

**TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING – SATURDAY MORNING  
FEBRUARY 21, 2009**

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PRESENT: Marshall, Cordeiro, Parella, and Barboza

ABSENT: Herreshoff

ALSO PRESENT: Diane C. Mederos, Town Administrator  
John M. Day, Town Treasurer  
Hon. Sen. David Bates, District 32  
Hon. Sen. Walter Felag, District 10  
Hon. Rep. Douglas Gablinske, District 68  
Hon. David Frerichs, Warren Council President  
Hon. Christopher Stanley, Warren Town Council  
Hon. Catherine Tattrie, Warren Town Council  
Hon. Joseph DePasquale, Warren Town Council  
Hon. Frank Alfano, Warren Town Council  
Cheryl Silva, Warren Finance Director  
Jane Correia, B-W Regional Schools Director of  
Administration and Finance (arrived at 9)  
Paul Silva, Chairman, B-W Regional School  
Committee

The Council met in special session on Saturday morning, February 21, 2009 in the Town Hall Council Chambers beginning at 8:40 o'clock AM, Council Chairman Marshall presiding:

Council Chairman Marshall welcomed all and introduced Councilwoman Tattrie and Councilman Stanley, new members of the Warren Town Council. He mentioned that this annual meeting is a way to present legislative ideas to our senators and representatives for review, although the communities do share an open line of communication.

Council Chairman Marshall also noted that Bristol and Warren are connected through the school district and this is an opportunity to reconnect and look towards unique and collaborative ways to work together and save money.

**Council Chairman Marshall**

Council Chairman Marshall expressed concern about how the Governor spoke about alternative energy and wanting to reach a certain goal by a certain date but appointed a public utility commissioner that sides with National Grid and limits the amount of accounts allowed to be credited for alternative energy. He stated that Portsmouth and Bristol sent in a motion to reopen the docket regarding this matter and that Warren may want to consider the same. Council Chairman Marshall explained that National Grid wants to limit towns to 5 accounts which in turn

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would limit the towns' ability to utilize alternative energy such as wind turbines.

It was mentioned that land in Portsmouth, Tiverton and Little Compton was being considered for a wind turbine consortium. Council Chairman Marshall noted that the Public Policy Program at Roger Williams University has an information bank at the library that any community in Rhode Island can utilize as a resource to view and work with approved plans of another city or town.

**Warren Council President Frerichs**

Warren Council President Frerichs commented that he would like to see the budget problems addressed on a long term basis. He stated he would prefer to receive a little less money than no money at all and even out the curve.

He also asked the legislators to look into controlling the cost of health insurance with Sen. Felag advising Warren Council President Frerichs to use the voices of the collaborative as a bargaining tool. Sen. Felag also suggested that he may consider notifying Blue Cross that the town may look into alternative health insurance providers for service.

**Councilman Cordeiro**

Councilman Cordeiro noted that Assistant Harbor Master Calouro's collaboration between Bristol and Warren with the pump-out boat has proven to be effective. Warren Councilman DePasquale mentioned that Bristol and Warren have been able to assist one another with trading different sized ramps between the two towns and that has been an asset.

Warren Council President Frerichs questioned what the future is for the Enterprise Zone with Sen. Felag and Sen. Bates both responding they have not heard anything. Sen. Felag stated that the committee he was appointed to by the governor has been very productive in analyzing the EDC workings.

Councilman Cordeiro mentioned that Bristol is trying to recruit Kelly Space to Bristol and the Enterprise Zone plays an important role in that happening.

Sen. Felag stated that the review board's scope of work has been to establish an economic policy looking at target areas,

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regionally how to expand business development, and reconnecting with small businesses.

**Warren Councilman Stanley**

Warren Councilman Stanley expressed concern over the rising health insurance costs. He stressed the importance of using primary care physicians for colds, coughs, etc. rather than Emergency Rooms. Councilman Stanley stated that making purchases such as office supplies regionally as opposed to by individual communities would make economic sense.

Council Chairman Marshall stated that Town Administrator Mederos has spoken about the possibility of creating a wellness program collaborating with Blue Cross, United, etc. Council Chairman Marshall noted that if unions agreed to pay higher emergency room co-pays and to visit their general practitioner once a year, possibly lowering rates.

