

# MINUTES

## WATERTOWN TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

SWIFT MIDDLE SCHOOL  
LIBRARY  
MONDAY, May 10, 2010, 6:00 P.M.

**PRESENT:**

Elaine Adams  
Katherine Duplissie  
Linda Masayda  
Raymond Primini, Chairman  
Paul Rinaldi  
Mary Ann Rosa, Vice Chairman  
Thomas Winn

**ABSENT:**

Richard Fusco  
Richard DiFederico

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Chuck Frigon, Town Manager  
Frank Nardelli, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director

**OTHERS ABSENT:**

None

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

Mr. Primini, Chairman, Called the Special Meeting to Order at 6:00PM.

2. **Roll Call**

Ms. King, Secretary, executed the Roll Call.

3. **Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Primini, Chairman, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**4. Consider Fiscal Year 2010-2011 budgets to be sent to Budget Public Hearing.**

**Motion One:**

**(Ms. Rosa sec. Ms. Adams) I move to accept the Town General Fund budget as proposed by the Town Manager with the following change: \$35,425 be added to the Town General Fund for the maintenance of Crestbrook Park pool and tennis courts.**

Discussion: **Ms. Rosa:** In the finance meetings we talked about transferring some of the costs from the Crestbrook side to the town side. Those costs were in line with other Park and Rec charges around town. Maintenance of the area, the pool, the chemicals and the life guard which will help them balance their year out that is why that is being done.

**Ms. Adams:** It is not only the additional \$35,000, do we have to also take the revenue, it approximately \$25,000 that will be taken out to the town side with the offset of revenue.

**Mr. Nardelli:** The net cost is \$25,000

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

**Motion Two**

**(Ms. Rosa sec. Ms. Adams) I move to taking \$400,000.00 from the General Fund undesignated monies and placing it at the Capitol Improvement Account for the safety and necessary repairs at the Town Hall and for any work to be done at Heminway Park School so the town offices can be relocated.**

Discussion: **Ms. Adams:** I am not in favor at this time. We do not know what improvements specifically we are going to need. I do not believe \$100,000.00 will begin to cover it, I think there is a lot we need to do, not to say in time that the public would not want to take out and I am not in favor.

**Ms. Masayda:** Where does that figure come from?

**Ms. Rosa:** A figure I put there because we know we have to do the roof.

**Ms. Masayda:** We do not have anything to base that number on?

**Ms. Rosa:** Not yet, we have had previous estimates. We know we need to work at Heminway Park so between the two buildings that is a number that we can recover quickly through the saving of rent at Depot Square.

**Ms. Adams:** Maybe, maybe not because we are going to have utilities that we are going to have to pay, we do not know at this point.

**Ms. Rosa:** We know what the rent is.

**Ms. Adams:** We have sent this over to Public Buildings a couple of months ago and said come up with a plan, so we can go to public hearing talk to the people. I am still waiting for Public Buildings to come forward with the report.

**Mr. Winn:** I am still waiting for a Town Hall in the last 30 years. How long are we going to wait? We can either keep \$400,000 into this undesignated account that we have 5.4 million in and move it from A to B. In the next 6 months, 8 months, 10 months or whatever, designates someone to start bringing offices in there. Updating the school, whether it's electric, or it is paint; this town for the past 20 years has been standing still and doing nothing. We have had a Town Council for the last 20 years has done nothing, total failures, every time we have a meeting here and say "*Oh I am not finished*", every time we have a meeting the Town Council says "*Oh we can't do that*", "*no*". Twenty years ago I moved into this town with a great school now it is 169, great infrastructure now it is in need of repair. When are we going to start saying yes to something.

**Mr. Rinaldi:** I have been on councils for a long time I do not think they have been failures; I think that is pretty harsh thing to say. There have been several proposals for Town Halls that have gone out to the public. We never said no, the taxpayers said no. I have a real problem of circumventing the system and going into the general fund and I cannot support that.

**Ms. Rosa:** My concern is the Town Hall; I think we are very irresponsible for allowing employees to continue to work in those conditions. If you feel comfortable doing that, then you live by that standard, I cannot. I feel it is necessary that we do something there and do it right away. Setting a referendum to go to public to get more than \$25,000 is weeks and months down the road and I do not think it is the way to go.

**Ms. Duplissie:** Let's say we use \$310,000 of the \$400,000, what happens to other \$90,000 does it stay in the fund or goes back into the undesignated funds.

**Ms. Rosa:** That is up to us.

**Ms. Duplissie:** We are also going to save the \$100,000 a year on the rent of Depot Square, plus if the people move from the Annex and we decide we are going to sell the Annex that money will also go back into the general fund, is that correct.

**Mr. Frigon:** If that is what you decide.

**Ms. Duplissie:** We need to stop paying out money when we have all these empty buildings. We have the buildings let's use them and bring them up to code, why have them vacant? It is a waste of buildings, it is a waste of money, it is a waste of energy, and it is a waste of everything and I am for doing it.

