

**TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING  
MONDAY EVENING - APRIL 28, 2008**

PRESENT: Marshall, Cordeiro, Parella (arrived at 7:25 o'clock PM), Barboza and Herreshoff

ALSO PRESENT: Diane C. Mederos, Town Administrator  
John M. Day, Town Treasurer

The Council met in special session for the purposes of the Public Hearing concerning the budget for FY 2008-2009 and to hear other matters properly before its honorable body, on Monday evening, April 28, 2008 in the Town Hall, Council Chambers beginning at 7:05 o'clock PM, Council Chairman Marshall presiding:

Representatives from Bristol Troop 6, Boy Scouts of America led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Council Chairman Marshall opened the Public Hearing and read the list of department budgets. Questions regarding the provisional budget were as follows:

Robert Hewett of 6 Karen Ann Drive asked if the Council had considered the dramatic increase in petroleum products when adopting its provisional budget. He and Arnold Robinson of 129 Constitution Street noted that the proposed increases were modest as compared to the high rate of petroleum price increase - further noting that these increases will likely also impact the price of vehicle tires.

He suggested that the Council might consider increasing the various gas and oil line items prior to final budget adoption.

Town Administrator Mederos explained that the department heads will be participating in a retreat in the near future so as to brainstorm cost cutting ideas.

Councilman Herreshoff stated that the point made by Mr. Hewett and Mr. Robinson was "sensible."

Council Chairman Marshall stated that the Council will be able to draw from the unallocated surplus were the departments to need further funds for fuel. He also stated that the Council prefers not to take this action but it will do so without a viable alternative.

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Town Treasurer Day reminded the Council that the legislative cap would preclude the Council's adding to the budget at this time since the present provisional budget already requires an override. He further explained that the State Department of Revenue does not consider increases in fuel costs to be a justification for an override.

It was also noted that the budget was somewhat "fluid" and the Council and/or departments could delay some expenditures in favor of more critical ones if necessary.

Councilman Herreshoff noted that the Council receives detailed financial reports at each of its meetings. He recommended that the Council remain watchful on the fuel accounts in particular.

Town Treasurer Day also noted that the Town will likely pay lower borrowing interest rates than earlier anticipated due to the current downward interest rate trend.

Councilwoman Parella arrived at this point in the meeting 7:25 o'clock PM.

Councilman Herreshoff explained that the marked increase in the Rogers Free Library budget was attributable to the new building addition that will require more operating revenue and staff.

Several edits to the information provided in the printed copy of the budget were suggested, including the removal of misplaced punctuation marks and refining the line item descriptions. These changes were not substantive in that the budget figures were not impacted. The Clerk agreed to correct the document as noted.

A further discussion ensued regarding the plans for energy generating wind mills and increased recycling.

Councilman Barboza noted that the Town's cost for Central Landfill tipping fees might decrease if the Town can recycle a larger percentage of its refuse.

Council Chairman Marshall also noted that the Town was investigating ways in which cardboard may be more effectively recycled and sold to offset expenses.

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Kevin McMullen of 95 Woodlawn Avenue, also an employee of the City of Warwick, asked if the Council considered any "across the board" reductions; noting that the City of Warwick departments were required to do so.

Councilwoman Parella noted that the Council carefully "combed" the budget after it was reduced by Town Administrator Mederos. She also stated that Mr. McMullen's point was "well taken" but it was difficult for a small town to make deep cuts when there are few personnel.

Councilman Herreshoff suggested that some savings might be realized through attrition.

Councilwoman Parella agreed with Councilman Herreshoff and explained that the Council is "always on the lookout" for opportunities to save taxpayer funds.

Councilman Cordeiro noted that the proposed tax rate represents a modest reduction overall and that the Council agreed to this figure in consideration of the financial difficulty experienced by those on fixed income.

Council Chairman Marshall explained that the Human Resources department is funded in part by endowments established long ago by altruistic Bristolians.

It was also explained that the Bristol tax rate is one of the lowest in the state in consideration of the level of services provided free of charge.

Councilwoman Parella and Councilman Cordeiro noted that other communities; Portsmouth in particular; do not provide rubbish pick-up service.

Barboza/Cordeiro - Voted  
unanimously to close the public  
hearing and to refer the matter of  
the final adoption of the budget  
for fiscal year 2008-2009 to the  
regular meeting of May 7, 2008.

**Concerning the matter of a public "workshop" on  
reevaluation:**

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Council Chairman Marshall suggested that the Tax Assessor might be available for a public forum regarding the recent revaluation and the appeal process regarding same.