Warren Councilman Alfano stated that at his place of employment, Brown University, Blue Cross distributes informational packets and offers wellness programs. It was noted that this could possibly be a collaboration between towns. Councilwoman Tattrie stated that Blue Cross offers discounts to health clubs as well to encourage people to exercise. Councilman Cordeiro noted that he has observed an increase in people using the gym at his place of employment, Roger Williams University.

**Councilman Barboza**

Councilman Barboza stated that he wears two hats, one as councilman and the other as chairman of the Joint Finance Committee. He noted that between 60-65% of each town's budget goes towards funding education. Councilman Barboza stated the purpose of Senate Bill 3050 was to decrease the reliance of property tax and increase local aid and since that is no longer an option, he questioned where we are headed at the state level, as far as, state aid for education and the future of Senate Bill 3050; and if this bill is being reworked. Sen. Bates stated that there have been no discussions on redoing this bill.

Rep. Gablinske and Sen. Bates commented that funding will most likely be leveled for this year's supplemental budget. Mr. Silva stated that level funded means a reduction of last year's amount not the same. Councilman Barboza noted that funding cannot be less than the year before according to State Law.

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Rep. Gablinske stated that with the current budget problems, the rules can be changed.

Ms. Correia mentioned that the stimulus package states that the schools must be funded at the 06 level and that those cuts the governor is planning must be rescinded in order for the schools to be eligible.

Rep. Gablinske stated that the finance committee has a hearing with the legislators and more information will be available as they understand it as of that date. Sen. Felag noted that the only aspect of the stimulus package they have a good handle on is the capital projects that are ready to go.

Councilman Cordeiro asked who is going to oversee the stimulus package with Rep. Gablinske stating it is a difficult time with municipalities involved in their budgets and unfortunately, the legislators do not have answers at this time. Sen. Felag stated that this problem goes back to the fact that the municipalities and the State have the same fiscal year.

Sen. Felag noted that research shows the State could change their fiscal year by potentially a month but other than that they can't because of the fact they rely on the federal income tax that is paid in April. He suggested the prudent course would be to have the fiscal year for municipalities to start in September. Councilwoman Parella suggested that the State change to the Federal fiscal year starting October 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Warren Councilwoman Tattrie**

Councilwoman Tattrie stated that small businesses were not considered by President Obama in the stimulus package. Councilwoman Tattrie prepared a stimulus proposal, which the Chamber of Commerce's board is reviewing before sending it to Sen. (Jack) Reed's office.

Councilwoman Tattrie noted that small businesses make up 90% of the businesses in Rhode Island and these are not benefiting from the stimulus program. She stated that emphasis in Rhode Island should be on small businesses and not the banks and car manufacturers.

Councilwoman Tattrie stated that if you give money to the middle class and small business owners who are spending money it will stimulate the economy. The Chamber of Commerce is working on numbers for the stimulus package that Councilwoman Tattrie

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prepared in order to put aside money for payroll, as layoffs hurt the businesses not just that individual person, debt pay down, capital improvements and purchases.

Council Chairman Marshall stated that it is a difficult task as he tried to get the language out there early but unfortunately, it was too late. Councilwoman Tattrie stated that when people can't afford to buy the things affected by the stimulus program they are going to come back with questions as to why and the answers need to be there.

**Councilwoman Parella**

Councilwoman Parella stated that eliminating the sales tax on boats has created jobs in the marine trade industry and that will change if sales tax is reinstated as she read in the newspaper that it may be a possibility. Rhode Island is the only state that eliminated sales tax on boats and that brings businesses here for buying and storing boats.

Councilwoman Parella stated that the Collaboration Study from 1992 should be looked at and updated by either a graduate student or intern, looking into areas such as the purchasing of heavy equipment. Councilwoman Parella stated that the governor should give incentive for towns to merge.

Rep. Gablinske stated that the incentive should be that the towns save money and if they don't perhaps they should not collaborate. Councilwoman Parella stated that the state should help fund a study to see if towns would save money by merging with Rep. Gablinske replying that if the town is the one saving the money, why should the state help fund that.

Councilwoman Parella mentioned that for the regionalization of Bristol and Warren schools the incentive was for schools to have more course offerings and was not an issue of money. Rep. Gablinske stated that the Dog Pound should be a county or regional facility and that discussion at last year's meeting regarding this should have progressed.

