

PUBLIC HEARING NORTH SMITHFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

JUNE 2, 2008

NORTH SMITHFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

7:00

P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. and began with the prayer and the pledge to the flag. Council members present were Mr. Keeley, Mr. Leclerc, Mr. Lovett and Mrs. Thibault. Mr. Zwolenski was unable to attend. Town Administrator Lowe and Town Solicitor Hadden were also in attendance.

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008/2009

Mrs. Thibault read the Town Administrator's Budget Message: "Submitted herein, in accordance with Article VIII, Section 2 of the Town Charter is the proposed municipal budget for Fiscal Year 2008-2009 for the Town of North Smithfield. The zero-based budget is a plan that represents financial information by department and is summarized by the major governmental categories listed below – School, General Government, Financial Administration, Public Works, Public Safety, Debt Service, Fixed Charges and Other. The approach of the FY 2009 Proposed Budget is to create a budget structure and philosophy that will expand on our basic business principles to guide decisions now and in the future. Our primary goal for the future is to provide high quality service at the lowest cost possible with a stable tax rate and fee structure. Our secondary goal is to regain our focus on providing traditional municipal services and expanding into areas

of specialty on a planned basis when resources are available. The Fiscal Year 2008-2009 Budget is balanced in accordance with the Town Charter and addresses the goals and priorities established for the Town's future. The budget is fiscally sound, and although does not fund all initial requests made by departments, it does address top priority needs. I wish to recognize and extend thanks to staff in all Town and School Departments for their invaluable assistance during the budget process and express my appreciation to the Finance Department for their help in preparing this budget."

Following are the Adjusted Administrator's Requests for each department.

TOWN COUNCIL - \$14,730

No comments

PROBATE COURT EXPENSE - \$4,448

No comments

TOWN SOLICITOR - \$173,717

Mr. Ernest Alter questioned the increase.

Mr. Lowe responded that he is recommending hiring a full-time solicitor for \$85,000 plus benefits in an attempt to decrease outside litigation expenses.

Mr. Brian Newberry, an attorney, was concerned that the town would not be able to get a qualified individual at that salary.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICE - \$170,593

No comments

PERSONNEL/ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES - \$0

No comments

TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE - \$171,784

No comments

PLANNING DIVISION - \$141,830

No comments

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BOARD OF CANVASSERS - \$11,749

No comments

FINANCE DEPARTMENT - \$266,850

No comments

TAX ASSESSOR'S DEPARTMENT - \$125,063

No comments

TAX COLLECTOR'S OFFICE - \$112,718

No comments

Mrs. Claire O'Hara questioned some of the salary increases. She believes School Department personnel will be asked to accept a freeze in their next contract and, if so, she feels it should be across the board with municipal employees.

Mr. Lowe answered there is no freeze on administrative salaries nor probably with the union members. The North Smithfield staff is the lowest paid in the state and the town is losing personnel. These salary increases are not budget crushers but will enable the town to pay administrative personnel as professionals just as the school department does.

BOARD OF TAX REVIEW - \$1.00

No comments

AUDITS & COMPUTER SERVICE - \$102,965

No comments

ZONING BOARD EXPENSE - \$10,729

No comments

PERSONNEL BOARD - \$1.00

No comments

CONSERVATION COMMISSION - \$782

No comments

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION - \$1.00

No comments

HOUSING AUTHORITY - \$1.00

No comments

REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT - \$9,201

No comments

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION - \$1.00

No comments

BUDGET COMMITTEE - \$1.00

No comments

JUVENILE HEARING BOARD - \$3,650

No comments

TOWN HALL - \$7,500

No comments

PLANT OPERATIONS - \$13,500

No comments

PRINTING & ADVERTISING - \$15,000

No comments

CONTINGENCY FUND - \$90,500

Mrs. Linda-Jean Briggs felt the Council should take a second look at that account.

SCOUTERS' HALL - \$4,700

No comments

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NS PUBLIC LIBRARY - \$342,099

Mrs. Alison Peirce of the Board of Directors noted that last year there had been an error in their budget calculation regarding the Town Share. She met with Finance Director Jill Gemma to rectify the situation.

POLICE DEPARTMENT - \$2,438,298

No comments

ANIMAL CONTROL \$70,438

No comments

CIVIL DEFENSE - \$4,746

No comments

NORTH SMITHFIELD FIRE/RESCUE SERVICE - \$2,351,092

No comments

HYDRANT RENTAL - \$50,000

Mr. Jeff Butler wondered why the town doesn't buy the hydrants.

Mr. Lowe responded that it is the City of Woonsocket's and the Town of Blackstone's water system.

INSPECTION DIVISION - \$159,683

No comments

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT - \$883,090

Mr. Michael Rapko commented that this year the town had a lot of problems with planning issues and LIZ Development and he feels that at some point in time we will have to hire a town engineer. The town can't use the Town Administrator or the Town Planner to solve engineering problems. It will lead to a lawsuit at some point.

Mr. Ernest Alter agreed. The town may have avoided the problems with LIZ Development had it had a professional civil engineer.

PARKS & RECREATION - \$163,463

No comments

TREE WARDEN - \$4,861

No comments

STREET LIGHTS - \$160,000

No comments

RUBBISH DISPOSAL - \$650,000

Mr. Rapko asked how much money the town could save if it increased recycling.

Mr. Lowe estimated between \$20,000 to \$30,000 without much effort.

