

Minutes

WATERTOWN TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

SWIFT MIDDLE SCHOOL
TUESDAY, May 18, 2010, 8:50 P.M.
Immediately following Budget Public Hearing

PRESENT: Elaine Adams
Richard DiFederico
Katherine Duplissie
Richard Fusco
Raymond Primini, Chairman
Paul Rinaldi
Mary Ann Rosa, Vice Chairman
Thomas Winn

ABSENT: Linda Masayda

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 8:50PM.

2. **Consider Budgets for Fiscal Year 2010-2011**

(Winn sec. Fusco) I make a motion to approve the following budgets to be sent to referendum.

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

Discussion:

Ms. Adams: I want clarification on the motion, what the town put out was exactly what passed in last Monday's Special Town Council Meeting, that includes the \$450,000 cut to education and the other part of it would be on the town budget is as the Manager presented plus \$30,000 for Crestbrook. I would ask that the council consider if my numbers are corrected restoring to education \$197,461 to bring the education budget back up to what the board recommended to the council minus the amount that you have gotten in concessions and additional cuts. I have always believed that the people of Watertown have the right to decide what they are going to fund their education and their town services. What has happened to the education system has taken its toll phenomenally; we got kids that are not fully prepared to compete in the world outside Watertown. I strongly urge and I will make in a form, that Town Council add \$197,461 back to the Board of Ed side of the budget and let the people decide just what they would like to do.

Ms. Rosa: I agree with Elaine and support he motion and intended to make the motion myself. (inaudible)

Mr. Winn: (inaudible) Last 20 twenty years this town has done nothing but is concerned about retail in this town. (inaudible) I received in the last 2 or 3 weeks two e-mails from parents (inaudible). Look at these numbers here, the place is pretty much empty. This is atmosphere we have in this town, this needs to improve before this town is going to go any where for our school system. (inaudible) Our tax base there were a lot of people when we have votes on whether were going to move this town forward or not that do not show up, we have to show for every single vote. This town needs real development and

this town needs guidance, and was not getting any of that. Teacher unions I do know that we have a contract with these teachers they didn't step up to the plate as far as I am concerned but we have two more years of contracts. (inaudible) To bring this town back to where it belongs we need your help, we need to change this charter and determine whether this government continues to do what it suppose to do. We need economic development; we need retail development that will bring this town to where it belongs. (inaudible) We need to stay where the budget is, to decide where we are going with it, whether we will vote for the original suggestions of Town Council and when you start voting people, you need to help us. We cannot do it on our own; you cannot come here once a year to talk about the school budget when you do not show up for other votes. I am just asking you need to get out and vote every single time.

Mr. Duplissie: I too agree with Elaine and we should go with the original budget. I am strong supporter of World Language. I have a personal experience with World Language and a firm believer to have a second language (inaudible) however we are morally obligated to support our children. (inaudible) Let the people decide what they want to do.

Mr. Rinaldi: At the last council meeting I listened to all the reasons why I think we should not cut more \$252,000 for the budget and not going through it again tonight. We can't sit here as town people and taxpayers say test scores are low, we need to bring up our test scores and turn around cut the education budget it does not make any sense to me. I think our job here is to provide the opportunities to these children and whatever path these choose to take is up to them. Our job is to provide the opportunity and we have to draw the bottom line somewhere.

Mr. Fusco: I feel bad, when you say that I am cutting World Language, I'm not. It is the Board of Education that in charge of it. I don't think we do line items and give a certain amount of money they do the cutting. The World Language is going to go that is something that they would be thinking about not us.

Mr. DiFederico: The education did get a lot in Joe Pawlak's year and our scores still have not improved. So there is something, give me the reason why is it still low. This goes back to Joe Pawlak when he was the Chairman.

Mr. Rinaldi: I was on that council and yes we pretty much gave the board what they asked for. Ever since 1991 the Board of Education has been devastated with cuts every year. They lost 21 teachers back in 1991 and we have to recover from making that. A lot of people in this town and this goes for anyone, one of the important factors that brings the test scores up, is that parents have to work with their kids. You cannot send your kids off to school it is the teacher's job to nurse them, to teach them, to do the whole nine yards, parents have to work with their children. Teachers do what they can and I know they put in long hours. We have to take some of that into consideration as parents and get involved with kids and what they are doing and just do not send them off.

