

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT

Special Town Council Meeting

APRIL 11, 2012

FY 2012 - 2013 BUDGET

PUBLIC HEARING

RECORD OF VOTES & MINUTES

The Public Hearing on the Budget was called to order at 6:03 P.M. in the Robert Earley Auditorium of the Wallingford Town Hall. A Moment of Silence was observed, and the Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were as follows: Vincent Cervoni, Nick Economopoulos, Craig C. Fishbein, Thomas Laffin, John LeTourneau, Chairman Robert F. Parisi, Rosemary Rascati and Jason Zandri. Councilor John J. Sullivan arrived at 6:34 P.M. Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr. and Comptroller James Bowes were also in attendance at the meeting.

3. Public Hearing on the Town of Wallingford Budget for FY 2012-2013

Mayor Dickinson opened the Public Hearing with comments to the residents of the Town of Wallingford. He asked, "Why have government?" He remarked that there are certain services that are needed in order for society to function in a way that is beneficial to all members of that society. He asked what services that should be provided by government and what would be a reasonable cost of those services given all the factors involved to the members of the society. He stated that the proposed budget is recommended. It has a range of services that have been provided for a long time that have allowed the community to flourish. He added that the cost of those services continue to go up. He referred to the state of the economy and in other layers of government some of which is not helpful when trying to address the needs of our community and how to deal with all of the problems and challenges associated with services and the governance of the community. He went on to say that the bare bones of the budget are that the budget totals approximately \$145,000,000 without counting utilities. It's not a small business.

Expenditures increased 2.6%; education, which is 60+% of the budget, will increase 3.2%; General Government increases 1.63%, an increase which is the first year in four years that it has increased. He said there has been a serious effort at controlling the expenses while being mindful of the difficulties of the citizenry in meeting the challenges of a poor economy. The tax increase is .76 mills, 3.01% in the mill rate, and the result is on the average, assessed property of \$191,000 that the tax increase annually is \$145.00. He said he prefers no tax increase but after close analysis if what we need and how to continue the quality of life that we enjoy in Wallingford, it is necessary.

He continued in discussing the Utilities, who offer the most essential services on a daily basis in the community. The Electric, a very central service, a very important service has a .6% rate increase, which is for a residential customer \$1.63 per month on a monthly 750kWh usage.

He stated that we need potable water to maintain public health. The number one cause of disease in the world is bad water, and we lose sight of that in this country. It is an absolute blessing to be able to turn on a faucet and receive potable water. It's an incredible gift. Water will have a 3.5% rate increase and that is \$.95 per month for a 2,200 cu ft per quarter per residential user.

Sewer is a 10.3% rate increase which is \$4.29 per month on 2,200 cu ft user of the waster water treatment. One half of the waste water increase is due to our need to reduce inflow and infiltration, meaning water that is getting into our system that is not waste water. It's storm water that increases the volumes that go through our treatment plant. At the point we reach a given level, we will have to spend tens of millions of dollars to expand the plant. It is essential that the money be put aside to allow us fix the system. He said that it is an important project and that an ordinance has been proposed and will be moving forward.

Another issue that is not in this budget is phosphorus issue coming from both the state and the federal governments which potentially mean millions of dollars for taking phosphorus out of waste water. He encouraged people to write to their representatives in Congress. For Wallingford, this could mean a \$20 million to \$60 million expenditure that we cannot afford. This is an example of the other things that are being visited upon us. We need to say no.

He stated that he believes this to be a good budget that he recommends to the Council and the public that it is something that will serve the community well. He thanked everyone for their attendance.

The following departments were called forward for questions from the public:

Animal Control

In Attendance:

Dean Rizzo, Assistant Animal Control Officer

Mr. Rizzo stated that the Animal Control Officer, Lisa Seyler was ill and could not attend. He was asked about the bequest funds and their expenditures.

Board of Assessment Appeals *Waived*

Board of Education

In Attendance:

Dr. Salvatore Menzo, Superintendent of School;

Linda Winters, Business Manager;

Roxanne McKay, Vice-Chairperson, Board of Education

Robert Gross, 114 Long Hill Road asked about the Severance Contractual Retirees account; Waivers for Medical Insurance and subsequent payments. Mr. William Comerford, 5 Broadview Drive inquired about usage of gas and number of facilities with interrupted gas feature; he asked about ownership of buildings; Paul Ciardullo, 2 Bayberry Drive asked about cost of education per student

Board of Ethics *Waived*

Board of Selectmen *Waived*

Building Department *Waived*

Cafeteria *Waived*

Capital Appropriations Reserve

Capital and Non-Recurring

In Attendance:

James Bowes, Comptroller

John Thompson, Town Engineer

They discussed parking lots for Wooding Caplan and the Police Station area, building demolition and milling as they relate to the budget with Robert Gross, Geno Zandri and Bill Comerford.