Tax Assessor Spagnolo agreed to arrange for such a forum and request the participation of the revaluation vendor. The Clerk agreed to help arrange this forum along with the Tax Assessor and to contact Mike Davis so as it might be recorded and broadcast on television and/or the Town website.

**Concerning the matter of the GHGRI proposal:**

Herreshoff/Barboza - Voted  
unanimously to approve the Town's  
participation in the GHGRI program  
as recommended by Town Treasurer  
Day and Town Administrator  
Mederos.

Prior to the vote taken, Town Treasurer Day explained that the Town would realize a saving in the amount of \$200,000 were it to contract with GHGRI to represent the Town's interest in health care coverage. He noted that the previous arrangement expected an increase in premiums of approximately 2.8% and the new arrangement will realize a reduction of 9.5%.

Councilman Herreshoff asked if the Town's agreement to use this new service was a "no-brainer" with Town Treasurer Day explaining that it would be difficult to pass-up the opportunity for a 12% "swing" in the Town's favor.

Councilman Herreshoff asked if the Town must commit for a long period of time with Town Treasurer Day explaining that the Town's commitment was for three years. He also noted that the School District was a participant in the program and was generally satisfied with the arrangement.

**Concerning the matter of public service appointment interviews:**

**Alan Leach - Auxiliary Harbor Master**

Mr. Leach informed the Council that he read the Public Service advertisement in the Bristol Phoenix and decided to apply for the Assistant Harbor Master position. He also

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noted that he was equally interested in the Auxiliary Harbor Master position that might be available.

He explained that he has a marine training certificate and gained experience through the merchant marine. He also noted that he was familiar with the Bristol waterways, particularly the Kickemuit River.

Council Chairman Marshall thanked Mr. Leach for his interest. Councilman Cordeiro noted that the appointment for Auxiliary Harbor Master will be considered by the Council on May 7, 2008.

**John B. Garry - Zoning Board of Review Alternate Member**

Mr. Garry informed the Council that he has been a resident of Bristol for 10 years and this is the first time he considered applying for a public service appointment. He further noted that he enjoys living in the community and would like to "give something back" for the benefit of his fellow townspeople.

Council Chairman Marshall noted that Mr. Garry has "great credentials" and drew particular attention to Mr. Garry's education at the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis.

Mr. Garry further explained that he is a practicing attorney with experience in land use and environmental issues; this preparing him for the issues that are typically heard before the Zoning Board of Review.

Councilman Cordeiro asked Mr. Garry if he was familiar with Mr. Kogan who is currently a Zoning Board of Review alternate with Mr. Garry responding that Mr. Kogan was his instructor in property tax law.

Mr. Garry also noted that he has a joint degree in marine affairs and is in the Naval Reserves. He will soon hold the rank of Commander.

Council Chairman Marshall stated he appreciated Mr. Garry's application and further noted that Mr. Garry's resume was "great."

Councilman Barboza stated that he, too, was impressed by Mr. Garry's credentials.

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The Council thanked Mr. Garry for his application and Mr. Garry thanked the Council for its time and consideration of same.

**Michael DeMello - Zoning Board of Review Alternate Member  
and Redevelopment Agency Alternate Member**

Councilman Barboza asked Mr. DeMello if he was interested in "getting involved" with Mr. DeMello responding affirmatively.

Mr. DeMello also informed the Council that he had been employed as a fire marshal, was an emergency service professional in North Providence and was very interested in the issues of public safety.

Council Chairman Marshall expanded on the value of the Redevelopment Agency and noted the progress in the Franklin Street Corridor. He also explained that this Agency will be involved in very important projects in the future; the Wood Street industrial area in particular.

Councilman Barboza explained that the Redevelopment Agency was an important Town board empowered by the State to condemn property for redevelopment. He further noted that the Agency was the only Town board so empowered.

Mr. DeMello reported that he was involved with property revitalization while a fire marshal.

Councilwoman Parella noted that Mr. DeMello was also a volunteer fireman and that he was pursuing his bachelor's degree with Mr. DeMello stating that he was soon to complete the bachelor's degree and plans to also pursue a master's degree.

Mr. DeMello also informed the Council that he serves on Technical Review Committees (TRC) in North Providence.

Councilman Cordeiro thanked Mr. DeMello for "getting involved."

It was noted for the record that these public service appointments will be considered by the Council at its regular meeting on May 7, 2008.

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There being no further business upon a motion by Councilman Barboza, seconded by Councilwoman Parella and unanimously voted, the Chairman declared this meeting to be adjourned at 8:55 o'clock PM

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Louis P. Cirillo, CMC  
Council Clerk