

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
MAY 7, 2012**

The Annual Budget Meeting of the Town of Fairfield took place on Monday, May 7, 2012, at Fairfield Warde High School, Melville Avenue, Fairfield, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 8:20 P.M. by Moderator Jeffrey Steele.

PRESENT: 49 ABSENT: 1 VACANCY: 0

PRESENT: Becker, Herley, Meyer, Richmond, Sundman, P. Ambrose, Mitola, Steele, Stewart, Varian, Bateson, Conley, Ference, Mackenzie, McCullough, Dean, DeMartino, Hug, Mezoff, Palmer, M. Ambrose, Garskof, McAleese, Smey, Stamler, Brogan, Campbell, Gottlieb, Marmion, Wolk, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Newman, Patten, Schwartz, Braun, Kery, Marks, McCarthy, Stopa, Domeika, Felner, Jacob, Mirabile, Pontrelli, Hannum, Lee, Ryan, Way

ABSENT: Weber

ITEM NO. 1 ON CALL: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MOMENT OF SILENCE

The Moderator led the Body in the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

MOTION: David Becker, District 1, moved to take Item #4 out of order, duly seconded and carried with 47 in favor, 2 opposed (Stewart, Dean).

ITEM NO. 4 ON CALL: TO CONSIDER AND ACT UPON A MOTION TO SUSPEND RULE 32 OF THE RULES TO REGULATE THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD IN ORDER THAT THE FORTHCOMING REDISTRICTING ORDINANCE NOT BE REQUIRED TO: 1) BE INITIALLY REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION AND ADMINISTRATION AND 2) BE FORMALLY LISTED ON THE WARNING FOR TWO MEETINGS AND DISCUSSED BY APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES PRIOR TO EACH MEETING. THE PURPOSE OF SUCH ACTION IS TO ALLOW FOR THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE TO BE CONSIDERED BY STANDING COMMITTEES ON MAY 14 AND 16 AND BROUGHT TO THE FULL RTM FOR A VOTE ON MAY 21

The Moderator moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

MOTION: Ann Stamler, District 5, moved to amend the resolution in order to add the year, 2012, to the dates May 14, May 16 and May 21, duly seconded and carried unanimously.

VOTE: The motion to suspend the rules in order to enact the redistricting ordinance during the May 21, 2012 RTM meeting, as amended, was approved unanimously.

ITEM NO. 2 ON CALL: TO CONSIDER AND ACT UPON PROPOSED APPROPRIATIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$273,382,694 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR OF JULY 1, 2012 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2013, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE AND AMENDED BY THE RTM ON APRIL 30, 2012, FOR ANY LAWFUL PURPOSE.

**REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING
MAY 7, 2012**

2

The Moderator moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

MOTION: Michael Herley, District 1, moved the question, duly seconded and carried with 42 in favor, 7 opposed (Becker, Mackenzie, Dean, Marmion, Hochberg, Mirabile, Ryan).

VOTE: The 2012-2013 budget failed with 20 in favor, 29 opposed.

IN FAVOR: Mitola, Dean, M. Ambrose, Garskof, McAleese, Smey, Stamler, Brogan, Campbell, Gottlieb, Marmion, Wolk, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Newman, Patten, Schwartz, Marks, Hannum, Lee

OPPOSED: Becker, Herley, Meyer, Richmond, Sundman, P. Ambrose, Steele, Stewart, Varian, Bateson, Conley, Ference, Mackenzie, McCullough, DeMartino, Hug, Mezzoff, Palmer, Braun, Kery, McCarthy, Stopa, Domeika, Felner, Jacob, Mirabile, Pontrelli, Ryan, Way

At 9:40 P.M., the Moderator called for a recess. The meeting resumed at 10:10 P.M.

MOTION: Ed Bateson, District 3, moved to reconsider item #2, duly seconded and carried with 45 in favor, 4 opposed (Meyer, Sundman, Richmond, McCullough).

Peter Ambrose, District 2, asked how many teacher retirements are built into the budget. He asked if Dr. Title had the statistics Selectman Walsh requested at the previous meeting.

Superintendent of Schools David Title said that 12 teacher retirements are taken into account in the education budget. He continued that there are 12 known retirements this year. Last year 17 teachers retired, with 3 more occurring before the beginning of the school year in September, but after the Board of Ed made budget adjustments which happens by June.

MOTION: David Becker, District 1, moved to reduce line item 8010, Board of Education, by \$250,000, duly seconded.

Sheila Marmion, District 6, asked where the money would come from.

Dr. Title explained that the Board of Education makes the ultimate decision, but he would recommend the funding come from additional teacher retirements and pay-for-play sports programs. He said they would have to slice a small amount from many different accounts, but he would urge the maintenance account be left whole.

Board of Education Chairman Pam Iacono said although she could not speak on behalf of the entire board, she would take into consideration the recommendations from the administration. She would consider pay-to-play sports, but she would lean away from taking additional teacher retirements into account.

Hal Schwartz, District 7, said that he cannot support this amendment. The Board of Selectmen had reduced the BOE's request and the Board of Finance saw fit to put the money back in. He urged the Body vote against this cut.

Carolyn Richmond, District 1, said that there are ways to reduce the BOE's request without impacting the quality of education to children. She urged support of the motion.

Ann Stamler, District 5, said that she respects the recommendation of the Superintendent and she has listened to constituents. She supports the education budget, and she cannot support this motion.

**REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING
MAY 7, 2012**

3

Josh Garskof, District 5, said that good schools drive property values. Every cut made from the education program is something we cannot put back next year. He asked the Body vote down this motion.

Heather Dean, District 4, said that families rely on the schools to help them through hard times. A pay-to-play program would mean more families unable to participate in the sports programs.