Councilman Alfano stated that Warren recently purchased a bucket truck that unfortunately is too big and cannot be used but however Bristol can possibly use it. Also, Warren just purchased a ladder truck costing \$900,000 and Councilman Alfano suggested that Bristol doesn't buy one. It was noted that Bristol also recently purchased a ladder truck. Councilman Alfano stated the importance of towns communicating while

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preparing the budget with Town Administrator Mederos stating that is the case.

Sen. Felag mentioned that discussions have to take place at the local level. Councilwoman Parella agreed that this has to happen from the bottom up. Councilwoman Parella mentioned that her point in bringing up the state's participation in collaboration is in the case of global merging such as the merging of three police or fire departments and she believes in that situation there needs to be an incentive. She also stated that Bristol and Warren is fortunate to have volunteer fire departments.

Councilman DePasquale stated that Warren's vote regarding the animal shelter supported their financial situation at the time. Council President Frerichs stated that he will put this matter on the March agenda and look at the current financial impact on the town. Rep. Gablinske suggested the idea of a non-profit animal shelter corporation that three towns support.

Councilwoman Tattrie stated that towns are penalized for having volunteer fire department. Rep. Gablinske stated that this is the second year in row that he introduced legislation to have educational collaborative entities take on more back room responsibilities such as human resources, buying, educational sharing, etc. and that can be worked on as one collaborative with the regional areas.

**Warren Councilman DePasquale**

Councilman DePasquale echoed Council Chairman Marshall's sentiments to move combined forces together. He also reiterated the collaboration benefits of Assistant Harbor Master Cavour as mentioned by Councilman Cordeiro. Councilman DePasquale supported Sen. Felag regarding coordinating the municipalities and state's fiscal year.

Councilman DePasquale requested that Bristol send a resolution to Warren to downsize the number of School Committee members to five, three from Bristol and two from Warren. He noted that it would make the meetings easier. Councilman DePasquale stated that he is open, supportive, and available towards of all efforts.

**Warren Councilman Alfano**

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Councilman Alfano mentioned that Kathleen Maisano is currently working through Warren's budget and perhaps Town Administrator Mederos and Warren Tax Assessor Maisano could communicate about sharing capital purchases.

He stated that not having revenue sometimes forces towns to do things that should have been done before. He stated that Warren is preparing budgets as best they can not knowing what to expect in June or July. However, they do recognize that the amount of money will not be increasing.

Councilman Alfano mentioned that keeping mandates in place combined with reduced funding is only going to impact the town councils and property taxes. He stated that Bristol and Warren may be in better shape than other towns but it may not be long before that is not the case.

Rep. Gablinske stated that additional costs for schools and municipalities, in addition to the mandates, are salaries and benefits. He stated that he supports the bill currently before the general assembly restoring manager's rights to school committees.

**Town Administrator Mederos**

Town Administrator Mederos stated that she is currently working on the budget and her utmost concern is the uncertainty of the governor's supplemental budget especially regarding the schools. Town Administrator Mederos also noted that Bristol and Warren have good communication.

Sen. Felag stated that 70% of the state budget is a revenue generated budget and states that it is not entirely true that the more money the state receives the more they spend; part of spending is giving back to the communities. He stated that 30% of general revenue expenditure is given back to the cities and towns. He explained that as revenue decreases, the money is not there to give out and the question is where to make the cuts. He stated that from a budgetary prospective, one of the cuts is leveling off increasing costs such as the historic tax credit. Sen. Felag also mentioned that pensions need to be looked at as they are out of control.

He stated that the increase in pensions shared between the state and municipalities went up from \$80 million in 2001 to \$230 million resulting in the governor coming in with this blanket cut. The legislators are looking into whether this is

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beneficial to the educational system as well, 60-70% of retirees salaries are being paid in addition to \$30,000 - \$40,000 for the replacement teacher. Sen. Felag stated that situations like this were brought to the attention of the governor for review and possibly having the teacher or public employee work another 10 years grandfathering them into COLA, changing their COLA into a CPI, or keeping the cola until a certain age and then changing it to a CPI. Councilwoman Parella stated her concern of a mass exodus of teachers and the chaos that would create to the educational system in hiring replacements for these teachers.

Sen. Bates stated that the State Police lost 30 troopers and it is imperative to get the current class graduated. Rep. Gablinske stated the past practice of offering retirement at age 50 is not beneficial although understanding the high stress police officers are under should be taken into consideration. He also stated the possibility retiring at age 50 but not collecting a pension for another 10 years.

