



Town of East Greenwich Town Council Minutes April 4, 2011

Location and Time: Swift Community Center, 121 Peirce Street, 7:00pm

Council Members: Michael B. Isaacs, President
Henry V. Boezi, Vice President
Jeffrey B. Cianciolo, Councilor
Mark Watkins Gee, Councilor
Michael S. Kiernan, Councilor

Staff Members: William Sequino, Jr., Town Manager
Leigh A. Botello, Town Clerk
Col. Thomas Coyle, Chief of Police
Joseph Duarte, Public Works Director
Wendy Schmidle, IT Director
Kathy Raposa, Finance Director
Lisa Bourbonnais, Planning Director
Catherine Bradley, Parks and Recreation Director
Erin McAndrew, Human and Senior Services Director
Peter Clarkin, Town Solicitor (absent)

Others: School Committee Members: Gifford, Green, Winters, Durant, Sommer
Dr. Victor Mercurio, Superintendent
Maryanne Crawford, Director of Administration

7:00pm Budget Work Session

President Isaacs calls the special session to order and leads the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

- 1) Agency Presentations
 - a. WellOne – (formerly Bayside Family Healthcare) presented by Kathryn M. Franklin, Ph.D. requests \$5,400. They provide high-quality primary medical and dental care to residents, regardless of their ability to pay.
 - b. East Greenwich Animal Protection League – presented by their secretary Renee, requests \$25,000. They are the acting animal pound and are a totally volunteer operation.
 - c. Elizabeth Buffum Chase Center – presented by Judith Earle, Executive Director, requests \$3,000. They offer court advocacy for victims of domestic violence. They recently placed an advocate on-site at the police station to follow-up with victims who have had contact with the police regardless of whether an arrest was made or not. This service is provided by a grant with no cost to the Town.



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- d. Trudeau Center – no one is present to speak but a letter was received requesting \$5,500 to cover services to residents such as early intervention, children’s services, day habilitation and recreation.
- e. Kent Center – no one is present to speak but a letter was received requesting \$9,407 to cover services to residents such as Community Support, Emergency Services, outpatient mental health or substance abuse counseling and Youth or Family Services. Last year they served 203 East Greenwich residents.
- f. VNA of Care New England – presented by Margaret McGillivray, Board Member, request \$5000. Services include skilled nursing care, home health aide services, social work, Hospice and flu shots.
- g. General Nathanael Greene Chapter DAR – presented by Lorraine Hilton requests \$200, mainly for the maintenance of historic cemetery #62 on Wine Street.
- h. Safety Town – per Mr. Sequino, this is an in-house program run by the Police Department.
- i. Hill and Harbour Merchants Association – presented by Diane Villari, requests \$4000. They maintain the seasonal banners, run *Arts on Main* and Christmas decorations.
- j. Chamber of Commerce – reflects the Town’s dues.
- k. Economic Development – Town matched funds to help support the Main Street Merchants.
- l. Meals on Wheels RI – presented by Heather Amaral, Executive Director, requests \$2500 to continue to deliver nutritional meals to elders in the community who are unable to come to lunch at the Senior Center.
- m. Samaritans – presented by Denise Panichas, Executive Director, requests \$500. They continue to provide hotline services and have a new website which is specifically tailored to each city and town in the State of Rhode Island. A discussion follows on the 211 telephone system.
- n. Southern RI Conservation District – no one is present.
- o. Westbay Community Action – presented by Jeanne M. Gattegno, requests \$12,500. They offer services such as social services, affordable housing, food cupboard and administration of a state grant which supports the Town’s meal site program.
- p. Cornerstone Adult Services – presented by Dottie Santagata, Administrator, requests \$6,165 to continue to provide compassionate care and supportive services to frail elders and adults in their day centers.
- q. Literacy Volunteers of Kent County – presented by Dorothy Brindamour, Program Director, requests \$150. They recruit, train and support tutors who teach basic literacy skills on a one-on-one basis.
- r. Cridco – delete from the budget.



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- s. Summers End – presented by Bill Maloney, President, requests \$7,339. They organize the free summer event featuring the Rhode Island Philharmonic and offer scholarships.
- t. East Greenwich Free Library – presented by Karen Taylor, Director, requests \$480,161 for their operating budget. Statistics have increased and they now have over 8,300 library card holders. They are in the process of updating their website.

The Council takes a brief recess before reconvening with the School Committee.

8:00pm Joint Budget Session with School Committee

Chairwoman Gifford calls the School Committee to order.