Amy Mezoff, District 4, said that the number of kids qualifying for the free or reduced lunch has increased, meaning families are falling on harder times. Our taxes need to go down, and it is not unreasonable to reduce the education request by \$250,000.

MOTION: Ed Bateson, District 3, moved to suspend the rules in order to take up new business after 11:00 P.M., duly seconded.

VOTE: The motion to suspend the rules to convene past 11:30 failed with 17 in favor (Steele, Bateson, Garskof, McAleese, Smey, Stamler, Gottlieb, Marmion, Wolk, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Newman, Patten, Kery, Marks, Stopa, Lee), 33 opposed.

Mr. Bateson said that the proposed education budget can handle a bigger cut. The Board of Finance's job is to fund operations and the question is do we want to pay for it.

Mr. Garskof urged the Body to vote on the education budget tonight so that all the residents present do not have to come back tomorrow.

MOTION: Carolyn Richmond, District 1, moved the question, duly seconded.

VOTE: The motion to move the question was approved with 37 in favor, 12 opposed (Becker, DeMartino, Smey, Stamler, Wolk, Hochberg, Newman, Patten, Schwartz, Kery, Felner, Lee).

VOTE: The motion to reduce the proposed education budget by \$250,000 was approved with 27 in favor, 21 opposed and 1 abstention.

IN FAVOR: Becker, Meyer, Richmond, Sundman, P. Ambrose, Steele, Stewart, Varian, Bateson, Conley, Ference, Mackenzie, McCullough, DeMartino, Hug, Mezoff, Palmer, Braun, McCarthy, Stopa, Domeika, Felner, Jacob, Mirabile, Pontrelli, Ryan, Way

OPPOSED: Mitola, Dean, M. Ambrose, Garskof, McAleese, Smey, Stamler, Brogan, Campbell, Gottlieb, Marmion, Wolk, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Newman, Patten, Schwartz, Kery, Marks, Hannum, Lee

ABSTAINED: Herley

MOTION: Ms. Mezoff moved to adjourn, duly seconded.

VOTE: The motion to adjourn failed with 24 in favor, 25 opposed.

IN FAVOR: Becker, Herley, Meyer, Richmond, Sundman, P. Ambrose, Stewart, Varian, Ference, Mackenzie, McCullough, DeMartino, Hug, Mezoff, Palmer, Braun, Kery, McCarthy, Domeika, Felner, Jacob, Pontrelli, Ryan, Way

OPPOSED: Mitola, Steele, Bateson, Conley, Dean, M. Ambrose, Garskof, McAleese, Smey, Stamler, Brogan, Campbell, Gottlieb, Marmion, Wolk, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Newman, Patten, Schwartz, Marks, Stopa, Mirabile, Hannum, Lee

**REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING
MAY 7, 2012**

4

MOTION: Joe Palmer, District 4, moved to reduce line item 7113, Smith Richardson Golf Course, by \$27,810 for a new mower, duly seconded.

Mr. Palmer explained that he had a conversation with Rec Director Gerry Lombardo who said he was comfortable deferring this item until next year.

John Mitola, District 2, said that this mower is to replace a 1991 mower that continuously breaks down. It impacts costs in time and labor and we should not continue to defer items to next year. The golf course makes money for the town.

Kenneth Lee, District 10, asked what the impact on revenue would be if the mower were not replaced. He asked if extra money is set aside to maintain this equipment.

Rec Director Gerry Lombardo said that we will make it through the season with this mower. There is a capital replacement plan in place that we are trying to follow in order to keep the golf course running. He noted, however, that he would not have asked for the mower if we did not need it.

Ann Stamler, District 5, spoke against the motion. She said she trusts the department heads to request what they need, and this mower is costing us time and labor.

Hal Schwartz, District 7, said he does not support the motion. He asked why we should defer this item until next year. The town gives us a capital replacement plan. He asked what the point is in having such a plan if we do not follow it.

Ed Bateson, District 3, said that Mr. Lombardo said the magic words: We can get by without it. He said we should take him up on it, and he urged everyone to support the motion.

Mike Herley, District 1, spoke in favor of the reduction.

Peter Ambrose, District 2, said that if we do not support the minor cuts sanctioned by department heads, we are going to be here a long time. He urged the Body support this motion.

Joe DeMartino, District 4, said that he is not a golf course maintenance expert, but Mr. Lombardo is. There has to be a top-down approach and we have to let the experts determine where cuts should be made.

MOTION: Ms. Richmond moved the question, duly seconded.

VOTE: The motion to move the question was approved with 43 in favor, 6 opposed (Becker, Herley, Mezoff, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Schwartz).

VOTE: The motion to reduce the Smith Richardson golf course budget by \$27,810 was approved with 35 in favor, 14 opposed.

IN FAVOR: Becker, Herley, Meyer, Richmond, Sundman, Steele, Varian, Bateson, Conley, Ference, Mackenzie, McCullough, DeMartino, Hug, Mezoff, Palmer, M. Ambrose, McAleese, Smey, Brogan, Gottlieb, Newman, Patten, Braun, Kery, Marks, McCarthy, Stopa, Domeika, Felner, Jacob, Mirabile, Pontrelli, Ryan, Way

OPPOSED: P. Ambrose, Mitola, Stewart, Dean, Garskof, Stamler, Campbell, Marmion, Wolk, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Schwartz, Hannum, Lee

**REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING
MAY 7, 2012**

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Stewart moved to adjourn, duly seconded and carried with 40 in favor, 9 opposed (Conley, Dean, Mezoff, Gall, McAleese, Brogan, Wolk, Patten, Domeika).

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 P.M., until 8:00 P.M. the next evening.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth P. Browne
Town Clerk

Recorded by: Ann Roche