

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT

Special Town Council Meeting

APRIL 13, 2011

FY 2011 – 2012 BUDGET WORKSHOP

RECORD OF VOTES AND MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

Councilors Vincent Cervoni, Nick Economopoulos, Jerry Farrell, Jr., Craig C. Fishbein, John LeTourneau, Chairman Robert F. Parisi, Rosemary Rascati, John J. Sullivan and Vincent F. Testa, Jr. Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr., Town Attorney Janis Small and Comptroller James Bowes were also in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 P.M.

There was a Moment of Silence, and the Pledge to the Flag was said.

3. BUDGET WORKSHOP

Board of Education,

In Attendance:

Dr. Salvatore Menzo, Superintendent of School;

Ellen Cohn, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum;

Jan Guarino, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel;

Linda Winters, Business Manager;

Michael Votto, Secretary, Board of Education

The Council received a paper copy (part of the record of the meeting) of the slides in the presentation by Dr. Menzo.

Dr. Menzo presented a PowerPoint slide-show to demonstrate the Board of Education budget that included Recognizing the Past, Accounting for the Present and Planning for the Future. Dr. Menzo recounted the budget outcomes for 2010-11 and reviewed the steps and the savings. He recounted the School System Strategic Plan Mission Statement and the Vision Statement. He recounted the makeup of the Base Budget, listing what makes it up. He discussed the current and anticipated increases that would allow the school system to sustain their services. Sustained Services equal the base budget plus the anticipated increases for the same services the following year. He explained the *Federal Education Job Fund Program*, its application process and its specific use to maintain or increase staff. He said that this award is made directly to the school district. He defined the 'Unencumbered Fund Balance' as monies remaining at the end of the school years in the board of Education budget that are used for one-time expenditures which are predominately capital items. He spoke about the CRRA Funds, which are funds provided to the district for one-time capital expenditures. He stated the potential funds to be \$90,133,425. He reviewed the savings of the Board of Education in heating, lighting and other line-by-line cuts that have been made. He spoke about staff reductions and reorganizations implemented. He reported on population trends and loss of student impact going forward. At the time of this report of April 2011, he reported that the remainder to be reduced is \$381,159, which in the future be different due to the budget of the State of Connecticut. He summarized noting the much larger shortfall in Fiscal Year 2012-2013 of almost \$7 million if services are to be maintained.

The Council queried subjects such as enrollment, future enrollment trends, ration of class size

and teachers, stated guidelines for enrollment; teacher reductions in elementary (driven by enrollment) and middle schools; teacher retirements as they relate to the reductions; language arts and requirements; one-time expenditures, including Lyman Hall bleachers, Sheehan swimming pool, exhaust fans, Lyman Hall tuner door, intercom, telephone system, the K-2 literacy curriculum to name some of them; Grade 6 full school year of language; system looking at Spanish, French, Italian and Chinese; technology; federal funds; initial outreach to discuss wage freeze has been made; education and jobs in Connecticut related to the training students receive for the rapidly advancing world, especially in relation to technology; contingency, structure of schools with respect to number of administrators and shifting duties; department chair stipends; facilities maintenance; planetarium; interaction between the town recreation department and the Board of Education; in-house administrator teacher training; open choice; and the Superintendent of Building and Grounds hiring process and salary.

Councilor Economopoulos announced that he has checked with the Ethics Committee and with the Town Attorney and that he may comment and vote on the Board of Education budget. He commented on the idea of interchanging, seasonally, the Public Works Department with the Facilities Department of the Board of Education. He also discussed whether overtime was being abused. Councilor Economopoulos stated that he will be pursuing the restoration of \$400,000 to the Board of Education budget.

Mayor Dickinson expressed that the end of the story is still to be written.

Dr. Menzo spoke about the refinement of the budget over the part two years and said that the difficulty will be to sustain services in the future.

Chairman Parisi complimented the panel on the fine presentation and in the way the workshop was conducted. This portion of the meeting ended at 8:24 P.M.

Cafeteria

In Attendance:

Sharlene Wong, Food Service Director

Ms. Wong reported her budget has no true revenue increases and uses no town funding that the lunch program uses no tax dollars, that it is not in the Board of Education budget, that it is not subsidized but that it is run like a business. She said that because of decreasing revenues that prices of lunches and milk will be increasing. She reported an increase in the number of students who need food subsidies as compared to the past few years. Ms. Wong stated that she is faced with product cost increases and that purchasing is assisting her in getting good prices.

She told of starting a vegetable gardening project in the schools with K-2 planting seeds and 2-6 taking care of the seedlings. She hopes for donations to implement the program with each school's budget set at \$5,000.

She responded to a question with regard to the cafeteria contingency fund stating that it has taken 17 years to build to a level of \$480,640. Ms. Wong stated that her budget will lose \$32,000 from the federal government. She recounted that free lunch program is growing to 683 students with 149 getting reduced cost lunches and 46 receiving free milk for a total of 729 students being subsidized. She stated that she will look into Taco Tuesday and Thursday for Councilor Sullivan's child. To assist children who frequently do not have money for lunch, there exists a Principal's Fund.

She said that the breakfast program was not successful as students could not get to school to take advantage of it. There were about 18 students when the Mayor came to read during the breakfast time.

Chairman Parisi shared that Ms. Wong is a ray of sunshine.

MOTION TO APPROVE ADJOURNMENT

MADE BY: Farrell

SECONDED BY: Sullivan

VOTE:

Cervoni - yes Economopoulos - yes Farrell - yes Fishbein - yes

LeTourneau - yes Rascati - yes Sullivan - yes Testa - yes

Chairman Parisi - yes

9 Aye; 0 Nay

MOTION PASSED

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra R. Weekes
Town Council Secretary
Meeting digitally recorded

Robert F. Parisi, Chairman

Date

Barbara Thompson, Town Clerk

Date