

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING - MONDAY EVENING - APRIL 11, 2011

PRESENT: Marshall, Barboza, Teixeira, Herreshoff, and Parella

ALSO PRESENT: Diane C. Mederos, Town Administrator
Julie Goucher, Town Treasurer

The Council met in special session for the purpose of the 2011-2012 Provisional Budget on Monday evening, April 11, 2011 in the Town Hall, Council Chambers, beginning at 7:15 o'clock PM, Council Chairman Marshall presiding:

Document Received:

- (Town Treasurer Goucher) re Town of Bristol "Recapitulation"

Barboza/Parella - Voted to adopt the provisional budget as adjusted by the Council during the previous budget sessions; Schedule A = \$41,261,771; Schedule B (included in Schedule A); and Schedule C = \$4,711,117. Voting in favor of this motion were Council members Marshall, Barboza, Herreshoff, and Parella. Voting opposed was Councilman Teixeira.

Prior to the vote taken, a discussion ensued regarding the tax rate calculation.

Councilwoman Parella observed that the proposed rate of increase is based upon the following components:

Property value decrease due to revaluation	\$1.34
School spending increase	.38
Debt service	.23
Operating increase	.09
Total	\$2.04

Councilwoman Parella also observed that the increase attributable to the revaluation is approximately 66% of the total.

Town Treasurer Goucher reported a 13% decline in property values overall but explained that the decline in commercial property values is measured at 16%. She added that the percentage of commercial values as a portion of the whole is quite small

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therefore its result is relatively insignificant when measuring its effect upon the overall decline.

Town Treasurer Goucher reported that the Assessor is still reviewing the motor vehicle data.

Councilwoman Parella asked to know the collection rate with Town Treasurer Goucher reporting that the budget, as adjusted by the Council, has a \$44,000 "cushion."

A discussion ensued regarding the possibility of the "open letter" from the Council explaining the proposed tax increase with Councilman Herreshoff agreeing to have a draft of same by April 21.

Councilman Teixeira asked to know the amount of the Town's reserve fund that would be infused into the budget with Town Treasurer Goucher reporting that the plan is to utilize \$1.7 million of the reserve with \$500,000 of this being allocated to the capital fund.

Councilman Teixeira asked to know the status of the "telephone tax" with Town Treasurer Goucher reporting that this amount is dictated by the State. She also explained that the amount derived may be reduced due to cellular telephones.

Councilman Herreshoff suggested that the "Recapitulation" might be restated with a column for each year. He added that the "sewer" related expenses should be removed since these are supported by other than property tax revenues.

Councilman Teixeira observed that the Public Works cost reduction is stated as \$193,000 when he thought the savings was planned at \$370,000.

Councilman Barboza asked to know if the Historic District Commission was moved to Community Development with Town Treasurer Goucher responding that it was.

Councilman Herreshoff asked to know the amount remaining in this year's capital account with Town Treasurer Goucher responding that the amount remaining was \$45,000 but that this may be already allocated toward a capital project.

Town Treasurer Goucher also noted that remaining funds may be "transferred out" to a "capital fund." She also agreed to provide a "Capital Fund Report" on a regular basis.

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Responding to Councilman Teixeira's question concerning the cost savings in the DPW budget, Town Treasurer Goucher reported that the proposed savings, without new hiring of four (4) people, is \$321,954. She added that the remainder of the savings earlier identified is found in the "fixed charges" account which includes personnel costs.

After the vote taken, Councilman Teixeira stated that the budget was a "hard process" and a "great effort" and added that he was of the opinion that the Council "could do better" and that the process did not go "far enough."

Councilman Teixeira stated that he believes that there were two police officers too many and disagrees with the "differential" pay at the Public Works Department.

Councilman Teixeira expressed concern that the Town "creates jobs for persons rather than vice-versa."

Councilman Barboza noted that the Police Department is "Nationally accredited" and that an insufficient roster of officers lends to an "overtime through the roof" situation. He added that the Town remains below its staffing levels of one and a half years ago and that the cycle of bringing a probationary patrolman to a full-patrolman status is not instantaneous.

Councilman Barboza also explained that the Police Department staffing program is "clear cut" based upon the "track record" relating to same.

Councilman Teixeira stated that if five (5) officers are ready to retire than these persons should inform management of their intention "well in advance."

Councilman Barboza explained that this advance notice is not required by the contract. He added that the Town has worked too long and hard to develop its personnel replacement policy to "toy" with it.

Councilwoman Parella stated that she did not agree with Councilman Teixeira and that the Council should look at the contract before making any policy changes.

Councilman Teixeira also stated that he believes that benefits should be "curbed." He added that the Town pays approximately

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\$328,000 in longevity overall and that this should be eliminated.

Councilman Herreshoff stated that it is difficult, if not impossible, to take away current salary components. He added that a plan to eliminate this benefit for future employees may be possible.

Town Administrator Mederos reported that she has included this issue in her negotiations with the labor unions and that she has been successful in eliminating longevity for future employees in some cases.

Council Chairman Marshall noted that the Administration and Council have reviewed the budget line-by-line and that it has been Council policy to cut budgets whenever possible so as not to impact citizen-expected services.

Councilman Barboza noted that the "municipal" side of the budget does not have a substantial increase.

Town Administrator Mederos agreed that the Administration is charged to look at the "details" of the budget.

Councilman Herreshoff stated that he agrees that the Administration should be provided with a "lump" (of funding) and that it should "figure it out."

Councilwoman Parella stated that it would not be fair to expect the "municipal" budget to "take a hit."

There being no further business, upon a motion by Councilman Herreshoff, seconded by Councilman Teixeira and voted unanimously, the Chairman declared this meeting to be adjourned at 8:15 o'clock PM.

Louis P. Cirillo, CMC, Council Clerk