**Town Treasurer Day**

Town Treasurer Day addressed the stimulus package related to oil prices and the fact that the School department and Town of Bristol locked into oil prices at \$3.40, which at the time made sense and was a good price. He stated that he has since contacted the supplier (Brennan Oil) with no recourse due to the fact that they locked in high also.

He stated that he was looking into the possibility of receiving a portion of the stimulus money to allow relief for the oil supplier under the condition this would allow relief for everyone under them. Ms. Correia stated the schools switched to gas because of this. Rep. Gablinske commented that this was good management.

Town Treasurer Day noted that his 29 years of experience has shown that not many department heads are willing to cooperate with collaborations. The only collaborations he has seen works were the regionalization of the school systems and the sewer flow through Warren. He noted that the only reason these worked were because the communities paid a third party. Town Treasurer Day stated a committee needs to be established if collaboration of the animal shelter or combining the two town's recreation facilities is to be considered. Town Treasurer Day stated that the level of making this happen is the two town councils. He noted that he receives e-mails from the state regarding surplus

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equipment that is available and suggested this procedure being implemented on a town level when surplus equipment is available.

Councilman DePasquale mentioned that it is the same approach being taken with the wind farms. Town Treasurer Day stated the problem with equipment sharing is the possibility of equipment being returned broken. Sen. Felag mentioned the possibility of joint bids.

**Warren Town Treasurer Cheryl Silva**

Warren Town Treasurer Silva stated she is learning about municipalities as she is new and came from a corporate background. She stated that Warren's healthcare rates are rising significantly and are as high as 12.2% even though they are part of the collaborative.

Ms. Correia stated that Bristol and Warren Schools are paying 3.1% and this number reflects the low number of claims submitted and the rest of the costs are shared collaboratively. Ms. Correia stated that next year could be a different situation depending on the amount of claims. Warren Town Treasurer Silva stated another concern is regarding Bristol, Warren and Barrington sharing the same union but negotiating the contracts separately and would like to see the towns as a collaborative negotiate one contract.

Ms. Correia stated she was at the Senate yesterday and observed several bills that were trying to create more consistent benefits but this does take bargaining rights away so the unions have been opposed to it; however, the unions realize the significance of this and are coming forward with their own proposals. Town Administrator Mederos agreed with Warren Town Treasurer Silva in regards to the unions coming to the towns knowing exactly what the other communities have negotiated and she reiterated the fact that the towns do need to communicate. Paul Silva, Bristol Warren School Committee Chairman, stated that the School Committee is not able to communicate with other communities negotiating the same contract or they will be fined due to unfair labor practice but that the unions are able to.

Mr. Silva suggested that if one unified contract is not a possibility at least have those labor laws changed so the towns are on the same playing field. Sen. Bates agreed that this is a good law to change. Mr. Silva stated that one contract gives more bargaining power to the towns when negotiating the contract and also, gives the union more strength if they decide to strike

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or work the rules they are doing it in more communities so there is more pressure spread out.

Warren Town Treasurer Silva questioned the Governor directly regarding what support the state will provide the town councils, school committees, and administrators to work with the unions after hearing the his speech on how the towns will have to work together with the schools and town councils on mandates and he had no answer.

Rep. Gablinske stated there was a time when unions were badly needed to protect the rights of workers but through the growth of labor laws the situation now needs to be changed in the regards for management rights, which is not an easy thing to do.

Rep. Gablinske stated that some bills will never get past the senate because there are 6-7 legislators who are union business agents and are also elected representatives and they will stop any management rights bills that try to go through. Rep. Gablinske stated that he is one out of seventy-five and they are one out of thirty-eight.

Rep. Gablinske stated that he has introduced a number of bills regarding changing labor laws but there is no chance of any of them passing this year. Sen. Bates stated that the majority of legislators are made up of teachers and lawyers. Councilwoman Parella stated that a high percentage of the senate is in the union and that fact is shocking.

**Jane Correia**

Ms. Correia presented concerns as to whether or not Article 19 will remain in part of the Governor's supplemental budget or be moved to the 2010 budget and another concern, although smaller, is vocational education. Ms. Correia stated that if you reside in the northern part of the state your children go to Davies or Met-tech Schools for free but there are about 15 students attending the East Providence vocational school and Bristol and Warren are paying high tuitions there.