SEALER OF WEIGHTS - \$1.00

No comments

DEBT SERVICE/PRINCIPAL - \$1,276,088

No comments

DEBT SERVICE/INTEREST - \$2,311,124

No comments

MEDICAL & RETIREMENT EXPENSE - \$293,171

No comments

INSURANCE - \$225,000

No comments

SCHOOL DEPARTMENT - \$20,595,086

Several residents questioned why there were no line items listed for the School Department.

Both School Committee Chair Robert Lafleur and Superintendent of Schools Stephen Lindberg explained there had been at least three

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public hearings where that information had been made available. Mr. Lindberg also stated he would try to get the information onto the website.

Ms. Lisa Palmer was concerned that the proposed cuts in programs will affect the enrichment of the children.

Ms. Leanne Jalette asked the Council to consider closing Halliwell School and redistricting to have Grades K – 4 at NSES , Grades 5 – 7 at the Middle School and Grades 8 – 12 at the High School.

Mr. Lovett emphasized that the School Committee is the body that will make cuts, not the Town Council. The job of the Council is to make fiscally responsible decisions.

GRANTS & CONTRIBUTIONS - \$55,749

Mr. Jeff Butler asked if all of the grants were necessary.

Mrs. Tracy Nangle asked the Council to take the initiative to meet regularly with the state representatives. She commented that every child enrolled in public education is entitled to quality, public-funded education and if you have to start paying for extracurricular activities, it becomes inequitable. The town needs to be more proactive in terms of planning to pay for things. Mrs. Nangle would like to see a plan for one, three, five and ten years.

CAPITAL BUDGET

Administration - \$55,250

No comments.

Highway Department - \$160,000

No comments.

Library - \$1,000

No comments.

N.S. Fire Department - \$25,000

No comments.

Parks and Recreation - \$2,300

No comments.

Police Department - \$0

No comments.

School Department - \$233,000

Mr. Jeff Butler commented on the poor condition of Halliwell School and the horror stories he has heard. His opinion was to close the school and shift classes around.

MOTION by Mr. Lovett, seconded by Mr. Leclerc, and voted unanimously on an aye vote to continue the public hearing to June 23, 2008.

MOTION by Mr. Lovett, seconded by Mr. Keeley, and voted unanimously on an aye vote at 8:45 P.M. to take a five-minute recess.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra A. Todd, Town Clerk

SPECIAL MEETING NORTH SMITHFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

JUNE 2, 2008

NS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

PUBLIC HEARING

The special meeting was called to order at 8:59 P.M. The prayer and the pledge to the flag were waived. Council members present were

Mr. Keeley, Mr. Leclerc, Mr. Lovett and Mrs. Thibault. Mr. Zwolenski was unable to attend. Town Administrator Lowe and Town Solicitor Hadden were also present.

APPOINTMENT TO PERSONNEL BOARD

Mr. Lowe submitted the name of Gary Lapierre of 14 Willerval Avenue.

Mr. Lapierre would be completing the three-year term of Michael Naylor that expires on December 1, 2008.

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MOTION by Mr. Lovett, seconded by Mr. Keeley, and voted unanimously on an aye vote to confirm the Administrator's appointment of Gary Lapierre to the Personnel Board.

EXCEED TAX CAP OF 5% FOR DEBT SERVICE

Mrs. Gemma noted that a 4/5 approval vote would be necessary for this and asked that the item be continued to another meeting.

MOTION by Mr. Leclerc, seconded by Mr. Keeley, and voted unanimously on an aye vote to continue this discussion to June 23, 2008.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PERMIT FEES

MOTION by Mr. Lovett, seconded by Mr. Keeley, and voted unanimously on an aye vote to table this matter to June 23, 2008.

VICTUALING LICENSE – MEZZA LUNA PIZZERIA

MOTION by Mr. Leclerc, seconded by Mr. Keeley, and voted unanimously on a roll call vote to approve a victualing license for Mezza Luna Pizzeria.

PEDDLER’S LICENSE – UNIVERSAL INVESTMENTS INC. D/B/A DEL’S LEMONADE OF CUMBERLAND

MOTION by Mr. Leclerc, seconded by Mr. Keeley, and voted unanimously on a roll call vote to approve a peddler’s license for Universal Investments Inc. d/b/a Del’s Lemonade of Cumberland to be applicable at the street address of 7 Eddie Dowling Highway and the adjoining lot owned by the applicant.

VICTUALING LICENSE – RI SPORTS CENTER, INC.

MOTION by Mr. Leclerc, seconded by Mr. Keeley, and voted unanimously on a roll call vote to approve a victualing license for RI Sports Center, Inc. located at 1186 Eddie Dowling Highway.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Mr. Lovett, seconded by Mr. Leclerc, and voted unanimously on an aye vote to enter into executive session at 9:12 P.M. pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(A)(5) Any discussions or considerations related to the acquisition or lease of real property for public purposes, or of the disposition of publicly held property wherein advanced public information would be detrimental to the interest of the public.

(Mr. Keeley recused himself from executive session.)

MOTION by Mr. Lovett, seconded by Mr. Leclerc, and voted unanimously on an aye vote to come out of executive session at 9:50 P.M. and to seal the minutes. One vote was taken to table the discussion held in executive session until the June 10th meeting.

MOTION by Mr. Lovett, seconded by Mr. Keeley, and voted unanimously on an aye vote to adjourn at 9:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra A. Todd, Town Clerk