

MINUTES

WATERTOWN TOWN COUNCIL FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE

SWIFT MIDDLE SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER

250 COLONIAL STREET, OAKVILLE, CT 06779

TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 2009, 7:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Gary Bernier, Chairman
Richard DiFederico
Richard Fusco
Carl Mancini

ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: David Demirs, Town Council
Chuck Frigon, Town Manager
Frank Nardelli, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director
Paul Rinaldi, Town Council
Thomas Winn

1. Call Meeting To Order - 7:00 P.M.

Mr. Bernier, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Mr. Bernier, Chairman, executed the Roll Call.

3. Minutes

A. May 5, 2009

MOTION: (Mr. Mancini, sec. Mr. DiFederico) to Approve the Meeting Minutes of May 5, 2009, as presented.

Discussion: None

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

B. May 7, 2009

MOTION: (Mr. DiFederico, sec. Mr. Mancini) to Approve the Meeting Minutes of May 7, 2009, as presented.

Discussion: None

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Discussion Concerning Fiscal Year 2009/2010 Budgets

Mr. Bernier: Obviously I was disappointed that the budget did not pass. With that said, my thoughts are that obviously the \$1,400,000 is a given, that that cannot be negotiated, that is solid, that is a liability that we have. The Town's side, my thought is that the Town's side came in with a zero, we asked them to come in at that, I understand it was close, but the Town's side did exactly what we asked them to do, they came in with zero, there were many cuts before they came to us and my feeling is that we do not touch the Town's side. I know there has been some discussion, some people have some thoughts but in all candor I don't think we started even, I think the Town did a good job, they did exactly what we asked them to do, there were many givebacks, just to name a few, there are trucks, a few police officers, we have (inaudible) police officers that we surely could use but after discussions with the department head he feels, and therefore I agree with him 110%, that if he feels comfortable, it is a risk, but it is a risk that we can take, then so be it. Those are my thoughts.

As far as the Board of Education, before we start discussions, I've given this a lot of thought. In all candor Superintendent Baldwin will be making a presentation at the full Council meeting. She had called me and she had looked, I had heard a few numbers being popped around by a few people, so she will be presenting a couple of different scenarios for us and I believe, I truly believe we need to hear what the impact is going to be to the Town before we come up with a number, but that's my feeling. To just go searching for a number without having an understanding or an appreciation to what that impact would be, in my mind, for me would be irresponsible, but that is where I stand as we sit. I most certainly welcome your comments and discussion.

Mr. Fusco: I would have liked to have heard the presentation from Karen Baldwin as a subcommittee so we know where we're going. Right now we don't know where we're going and when comparing the Town's side of the budget to the school side, is comparing apples and oranges almost. The Town has big trucks, we have highways, schools only have teachers and students. We have to look at this very closely. We are very low on the level of schools in the State, we're still 168 or 169.

Mr. Bernier: We are toward the bottom, that is a given, but in all candor from the Town's side, we're probably in the 26th year of a 9 year plan for asphalt, we're down 3 police detectives, this last time we actually took cell phones off of some of our emergency vehicles and I don't want to paint a picture, I don't want to skew this, I certainly want to hear what the Superintendent says, but I also don't believe that we were (inaudible) going into this last budget. Again I read what you read this morning in the paper, I have some thoughts on that, but I certainly don't want to skew anybody, anybody until I hear the presentation. I certainly have some discussion for the Superintendent.

Mr. Fusco: I thought we should have had it for us as the subcommittee so we could move ahead. Right now we can't do anything, I mean we can only talk about it. We don't know where to turn.

Mr. Bernier: In all candor, we really, I don't know if there really was a charge for this subcommittee to meet prior to, we had come with a recommendation, we had set a budget and it truly is the Council's decision where we go next. I certainly wanted an opportunity because you gentlemen have put so much time and effort into this, to hear your comments and thoughts before we go to the Council.