**Ms. Masayda:** My main issue with this, I am for having a new Town Hall, I think you are right that we owe these people a safe working environment. From what I just heard you pulled the number out of the air. You do not typically go without a costing plan. Maybe if we took just a little bit time to get our facts straight, bounce it off the public for a public hearing. You say months, I am new to the process, maybe it does not have to be drawn out so long. At least this way we have real numbers. So in the big picture you don't know if you are getting yourself deeper in problems.

**Ms. Adams:** Four years ago, Ray and Paul were on the council, we put all of this out there and we have gotten some quotes, they are very old, and the costs could have gone down. Until we have more information, just to take money out of the general, I believe by charter our budget says we have to do specific line items on this, we just can't say okay we are going to throw it into a fund, just on the council vote here. I believe you need to spell it out exactly where the money is going and for what purpose not a general type thing and I am not supporting it.

**Mr. Winn:** I have listened to all sides, I think that everybody has their opinion, everybody has their sides. Again I think the town has been "*let's do a study, let's not go real fast, let's have a vote*", *let's have 14 votes*. Where are we with our Town Hall it is now falling down and now it is an emergency? We have been repairing this Town Hall for 20 something years, and what is the excuse "*Well let's just calm down and slow down*" and *be deliberate and let's not take \$400,000 in this account and put it over here and we can maybe start, get some seed money to start bringing in a Town Hall and maybe can use this*". We have an economy that is in bad shape, maybe we can get some people that will work here, that will help us with the Town Hall but why can't we just transfer money A to B and start moving a little bit. Let's start being big people here and do like the big boys do in Southbury, Southington, and Norwalk, and Stamford, start growing this town a little bit.

**Mr. Primini:** If this money is put aside in the fund could it be a capital improvement fund or does it have to be for that specific purpose if it is not used, does it have to be used within this physical year.

**Mr. Nardelli:** The terminology you used on the fund again was again?

**Ms. Rosa:** To put into a capitol improvement account for work on Heminway and the Town Hall.

**Mr. Nardelli:** You would designate that in next year's budget particular item, and then you would transfer that money out to this particular fund. Once that money is in that fund then you can spend it for that particular purpose. But you did have to set that up as a one line item in next year's budget then that process take the money out of the general fund and put it into this capitol improvement.

**Mr. Primini:** What about this physical year right now.

**Mr. Nardelli:** It would be for next physical year

**Mr. Primini:** And it would be specific, when you say capitol improvement, it is specified for those two items. What if it's not used in this coming physical year, does it go back to the general fund?

**Mr. Nardelli:** It's set up as a capitol fund that money would still be able to stay there, that would not expire, and if you leave it in the general fund it would expire. If you move it out of the general fund to this capitol fund then the money will be able to stay there roll forward and not used.

**Mr. Primini:** The concern I have is that we talked about having a public meeting on Heminway Park School, so I do not know if it official if that is what is going to be done with this but if nothing is done the money will go back to the general fund.

**Mr. Nardelli:** No, it stays in the capitol fund

**Mr. Rinaldi:** With all due respect to Tom, first he said all the councils were failures and now you say let's step up and big men. I never considered myself a little guy; I just thought I throw that out there. Again back to the fact it's up to the public and taxpayers. So it 's not that the council's have taken it slow, council's has put out plenty of plans and plenty of proposals, and I think we are going to have to stay on top of this issue. But I do not think taking any money out of the general fund is going to do the job.

**Mr. Winn:** It is pretty sad, blaming the town people for what is happening to this town in the last 20 years.

Aye: 4 Nay: 3

MOTION FAILED

**Motion Three:**

**(Ms. Rosa sec. Ms. Adams) I move to accept the School General Fund budget with a \$450,000.00 reduction of the budget as recommended by the Watertown Board of Education.**

**Ms. Adams:** You said it is recommended by the Watertown Board of Education, I have heard nothing about that. Do we have Ms. Baldwin here and just to elaborate. I do not know if you were here two weeks but I know Tom was here and one thing we asked for is to go back to see if anything that you could possibly come back as we closer to the end of the physical year, that you take a look at your budget numbers seems to get a little firmer, if there was anything for cuts and has the board of Ed done that.

**Ms. Baldwin:** The Board of Ed met as a subcommittee last Wednesday evening and we reviewed our concessions agreement that we reached with the Watertown Education Association and also a concessions agreement that we reached with our educational secretaries group. Those two concessions equal about \$194,000.00, when you take a corresponding transportation reduction for one instruction day which would be a furlough day that is another \$5,000.00. Certainly the board could reduce its budget by approximately \$200,000.00, the furlough days for the Watertown Education Association, the furlough days for the secretaries and then the corresponding transportation. What we looked at in subcommittee was should the council decide to move in a direction of a mil rate increase of perhaps a 1.25 something between the 1.56 where we currently are and the 1.0 that was discussed around April 12<sup>th</sup>. We looked at what that reduction would be and would be about \$450,000.00 reduction. That is painful for us; anything beyond the concessions agreement is painful. As you know we have reduced this budget by 1,033,758 dollars, our local union dues have worked with us to sacrifice for the furlough days. The administrators are taking furlough days, the teachers and the secretaries. Anything beyond that to reach 450 does require position reduction. That would not be our recommendation, but we understand that this council maybe looking to move in direction below 1.5 and perhaps greater than 1.0.