Rep. Gablinske stated that Ms. Correia had mentioned, at a recent school committee meeting, that they were bulging at the seams at the Bristol elementary schools but not at Hugh Cole. Rep. Gablinske stated that combined with the rising scores in the public schools and bad economy, students from private schools will be gladly returning to the Bristol Warren School system since the school system is now high performing.

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He mentioned that many of the Bristol and Warren schools have been redone and are now top notch with Hugh Cole's expansion awaiting students' arrival. He stated that he is pleased to know there was foresight to expand Hugh Cole on a larger scale.

He mentioned that there needs to be legislation introduced, coming from the town councils, allowing a vote of the taxpayers in Bristol and Warren permitting elementary students to be bused across town lines. He also posed the question of spending millions more for a new school in a few years or filling a school that already exists.

Councilwoman Tattrie questioned where the empty seats and classrooms are in Hugh Cole with Mr. Silva stating that the school was built to house five tracks and is currently has only four. Ms. Correia stated that Hugh Cole could hold 120 additional students.

Councilwoman Parella suggested a magnet school with Mr. Silva replying that would be a long term project with someone having the initiative in a staffing perspective.

Mr. Silva stated that the restriction should be eliminated allowing the school department to place students in the school closest to their residence regardless of the town line. Councilman Alfano stated that in 1991 it was voted that elementary students would not be bused from one town to another.

Council Chairman Marshall asked if both councils agreed to put this on a referendum. Rep. Gablinske stated the school committee should ask the Town Council to put this on the ballot. Mr. Silva stated that this was something initiated by William Estrella.

**Paul Silva**

Mr. Silva agreed with Rep. Gablinske that the retirement age of 45-50 is unwise. He is concerned that when the proposal comes out on June 30<sup>th</sup> there are sixty teachers that will be affected and out of the top five administrators the schools have four who may retire.

Mr. Silva stated that a good school system comes from good leadership. He stated that if teachers are given a choice to retire having the ability to then teach in Massachusetts or a private school, the school system loses consistent and effective

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leadership and does not save a lot of money because they receive benefits that do not die with them because of being locked into contracts unlike with the newer employees. It costs more long term as a new employee becomes higher and higher on the scale because of incremental steps which includes a 6-7% salary increase a year.

The state mandates that there be ten steps in education for salaries. Many state teacher contracts also give a stipend for longevity. Mr. Silva stated that a court case based on a state statute indicates the step-increase is not a raise but rather is an entitlement.

Mr. Silva stated that half the superintendents in the state are eligible to retire under a COLA and it is a difficult situation when there are two districts looking for a superintendent. He questioned what it would be like if there were nine or ten with Sen. Felag answering that the state is looking into the matter.

**Senator David Bates**

Sen. Bates stated that regarding renewable energy the main part of the package was long term contracts although vetoed did not benefit Rhode Island. He stated that the same bill with a changed percentage to National Grid's long term contracts, this bill will pass.

He stated that one-third of bills filed are relating to labor. There have been 35 bills filed but did not pass. He mentioned that the Senators and Representative rely on the input from the School Committee and Town Councils.

Sen. Felag mentioned that Fire Department, Police Department, Town Treasurer, etc. should inform the legislators of bills that have been submitted and impact them, since the Legislators formulate a checklist and can stop certain legislation on the House or Senate floor or modify it.

Sen. Bates stated that he, Sen. Levesque, Rep. Malik, Rep. Gallison, Rep. Gablinske and Sen. Felag all work closely together, with Council Chairman Marshall stating that the towns are fortunate for that.

Councilman DePasquale mentioned that Linda Brunini of the Kickemuit River Council is scheduling the Kickemuit Middle School Auditorium for Thursday, February, 26, 2009 to show a 45 minute documentary video in opposition to the LNG proposal. He

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is working with Bristol Town Council on a resolution to submit for the March 4, 2009 comment deadline.

**Water Pollution Control Superintendent Calderiso**

Supt. Calderiso informed the legislators that he is of the impression that there is the possibility of negative or low rate interest in the way the stimulus funds are going to be dispersed. He stated that he has \$8-\$10 million dollars of shovel ready projects but only has a borrowing resolution for \$4 million so this stimulus package through SRF will not help.

Sen. Felag suggested that Supt. Calderiso submit a formal request to the legislators to present to the finance committee.

