

ADJOURNED BUDGET MEETING MAY 15, 2007

An adjourned meeting of the Wethersfield Town Council was held on Tuesday May 15, 2007 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Manager's Conference Room.

Present: Councilor Cascio, Drake, Forrest, Kirsche, Kotkin, Montinieri, Walsh, Deputy Mayor Fortunato and Chairperson Adil.

Also present: Town Manager Bonine Therrien; Assistant to the Manager, RaeAnn Palmer; Finance Director Lisa Hancock; and Town Clerk Dolores Sassano.

The following motions were adopted to set the 2007-2008 Budget for the Town of Wethersfield:

Deputy Mayor Fortunato moved **"THAT THE TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR LIBRARY PURPOSES BE SET AT \$1,601,517 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2007"** seconded by Councilor Cascio.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-1-0; with Councilor Drake voting NAY.

There was no additional discussion on this motion.

Councilor Cascio wanted clarification on the reduction of the Board of Education budget by only \$50,000. He had reviewed previous notes and, in 1992, there were severe cuts statewide as well as higher insurance rates and he agrees that what we are experiencing with higher health claims may be cyclical. Councilor Cascio wanted to be sure he was clear on documenting the higher than normal health claims incurred by the Board of Education as the reason there were no additional cuts to the Board of Education budget. Just as the Library realizes their budget was cut this year because some of the space will be used by the Town staff during renovations, Councilor Cascio wants the Board of Education to realize the extra funds left in their budget are for the unanticipated payments in the health account. If additional health claim payments are not required, Councilor Cascio expects any unused monies will be returned to the Town. The money is not intended to be used for any other ordinary expenses in running the school system.

Chairperson Adil stated that he expected that the estimated amount for the health deficit to be very accurate and while he would like to see it come back, he is not anticipating it. The Town Council has the responsibility for the entire community.

Councilor Kirsche stated he agrees with Councilor Cascio and knows the \$334,000 was left in the Board of Education budget due to the unexpected number of high health claims and thinks the Board should realize it is not for the basic operating fund.

Councilor Kotkin said he spoke with Chris Monroe, the Agent of Record and felt that leaving the money in the Board of Education's account was not being overly cautious. It was higher in March and April and when you are self insured you do expect that there are savings but then, when something happens, you do need to be prepared for it. Councilor Kotkin stated he thought it was a responsible number.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato stated that timing plays into it also. If it had happened earlier, they would have had time to track it but it just happened in March and April so, it is more of an anomaly. May insurance figures would not be ready until June which is, too late for the budget.

Councilor Drake wanted to know how it would automatically come back to the Council. Chairperson Adil reminded him of the text books where they received monies back from the Board of Education and the Town Council then applied it, in part, to text books.

Councilor Cascio was hopeful their message would be heard knowing there is a seasoned Board and Council and that

the communications have been ongoing. Language of the operating fund is specific and the approximately \$300,000 was to pay for the anomaly which has occurred and not for books, pencils, school staff etc.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato stated that as a Past President of the Board of Education, they have to operate within the approved budget. The Board of Education has been forthright and the record will duly note their concerns. She also noted the Town Council was concerned with the well being of the people involved.

Councilor Forrest said it was duly noted, the Board of Education budget is set and they are hopeful to have a surplus. He would like to see the previous level of progress achieved continue and urged Council to go forward with the appropriate level to maintain the smaller class sizes, text books etc for the development of the young children.

Councilor Walsh moved **"THAT THE TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR SCHOOL PURPOSES BE SET AT \$44,799,332 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2007"** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-1-0; Councilor Drake voting NAY.

There was no additional discussion on this motion.

Councilor Montinieri moved **"THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL ADOPT THE TOWN BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER ON MARCH 31, 2007 AND AS AMENDED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL, IN THE SUM OF \$78,798,250 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2007"** seconded by Deputy Mayor Fortunato.

Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

There was no discussion on this motion.

Councilor Forrest moved **"THAT THE TOTAL AMOUNT TO BE RAISED BY TAXES FOR THE TOWN, LIBRARY, AND SCHOOL PURPOSES COMBINED BE SET AT \$65,589,866 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2007"** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

There was no discussion on this motion.

Councilor Kotkin moved **"THAT THE TAX RATE ON ALL REAL AND PERSONAL TAXABLE PROPERTY BE SET AT 32.94 MILLS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2007"** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

There was no discussion on this motion.

Chairperson Adil found the level of cooperation of the entire Council to be extraordinary and stated he appreciated their efforts. He also hoped the Town receives close to what is expected from the State.

ADJOURNMENT

AT 6:05 p.m., Councilor Kirsch moved, **"TO ADJOURN THE MEETING"** seconded by Councilor Cascio.

Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores Sassano

Town Clerk

Approved by vote of Council on June 18, 2007