Mr. DiFederico: (inaudible) I understand there is a lot more behind that, this is my opinion why it is the parents fault too and I do not disagree with you there. But the thing is year after year you gave them money you did not see an improvement that is my question and I have asked that. I saw that when I watched the last meeting I was at that when Joe Pawlak got up and I need to why. (inaudible) We are talking about World Language and I cannot see why there has not been any improvement. (inaudible) You cannot blame it all on the parents and I cannot blame it all on the teachers either. I have talked to teachers somebody talked about the program, well maybe the program is not working then change it, or is it a teacher or is it a counselor there has to be something there why we do not see any improvement and we are still at the bottom of the list. There has to be a reason.

Ms. Rosa: I spend more hours than I can count looking at Board of Ed budgets over 15 or 16 year time frame and I will tell you what the problem is. Not enough money and that is what it always been. It is not because people do not care, it is because we cannot afford it. It is not because we do not want the best system, the great system we had years ago, that the town did not give to the program and all of its special programs that we had over the years that we have lost. We all want that back and we want the test scores we use to have, we just cannot afford to pay for them. That is not people saying they don't care about education, it is not seniors who do not want to pay, it is a reality of life that the economy is changed drastically. Our town has not kept up with any of it. Our town has not kept up with bringing an income into the town to have the school system we want to have. So we tried to do all the things we need to do in our town, from the town side with the roads and the buildings to the school side. We cannot get mad at each other because one person supports one thing and someone supports something else. We have to work together and those of you that came tonight Mr. Winn is right we cannot just come one night you have to come all the time and support us. I do not know how this vote is going to go but if we were to revise the figure to the 3.1 number tonight and it goes out to referendum, then let's see if the people in town will support that budget and if they do not then the reality is we have to look at additional cuts. It is a reality that you look at in your home when you do not have an additional income, when you get a raise and why some others have not for 3 or 4 years. Some of us resent town employees getting raises; I would stand up and say yes, I do. I mean that just against a teacher or certified staff member, people on the town side the budget getting raises also. This is an economy where the average person is not getting any raises never mind (inaudible). So it is very difficult for some people to support a tax increase and I understand that but also understand how desperate we need an education and that is why I support the motion.

Mr. Winn: (inaudible) 80% of the number of students we lost in the last 10 years was between K and 6th grade which means what? Which means people moving out; I am sure it is from the education part of it, (inaudible) so keep that in mind. Keep the pros and cons in scale. (inaudible) this budget goes down do not think for a second that this budget is going to be cut by \$197,000 it is going to be cut a lot more than that because if the

town people vote no you think they vote for cuts just an additional \$197,000 I do not think so. (Inaudible) People are going to ask what that is going to save them. I cannot support this amendment. (inaudible)

Ms. Duplissie: I think one of the reasons why the test scores are not higher is because they have 7 study halls and there is nothing being taught. (inaudible) As far as the not supporting the \$197,000 we were elected to try and to do the right thing for the town, now we have to let the town do the right thing, if they want this, the parents, the PTO's and everyone else and talk to people and say we support. If they do not want to do that then the budget will go down and it is not up to us it is up to them.

Mr. Primini: I would like to welcome back here Mr. Fusco our budget chairman who has been out on medical leave. (inaudible) The Board of Ed and the town side to work together on a monthly basis and people's tempers flair in past years and this is the easiest years going back and forth with this and understanding each others budgets (inaudible). When we were looked at this budget the last couple of weeks and we were looking at it over and over again and one of the things was what do we have to do to bring it down to zero. (inaudible) We looked at a mil, half mil, we planned to look at ¼ mil and right then it comes down to 1.29 mils if it goes back up \$197, 000 it going to be 1.4. When we originally had the 1.55 we knew in good times a budget like that wouldn't pass. One of the things we have to change is the mentality that (inaudible). The .33 of the mil is for the high school, I believe it was 7 million dollars that is the last bond right now for the schools and if you look at the rest 1.29 we are just pretty much under the mil that is there. We really need the help from everybody. I talked to members of the Board of Ed we typically get 25% voter turnout which I think is absurd we should have at least 75% turnout. This budget effects more than any other vote to our taxpayers. The interesting thing is that we start getting up to 31 to 32% that is when the vote starts passing and one thing I pointed out over the past year I was astounded (inaudible) that the number of no votes is down. The town side and the Board of Ed side you look at these figures, years ago we gave up looking at whatever was \$100,000, \$200,000 we are actually down to dollars and in the past year we have taken out items cell phones which were \$40.00 dollars a month. We have town vehicles down with bald tires and this is absurd. This is how bad it is on been on both sides of the fence, the town side is looking really thin right now and we are going pretty much look at (inaudible) increase on the town. The biggest problem we have is our revenues are just not coming in and know the Board of Ed gave us in two years cost sharing (inaudible) it paid our incomes and it is going to be disappearing. The town side there has not been a lot of construction going on. Zoning permits are down, are short term investments we are only getting a ½ percent. We really have to start finding new ways of doing business. We can talk to our bordering towns and there are some things we can do with shared services. (inaudible) We need to put that money back in there and the budget goes down it going to be devastating right after the budget passes. One thing we took seriously we looked at all different numbers, this is the proposal we will be given and people have come together on.