**Mr. Rinaldi:** What was the cut, what did you finally arrive at for...

**Ms. Baldwin:** If we have to we will cut further positions.

**Mr. Rinaldi:** What I mean as of right now without cutting positions

**Ms. Baldwin:** About \$200,000 between \$185,000.00 and the teacher furlough days, \$9,000.00 in secretary furlough days and a corresponding transportation reduction of about \$5,500.00;

**Mr. Rinaldi:** The motion states to cut what?

**Ms. Adams:** 450

**Mr. Primini:** The \$450,000 dollars there would be no staff reduction.

**Ms. Baldwin:** There would be staff reduction.

**Mr. Primini:** How much staff reduction would be in the 450?

**Ms. Baldwin:** To go from the furlough day that I described which is roughly \$200,000 we are looking at another \$250,000 reduction. We would look at Era funding which is \$136 and again the board and subcommittee has discussed this on two separate occasions, we have not come to an agreement on that but if that were the case that would leave approximately another \$100,000.00 that would need to be reduced and so that is approximately 3 positions would need to be reduced to get to the 450.

**Mr. Primini:** What would those positions be?

**Ms. Baldwin:** We would be looking at probably Family Consumer Science and Technology Education at the high school. We would look at potentially World Language grade eight here. We would look again at our remedial staffing at the elementary level. That is three positions and so all of this we still need to evaluate and I would make final recommendations to the board, but this is what the board has heard now for the 2 weeks in terms of positions that may be reduced may be reduced if we forced to do that.

**Mr. Rinaldi:** As we all know here our job is to cut the bottom line. We do not get involved in individual line items. I think that when we hit the point that we are starting to lose staff in important areas I think we should seriously reconsider and accept what the board been able to do so far.

**Ms. Duplissie:** I was under the impression that \$450,000 was not going to be a reduction in staff, that was my impression and I was wrong obviously.

**Mr. Baldwin:** Yes, it will likely be, I have not formerly presented this because we are not sure what we to make for a budget figures. But it likely that at least 3 additional staff in addition to the staff we have already reduced to come in at 3.9.

**Ms. Adams:** So you have approximately \$200,000 in concessions from the unions. I have no issue in reducing the budget by the \$200,000 the board did what we asked them to do they went back and they talked to their employees they came back with \$200,000; I have no issue cutting their budget by \$200,000. I am not comfortable going the 450 at this point in time. Cut the 200 like they came back with and again this is just for public hearing but to listen to the public hearing and put out your budget as presented. I just think the people need to have their say and we do not have that yet.

**Aye: 5 Ney: 2**

**Motion Four:**

**(Ms. Rosa sec. Ms. Adams) I further move that the budgets to be sent to Budget Public Hearing as follows:**

<b>A.</b>	<b>Town General Fund</b>	<b>\$25,452,103</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>School General Fund</b>	<b><u>\$36,120,986</u></b>
	<b>General Fund Total</b>	<b>\$61,573,089</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>Town Road Aid</b>	<b>\$178,800</b>
<b>D.</b>	<b>Water Operations</b>	<b>1,356,786</b>
<b>E.</b>	<b>Water Capital</b>	<b>118,678</b>
<b>F.</b>	<b>Water Extension</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>G.</b>	<b>Sewer Operation</b>	<b>\$2,031,995</b>
<b>H.</b>	<b>Sewer Extension</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>I.</b>	<b>Sewer Capital</b>	<b>160,500</b>
<b>J.</b>	<b>Water and Sewer Debt</b>	<b>160,750</b>
<b>K.</b>	<b>Crest brook Golf Operations</b>	<b>726,266</b>
<b>L.</b>	<b>Local Capitol Improvement</b>	<b>155,013</b>
<b>M.</b>	<b>Debt Service Fund</b>	<b>375,000</b>

**Mr. Rinaldi:** The water and sewer extension funds they have been fighting for 18 years to get those extension counts down to zero and finally where they belong.

**Aye: 5 Nay: 2**

5. Consider Date, Time and Place for Budget Public Hearing.

**Motion Five:**

**(Ms. Rosa sec. Ms. Duplissie) I move that the Watertown Town Council hold a Budget Public Hearing to be held on Tuesday, May 18, 2010, 7:00 p.m. at Swift Middle School Auditorium, 250 Colonial Street, Oakville, Connecticut to hear comments on the proposed fiscal Year 2010-2011 budgets as approved at this meeting.**

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

6. **Adjournment**

**Motion: (Mr. Rosa, sec. Mr. Winn) to Adjourn the Special Meeting at 6:30.**

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

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Respectfully submitted,

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Raymond F. Primini, Chairman  
Watertown Town Council

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Susan King, Clerk