Civil Preparedness

In Attendance: Ernie Frattini

Robert Gross asked about telephone expenditures.

Conservation Commission Waived

Contingency Account

In Attendance:

James Bowes, Comptroller

With Robert Gross, page 64, raises from negotiations.

Debt Services Waived

Economic Development Commission Waived

Personnel, Pensions, & Risk Management

In Attendance:

Terence Sullivan, Personnel Director

James Hutt, Assistant Personnel Director

Kurt Treiber, Risk Manager

Mr. Comerford referred to efficiency studies. Mr. Sullivan gave a history such studies.

Insurance-Property & Casualty

Comments about self insurance

Employee Insurance and Other Benefits

Robert Gross asked about longevity pay and Retirement pay for accrued sick time and health insurance. Mr. Comerford asked about payment from damage to OParks & Recreation building roof.

Engineering Department

In Attendance:

John Thompson, Town Engineer

William Comerford and Ed Bradley, 2 Hampton Trail, talked about sidewalks Six-Year Capital Budget and flooding at Spring Lake

Finance Department

In Attendance:

James Bowes, Comptroller

Paul Ciardullo, 2 Bayberry Drive talked about the "rainy day fund" and CRRRA funds with Mr. Bowes. Robert Gross commented on direct deposit and made comments on saving money via different telephone services..

Fire Department

In Attendance:

*Fire Chief Peter Struble
Deputy Fire Chief Heidgerd
Deputy Fire Chief Alsup
Fire Marshal Carmen Rao*

Discussion centered on Emergence Medical Service.

Fire Marshal Waived

Government TV

In Attendance:

Scott Hanley, Manager

Compliments were made to Mr. Hanley for the fine job he is doing. Mr. Gross asked to have BOE and PUC televised by Government Television.

Health Department Waived

Inland Wetlands Waived

Law Department Waived

Library Waived

Mayor

Raise the Mayor's salary since position is underfunded.

Parks and Recreation Waived

Pension Fund

Planning & Zoning Waived

Police Department

In Attendance:

*Douglas Dortenzio, Police Chief
Lt. William Wright, Administrative Services*

Mr. Gross, Mr. Ciardullo and Mr. Comerford were interested in department staffing, patrol cars and their replacement and associated costs.

Probate Court Waived

Program Planning

Bill Comerford asked about block Grants.

Public Works Department

In Attendance:

Henry McCully, Director, Public Works

Ms. Barbara Kapi, William Comerford, Robert Gross and Paul Ciardullo asked about and made comments about park clean-up; snow plowing; hazardous waste, blighted buildings; in-kind services and their value; fire works celebration; tracking worker hours and locations.

Registrars of Voters Waived

Social Services Contributions

WCI was called from this budget.

In Attendance:

Liz Landow, Executive Director

Steven Lazarus, Architect and Board Member

Joan Parisi, Board Member and Treasurer

Mr. Comerford expressed an opinion that the events by WCI should by Charter be the responsibility of Public Celebrations Committee

Public Celebrations Committee was called from this budget.

In Attendance:

Barbara Kapi

Ray Ross

Joan Parisi

Lorraine Devaney

They explained that they would use a balance forward for the coming year.

Town Council Waived

Town Clerk Waived

Utilities - Electric Division

In Attendance:

George Adair, Director, Public Utilities,

Robert Beaumont, Commission Chairman

David Gessert, Commission Member

Richard Hendershot, General Manager

Thomas Sullivan, Business Manager

Community welfare programs were discussed as well as electric rates.

Utilities –Water & Sewer Divisions

In Attendance:

George Adair, Public Utilities Director;

Roger Dann, General Manager

William Phelan, Business Manager

No questions were forthcoming.

Veterans Service Center Waived

Youth & Social Services Bureau Waived

Zoning Board of Appeals Waived

Mr. Gross asked about the Revenue side of the budget referring to Covanta; regionalization of purchasing and shared services.

MOTION TO APPROVE ADJOURNMENT

MADE BY: Parisi

SECONDED BY: Letourneau

VOTE: Unanimous

MOTION PASSED

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra R. Weekes
Town Council Secretary
Meeting digitally recorded

Robert F. Parisi, Chairman

Date

Barbara Thompson, Town Clerk

Date