Mr. DiFederico: That's what we have to do, I don't think we should touch the Town's side anymore either, I'll be honest with you.

Mr. Fusco: We're making a decision here, we shouldn't be doing that until we hear what the school side says.

Mr. Bernier: We certainly do not need, have to, we do not need or have to go forward with a recommendation from this meeting. And I gave some thought to Ms. Baldwin making the presentation to us and to the Council, at the end of the day it is a Council decision, it didn't, maybe I was wrong, but I thought that her making the presentation once instead of twice in the course of let's say an hour was the right thing to do.

Mr. Mancini: It was a great turnout, 30% is great turnout for referendum. The Town side did pass, the school side failed. Is there a number in anybody's mind that they feel they have to bring back in order to get a yes vote from the voters to pass both the Town and the school? That's the number we have to work to get down to and no matter how it's done, we have to figure out how it gets done. I think we're going to have to tell the Board of Education and they're not going to like it, but I think we have to tell them how we feel, they should get down to a certain number, be it layoffs or whatever, I'm like everybody else here on this committee, I want to know has anybody gone back to the unions? Have they come back with anything?

Mr. DiFederico: I would say no. Ms. Moriarty said no on that.

Mr. Mancini: I heard what she said at a meeting 3 weeks ago that we've given up enough, we're not doing anymore. Well what I read in the paper there will be 20 possible teacher layoffs. Now are they willing to go along with 20 layoffs? If that's what they want, fine. I thought maybe the Union might come up and say listen, in lieu of layoffs we can do this, this and this to help you out, so I agree with Gary, that we have to go and wait through the presentation and see what's done.

Mr. DiFederico: Gary didn't you say that we only have what two referendums to do this in or something, and if it didn't go through we were going to say hey, go after a zero. You said it, we told it right to them, so are you going to back out of this now, or are you going to go forward? That's what I'm saying.

Mr. Bernier: I certainly and you're taking some of my thunder for the next meeting but certainly we have budgeted for three referendum. We just had one, we have one in the Fall and we really have one to play with, after that I believe we are going into the fund balance and at that point we're taking a hit, the Town's side is going to have to absorb that \$8,000 for each referendum after the next one, so I was hopeful that we had a budget the last time, and that obviously is not true and I'm very optimistic that at the end of this evening we will have a number that we can put forward to the taxpayers and get us a budget.

Mr. Mancini: It's going to have to be a low enough number if you don't want to have 3, 4, 5 referendums.

Mr. Bernier: I believe, and I'm not going to disagree with that, but I think, and I'm not going to lie, I had a number in my head and I've made some comments in the past, but at the end of the day we have a responsibility to the Town, and part of that responsibility is to educate our children. I do not want to come up with a preconceived number without hearing the facts from the Superintendent as far as what those impacts are going to be.

Mr. DiFederico: I don't like being compared to other towns.

Mr. Bernier: Well that's a natural and normal thing.

Mr. DiFederico: Our kids get a really good education, I'm sorry, I have to disagree with some of that.

Mr. Bernier: Again coming into this evening I certainly, it had been mentioned it had been discussed about having the subcommittee, and I certainly am not opposed to sitting here. The \$1,400,000 for the bond is that, obviously we can't touch that. I didn't know what your thoughts were from the Town. Mine is that from this point really there have been some suggestions, but in all candor I don't believe we started off even and I truly believe that Chuck and Frank and the department heads work long and hard and really dug deep and did exactly what we asked them to do.

Mr. DiFederico: I do not disagree. So we might as well just make a motion to adjourn.

5. Consider Recommendation to Town Council for Fiscal Year 2009/2010 Budgets

Not discussed.

6 Adjournment

MOTION: (Mr. DiFederico, sec. Mr. Mancini) to Adjourn the Regular Meeting at 7:12 p.m.

Discussion: None

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Regular Meeting Adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gary Bernier, Chairman
Finance Subcommittee

Lynn M. LaForme, Clerk