town of Middletown entitled “Appropriating Revenues of the Town of Middletown for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009, as amended”.

Public Hearing was declared open.

Town Administrator Shawn Brown addressed the Council noting that currently, Rhode Island has been impacted with an economic slow down. Both the Town and School have tried to budget to reality being uncertain of what revenues will be seen from the state. This budget

contains at 3.5 million increase over the current year, 4.3% increase in the tax rate, increasing residential from \$11.01 to \$11.49, commercial from \$14.65 to \$15.29, there are additional increases to energy costs, annual compensation/benefits, Town and School debt service has moved from the School Department budget to the Town.

Superintendent Rosemarie Kraeger noted the preparation of this budget was difficult because of the Senate 3050 putting the cap at 5%. The School department has eliminated 16.7 positions of certified and non-certified staff.

School Committee Chair Mike Crowley reviewed last years impact aid noting at the federal level impact aid was reduced and the impact aid was level funded by the state. The school department is hopeful that there will be level funding from both federal and state this year, however, if reduced the schools will be highly impacted.

Shirley Lally, 26B Ellery Avenue, questioned the possibility of the Navy assisting monetarily for Military students.

Superintendent Rosemarie Kraeger, responding to Ms. Lally's inquiry, noted that military students are claimed in the impact aid count; however, the school department does not receive the total amount that it costs to educate the student.

Art Benner, 3 Namquid Drive, requested the Council to consider not only students but also Senior Citizens when reviewing this budget.

Ron Santa, 277 Turner Road, questioned the undesignated fund balance and where the money is obtained from yearly. Mr. Santa agrees with the concept of having a large undesignated fund balance, however, does not believe the undesignated/reserves fund balance should increase at the rate of one million dollars each year.

Town Administrator Shawn Brown reviewed the handout below, explaining the funds and what the monies are used for.

Paul Lally, 26B Ellery Avenue, questioned if interest is earned on Town monies is considered in the budget.

Town Administrator Shawn Brown responded to Mr. Lally's inquiry noting that the interest revenue of \$360,000 will off set the tax rate by ten cents.

Payson Fugitt, 1 Kent Road, addressed the Council questioning if the new software purchase is a one-time cost.

Town Administrator Shawn Brown responded that the software purchase is a one-time cost.

Carolyn Neary, 115 Center Avenue, questioned if money was gaining interest and if you can put it in an interest baring checking account.

Accountant Marc Tanguay responded that every night the money is swept out and interest is earned.

Antone Viveiros, 110 Indian Hill Road, believes there should be enough money in the reserve. Mr. Viveiros requests the Council to return monies to the taxpayers and have a level funded budget.

There being no other persons present desiring to be heard on this matter, the public hearing was declared closed.

On motion of Vice Chair Mello, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to receive said FY09 General Fund budget ordinance, as amended, on its first reading.

Break 7:50 PM until 8:00 PM

2. Public Hearing (Advertised)

An Ordinance of the Town of Middletown (First Reading)

An Ordinance in amendment to the ordinances of the Town of Middletown entitled “Appropriating Revenues of the Parks and Recreation Fund for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009, as amended”.

Public Hearing was declared open.

Ron Santa, 277 Turner Road, questioned the undesignated fund balance within this budget. Mr. Santa urges the Council to stop the increase of the fund balance by placing the monies into the general fund and decrease taxes.

There being no other persons present desiring to be heard on this matter, the public hearing was declared closed.

On motion of Vice Chair Mello, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to receive said FY09 Parks and Recreation Fund budget ordinance, as amended, on its first reading.

3. Public Hearing (Advertised)

An Ordinance of the Town of Middletown (First Reading)

An Ordinance in amendment to the ordinances of the Town of Middletown entitled “Appropriating Revenues of the Sewer Fund for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009, as amended”.

Public Hearing was declared open.

Councillor Santos requested information be provided to the Council pertaining to the 341 well users, including if any well users are senior citizens.

There being no other persons present desiring to be heard on this matter, the public hearing was declared closed.

On motion of Vice Chair Mello, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to receive said FY09 Sewer Fund budget ordinance, as amended, on its first reading.

4. Public Hearing (Advertised)

An Ordinance of the Town of Middletown (First Reading)

An Ordinance in amendment to the ordinances of the Town of Middletown entitled “Appropriating Revenue of the Recycling Fund for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009, as amended”.

Public Hearing was declared open.

Antone Viveiros, 110 Indian Hill Road, requests the Council to find a way to fund the program before making a decision to increase the bag rate or require a program fee.

Ron Santa, 277 Turner Road, suggests to level fund the taxes and fully fund the PAY-Throw program from the reserve.

Councillor DiPalma noted the goal is to have the PAY-Throw program be self-sufficient.

Payson Fugitt, 1 Kent Road, suggest the Town to have an incentive to participate in the program; maybe a reduction on your taxes for recycling.

Councillor Silveira suggests implementing a user fee for the program and decreasing the cost of the bag.

Council President Rodrigues suggests tweaking the totes and have commercial entities join the program.

Antone Viveiros, 110 Indian Hill Road, noted his concern for the lack of education to the public for the use of the program. Mr. Viveiros also thinks the public needs an incentive to join the program.

Carolyn Neary, 115 Center Avenue, suggests the Town explore the possibility of grant money to support the program.

Ron Santa, 277 Turner Road, requests the Council to vote for the PAY-Throw program to be mandatory.

The consensus was the need for more public education of the program and the need for participation.

There being no other persons present desiring to be heard on this matter, the public hearing was declared closed.

On motion of Vice Chair Mello, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to receive said FY09 Recycling Fund budget ordinance, as amended, on its first reading.

On motion of Vice Chair Mello, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to adjourn this meeting at 9:05 P.M.

Wendy J.W. Marshall, CMC

Council Clerk