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Aye: Primini, Winn, Fusco, DiFederico
Nay: Adams, Rinaldi, Duplissie, Rosa

MOTION FAILED

(Ms. Adams, sec. Mr. Rinaldi) Motion: To amend the motion to add back to the Board of Educations Budget \$197,461.

Aye: Adams, Rinaldi, Duplissie, Rosa
Nay: Primini, Winn, Fusco, DiFederico

MOTION FAILED

(Ms. Rosa, sec. Ms. Duplissie) Motion revised Town General Fund \$25,452,103 School General Fund \$36,182,028 for a total General fund \$61,634,131.

Ms. Adams: What this does is the town managers recommend, plus the Crestbrook money and restores to the Board of Ed the amount of money that they were able to come up with concessions plus \$61 thousand.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Consider setting Date for Machine Vote on fiscal Year 2010-2011 Budgets.

A referendum of electors and citizens qualified to vote in Town Meeting of the Town of Watertown will be held on Tuesday, June 8, 2010, between the hours of 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. to vote for the approval or disapproval of Fiscal Year 2010-2011 Budgets.

Voting will be at the following polling places:

Voting District 68-01 - Heminway Park School, Heminway Park Road, Watertown, CT

Voting District 68-02 – Judson School, Hamilton Lane, Watertown, CT

Voting Districts 68-03 - Swift Middle School, 250 Colonial Street, Oakville, CT

The temporary voting location for the Voting District 68-04 Polk School shall be the Heminway Park School, Heminway Park Road , Watertown, CT

Persons qualified to vote in Town Meeting who are not electors shall vote at the Office of the Registrar, 51 Depot Street, Depot Square Mall, Suite 113, Watertown, Connecticut.

Absentee ballots may be obtained at the Town Clerk's Office.

(Mr. Winn sec, Mr. Fusco) I move to approve the Referendum Notice for the

machine vote on the 2010-2011 Budgets as follows:

MOTION PASS UNANIMOUSLY

4. **Consider Setting Ballot for Fiscal Year 2010-2011 Budgets.**
1. SHALL THE FISCAL YEAR 2010/2011 SCHOOL GENERAL FUND BUDGET BE APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$ 36,182,028
 2. SHALL THE FISCAL YEAR 2010/2011 TOWN GENERAL BUDGET BE APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$ 25,452,103 AND SHALL THE FOLLOWING FISCAL YEAR 2010/2011 BUDGETS BE APPROVED IN THE AMOUNTS OF:

A. TOWN ROAD AID	\$178,800
B. WATER OPERATIONS	1,356,786
C. WATER CAPITAL	118,678
D. WATER EXTENSION	-0-
E. SEWER OPERATIONS	2,031,995
F. SEWER EXTENSION	-0-
G. SEWER CAPITAL	160,500
H. WATER AND SEWER DEBT	160,750
I. CRESTBROOK GOLF OPERATIONS	726,266
J. LOCAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT	155,013
K. DEBT SERVICE FUND	375,000

Voters approving each question will vote “Yes” and those opposing each question will vote “No.”

(Mr. Winn, sec. Mr. DiFederico) I move that the budget question be placed on the voting machines as follows:

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

5. Consider Setting Budget Town Meeting Date, time and Place for Fiscal year 2010-2011 Budgets.

(Mr. Winn, sec. Mr. Fusco) I move that the Town Council shall hold a Budget Town Meeting at the Town Hall Annex, 424 Main Street, Watertown at 7:30 p.m. on June 1, 2010 a consider the Fiscal year 2010-2011 Budgets.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

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**6. Adjournment
(Mr. Rinaldi, sec. Mr. Winn) To Adjourn the Special Meeting at 9:50.**

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Raymond F. Primini, Chairman
Watertown Town Council

Approved: _____
Susan King, Clerk