**Parks and Recreation Director Burke**

Recreation Director Burke supports Rep. Gablinske regarding labor. Recreation Director Burke mentioned he has a problem concerning Section 13-37-7 of the prevailing wages law within the construction provisions.

Recreation Director Burke noted that the communities are required to pay prevailing wages on anything over \$1,000. Recreation Director Burke explained that "if spread out and compared to the university, the same \$200,000 job would cost the university \$200,000 and the Town \$400,000."

Recreation Director Burke also provided another example at the Town Beach when the waterlines for underground sprinklers were put in the worker had to be paid plumber rates and the cost of that job was \$40,000 instead of what could have been \$17,000.

Recreation Director Burke believes the \$1,000 cap should be raised to \$200,000. Warren Council President Frerichs stated that Warren is facing a similar situation regarding the expansion of the Touisset fire station costing the town \$50,000 - \$60,000 more since the town must pay prevailing wages. Sen. Bates agrees that this is problematic. Councilwoman Tattrie suggested forwarding resolution to Senator Reed and Congressman Kennedy.

Council Chairman Marshall suggested appointing a town council committee between the two towns consisting of two council members from each town to vent ideas and see where collaboration is a possibility and bring ideas back to individual council. Collaboration report should be component of this subcommittee.

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**Police Chief Canario**

Police Chief Canario thanked Council for being invited. He noted it was great to put everyone in a thinking tank and it should happen more often. He stated the problem with negotiating union contracts will not be fixed overnight as he and Town Administrator Mederos experience firsthand.

Police Chief Canario noted that the Bristol Police Department has worked hand-in-hand with Warren and Portsmouth for years.

**Fire Chief Martin**

Fire Chief Martin stated that Warren and Bristol did collaborate on the recent purchases of the ladder trucks. Warren purchased a power ladder and Bristol purchased a straight stick in order to support each other.

Fire Chief Martin stated that Bristol has an ISO level of 4, which is one of the best in the state. It was also noted that Bristol has a burn unit that supports Warren and Portsmouth.

Councilwoman Tattrie stated that every department could learn from fire chiefs as they have great communication and collaboration. Chairman Marshall stated that the new training facility on Metacom Avenue will be a regional asset.

The portion of the meeting that included the members of the Warren Town Council, General Assembly, and Bristol-Warren Regional School Committee representatives concluded at this point, and these persons excused themselves from the Council Chambers.

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Jennifer Walsh, Deputy Town Clerk

**Preliminary Budget Discussions**

After a brief recess, the Council began its second agenda item: Preliminary Budget Discussions.

PRESENT: Marshall, Barboza, and Parella

ALSO PRESENT: Diane C. Mederos, Town Administrator

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John M. Day, Town Treasurer  
Diane M. Williamson, Director of Community  
Dev.(arrived at 11:30)  
Robert J. Martin, Fire Chief  
Josue D. Canario, Chief of Police  
Matthew Calderiso, Water Pollution Control Supt.  
Fred Serbst, Public Works Director (arrived at  
11:45)

Town Administrator Mederos stated that she met with Council Chairman Marshall and Councilman Cordeiro to ascertain their thoughts regarding the upcoming budget. She noted an anticipated \$840,000 cut from the State in this fiscal year and that members of the General Assembly believe that next year's State aid to the Town could be zero.

Town Administrator Mederos also stated that her overall goals for the upcoming budget are to maintain staffing levels and avoid a tax increase while maintaining Town services.

Town Administrator Mederos noted that some of the constraints to these goals are special interests including sports groups who are purported to have large financial reserves, Mt. Hope Farm, Last Night, Concerts on the Common, the visitor center and other non-essentials. She noted that times are hard and that all departments must be asked to live within their means.

It was also noted that the Capital budget will likely be slashed allowing a minimal amount to cover only the most desperate emergencies. Town Administrator reminded those present that last year's capital budget was approximately \$1 million.

Director of Community Development Williamson arrived at this point in the meeting (11:20 o'clock AM).

Councilwoman Parella asked if the organizers of the Last Night activity might charge an admission price in order to offset the cost with most in agreement that this may be difficult to manage.

Town Administrator Mederos speculated that some sort of activity may continue with Last Night provided that the sponsors continue to provide funding. She did note, however, that fireworks would be impossible.

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Town Administrator Mederos also noted that the idea for the visitor center was initially planned to have a volunteer workforce and this evolved into a paid workforce. She expressed concern that budget constraints would impact salaries.