President Isaacs notes that the Public Hearing on the budget is April 11, during the regularly scheduled Town Council meeting at the Swift Community Center.

1. Discussion of Budget

Mr. Sequino gives an overview of his budget message. Per the Charter, Department Heads must submit their budgets to the Town Manager by February 15. The School Committee must submit by March 15 and the Town Manager must transmit the Town budget to the Town Council by April 1. A Public Hearing must be held on or before April 15 and the Council must adopt the budget to present at the Financial Town Meeting no later than May 15. The recommended budget for FY2012 is \$47,708,318 which is an increase of \$2,848,113 or a 6.35% increase. The debt service budget is up by 45.08% with the addition of the \$10.6 million in tax free bonds for school construction. These funds are unspent and therefore, not eligible for state reimbursement. This reflects an increase of \$1.4 million which is offset by the federal subsidy of \$859K, leaving \$639K to be funded locally. The School Committee requested \$31.2 million which is 3.96% higher than the previous year. The maximum amount they could have requested was 4.25%. The Town's tax allocation for the school department was arrived at by taking the maximum amount they could have requested, subtracting the net school debt service increase and increase in state education aid to arrive at a budget increase figure of \$478,561. When coupled with state aid increase, this will be a total increase of \$639K for the school budget. Other items taken into consideration as alternatives to a tax increase are: state aid in the school budget is less than the funding formula by \$160K, there is \$230K in the school budget for capital items that could be funded by school fund balance, an estimated maintenance of effort deduction of \$140K is possible and anticipated teacher's retirements could potentially represent another \$100K. With all the preceding factors included, the school tax allocation is proposed at \$30,551.077.



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The total budget (town and school) is up 6.36% or \$2,853,113 of which \$1,498,556 is school debt. This proposal produces a tax rate increase of 4.1% or 71 cents and a tax levy increase of 3.96%, well within the tax levy cap.

The Town is faced with a \$500K increase due to increases in health care and pension costs. Employee pay increases have been included as well as capital improvements. It is anticipated that the budget for FY2013 will be worse with the balance of the \$52 million school bonds being sold. This could add another 95 cents to 1 dollar to the tax rate.

The state will issue reimbursement once the \$10.6 million school construction bonds are spend and when the project is substantially complete or certified. Chief Coyle requested two school resource officers and Mr. Sequino reduced it by one.

Mr. Sequino explains how the \$10.6 million affects the budget. The downside is the burden of the \$639K in debt service with no reimbursement from the state. The upside is the federal subsidy. Further discussions center on the costs of the bond and the time table for spending and reimbursement.

Ms. Gifford notes that their budget can be adjusted slightly due to new numbers related to retirements and the amount of state aid. The maintenance of effort deduction and process is discussed. The School Committee is working towards confirming enrollment and Mr. Sequino is waiting for a response from RIDE.

Mr. Durant states that the School Committee has only had a brief period to review the budget proposal. Contractual items contributed to \$900K of their request for \$1.2 million.

The School Resource Officer position is discussed and whether it is one or two positions and from which budget the costs will come out of.

President Isaacs requests a formal summary be presented at the Public Hearing on the departments with staffing changes, early retirements and pay back and savings information on the firing range. Also, he would like a column added to the revenue sheet to show year to date figures.

Ms. Gifford asks Mr. Sequino to explain again how he arrived at the proposed tax allocation number to the School Department of \$30,551,077. He refers to Page 3 of his budget message. The operational budget for the School Department is expected to be decreased by the amount of the debt service. Further discussion follows on the methodology used to determine the figures presented, past and present.



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The \$859K federal subsidy is explained by Mr. Sequino for Councilor Gee. It is money directed to education as part of the federal stimulus package. President Isaacs further explains the benefits of the program. It allows the Town to borrow at a low interest rate for a shorter term.

2. Discussion of School Building Projects

The School Committee will hear the official recommendation from the Building Committee regarding Meadowbrook and other projects along with a presentation by SMMA on renovation strategies at the high school at their meeting tomorrow, April 5, 2011.

3. EXECUTIVE SESSION per RIGL §42-46-5 (a) (1) (2) to discuss personnel, litigation/collective bargaining.

There is no motion for Executive Session.

VP Boezi moves for the Town Council to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Gee and it is voted 5-0 and the motion carries.

Mr. Durant moves for the School Committee to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Winters and it is voted 5-0 and the motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,
Leigh A. Botello
Town Clerk

APPROVED BY TOWN COUNCIL APRIL 11, 2011