Fire Chief Martin expressed concern that the Town department heads received minimal or no salary increases in years past and the School Administrators received hefty increases.

Councilman Barboza stated that the Joint Finance Committee is restrained from directing specific school expenditures but rather must deal only with the "bottom line."

Town Administrator Mederos stated that she plans to meet with Fourth of July Committee leaders in order to look at economies reminding those present that the Town's contribution in terms of in-kind services carries a high price tag.

Council Chairman Marshall agreed with Town Administrator Mederos in that the Town should attempt to maintain its workforce since the payment of unemployment benefits carries its own cost with no benefit to the Town.

Public Works Director Serbst arrived at this point in the meeting (11:25 o'clock AM).

Council Chairman Marshall suggested that the various departments should examine all non-essential costs and planned purchases; perhaps doing without replacement or new equipment and keeping services going.

Councilman Barboza asked to know if the Town's tax collection rate was acceptable with Town Treasurer Day responding that this continues to be good.

Councilwoman Parella asked if the Town might consider furloughs perhaps a four-day work week with Town Administrator Mederos responding that she was examining that possibility.

Water Pollution Control Superintendent Calderiso stated that the requirement of the composting facility and staff are seasonal.

Town Treasurer Day stated that one possibility to increase revenue and offset cost would be to create another "enterprise" fund for trash collection this funded through some type of minimal user fee.

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Public Works Director Serbst noted that some of the redundant workers from the Composting program were reassigned to work on the 9 Court Street renovation under the direction of the Public Works this being a union concession to prevent layoffs.

Council Chairman Marshall suggested that some budgeted items such as uniform allowances and dues and conferences and to cut any non-essentials. He further suggested that funds might be "pooled" for overtime, education, and uniforms.

It was noted for the record that the reduction in overtime budgets may be problematic since many storms appear to happen on week-ends and there is a need to maintain road access, etc.

Town Treasurer Day stated that earlier discussions about a four day work week raised the question as to whether or not Friday work would demand overtime premiums.

A discussion ensued about discussing some of these matters with the various unions resulted in an overall concern that the more long-term members will be unwilling to concede in favor of the newer members such as the situation observed recently in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where police and firefighters refused to concede pay causing large layoffs in the newer ranks.

Council Chairman Marshall stated that this process should be deliberate and that he warned against making any "rash decisions."

Police Chief Canario suggested that all of the departments might find ways to "tighten the belt" and that memoranda of understanding can sometimes resolve problematic issues.

Council Chairman Marshall encouraged all of the department heads to "look into the nooks and crannies."

Public Works Director Serbst noted that a four day work week may save for his department since he will save on utilities at his building.

Town Treasurer Day reported that Librarian Prescott believes that a four day week may work for the library.

Police Chief Canario stated that since the austerity moves are intended to be temporary the message should be articulated as such.

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A discussion ensued regarding ways to improve the Town's recycling plan and reduce cost.

Public Works Director Serbst suggested that the Town might charge for recycling bins since some homeowners appear to take these and use them for storage containers.

Councilwoman Parella suggested that the Town might consider capturing all of its cost for large removal items such as refrigerators, etc. Since it now only charges the dump fee and not the administrative cost in the fee structure.

Council Chairman Marshall asked if the Town could reduce the number of National Grid streetlights with Police Chief Canario reminding the Council of a recent fatal accident in Westerly in an area with minimal street lights.

A discussion ensued regarding the fuel oil contract with concern that the price was excessive.

A discussion ensued regarding the planned purchase of a new recycling truck with Public Works Director Serbst noting that this will be placed on the agenda for February 25, 2009.

A discussion ensued regarding the establishment of a capital fund pool with Town Administrator Mederos and Town Treasurer Day reminding those present that the Town has already declared a one year moratorium on capital purchases.

Director of Community Development Williamson expressed her concern that the Town of Warren does not contribute to the salary of Alan Crisman.

Council Chairman Marshall stated that the Town must "re-stimulate" the CDBG in order to secure future funding.

Council Chairman Marshall and Town Administrator Mederos thanked all of the various participants.

There being no further business, upon a motion by Councilwoman Parella, seconded by Councilman Barboza and voted unanimously, the Chairman declared this meeting to be adjourned at 12:55 o'clock PM.

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Louis P. Cirillo, CMC, Council Clerk