

**MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
PUBLIC HEARING ON RECOMMENDED BUDGET FY 2008/2009
APRIL 2, 2008
WADDELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AUDITORIUM**

PRESENT: Mayor Spadaccini, Deputy Mayor Peak, Secretary Pelletier, Directors Tweedie, Beckman, Zingler (7:08 p.m.), O'Neill, Topping, and Sheridan

ALSO: General Manager Shanley and Town Attorney Naab

Mayor Spadaccini called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Mayor Spadaccini.

General Manager Shanley reviewed the priorities of the Board of Directors and then gave a brief overview of the recommended budget for fiscal year 2008/2009. The recommended budget for Town operations has an increase of 2.84%. The recommended Education budget has an increase of 3.9%. The total expenditure increase for the recommended budget is 5%. Mr. Shanley discussed debt service and explained that the first payments are due on the Illing and Bennet school projects. This is the zenith year for debt service; it will level off through fiscal year 2010/2011. Expenditures for FY 2008/2009 will remain at the current level of service with three exceptions: funding for the East Side Recreation Center, participation in the 20% by 2010 program, and funding of a Small Business Advocate. Mr. Shanley reviewed measures being taken to manage costs which include savings in the areas of health care costs, electricity costs, and salaries.

Barbara Stambo, Local 1303-223 Secretarial Union Co-President, believes administration is misusing taxpayer money and cited legal expenses paid to Shipman and Goodman over a ten month period covering her legal case and other small issues totaling \$75,000. Union issues which lead to arbitration and mediation are costly to the district. She gave other examples of misuse of taxpayer funds which included the high salary paid to an interim Human Resources Director and a bonus to the Superintendent of Schools.

Terry Werkhoven, 88 Santina Drive, is concerned about the full renovation proposed for Highland Park School and the process used in the selection of an architect. He expressed concerns regarding the leaking roof over the gym and urged Board members to be sure to put up a roof that will last. He would like the referendum and bonding deferred. The roof has been leaking for two years and \$100,000 has been set aside to fix the most immediate problems.

Milt Perlman, 3 Sanford Road, said when he moved to Manchester in 1972 the economy was booming. Today there are foreclosures, jobs are going overseas, and factories are closing. People in Town are suffering and people are moving out of Connecticut. Looking at the budget, debt is a problem. He mentioned the CAFR and asked how much time was spent discussing it. Mr. Perlman think more time should be spent discussing the budget book and the CAFR.

Bonnie Schuetz, 12 Conway Road, stated that the Board of Education (BOE) knew about the problems at Highland Park School. Every year the BOE wants a new school and this is getting out of hand. There are people in town that are barely surviving. Ms. Schuetz suggested opening the schools for children's activities. The Freshman wing has a pool and a gym, plus the kids could use the High School grounds. She asked what the Town has planned for the children this summer and predicted there will be problems. Ms. Schuetz would like the Chief of Police to discuss the crime in town at a meeting of the Board of Directors.

Dennis Brenner, 100 Hampton Drive, said he was speaking on behalf of the seniors, middle class, and children of Manchester. He reviewed the costs for heating oil from 2005 through 2008 and noted a 200% increase. He also reviewed budget increases in Manchester from 2005 through 2008. Each year the spending ratio grows. Revaluation should have been done in 2004 but was pushed to 2006. Real estate prices were dramatically high in 2006, now they are dramatically low. He urged the Board of Directors to put a limit on the budget.

Scott Aiken, 92 Laurel Street, thanked the General Manager and Town staff for their hard work on the budget. He reviewed the costs involved with fully funding the East Side Rec Center and figured it will cost him an additional \$3 per year to fully fund it. He thinks the \$3 is worth having a great place for kids. The goals of the Board include making the community safer, promoting positive youth development and expanding and improving youth programming. He asked why not get the kids out of the library and into a space meant for recreation where kids have a chance to be rowdy and do what kids are supposed to do. Mr. Aiken noted that schools are the first thing people look at when moving to a new Town.

Matthew Galligan, 22 Packard Street, is concerned about the effect tax increases will have on his wallet. He understands that funds are needed, but we are in precarious times. He urged the Board to find some savings.

Carol Longo, 878 Center Street, was glad the Board started the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. She stated it is okay to cut spending and sacrifice. We cannot continue to spend money we do not have and we cannot continue to incur debt that will affect our children and grandchildren.

David Carlson, 40 Olcott Street, expressed his support of the Board. He does not envy Board members, but trusts them.

Bill Ogden, 137 Branford Street, expressed concerns over the use of Shipman and Goodman because they are a "union buster" and very expensive. He suggested the Town look for somebody that can do the job for less. Management Partners cost the Town \$200,000 and one of its suggestions was a night shift to take care of the trucks. Mechanics should be fixing the trucks; the Town should not be replacing them. Mr. Ogden appreciates the attempt to hold the budget down and hopes the Board is successful.

John Backer, 196 Vernon Street West, understands that the Board has a difficult job but there is a critical need to restrain spending. The Board is being asked to increase the budget by 5% on top of last year's 5.4%. Seniors in Town are only seeing an increase of 2.3% in Social Security. The Board of Education requested an increase in staff, but the number of students is smaller and projected to drop even further. He doesn't understand why the Board of Education needs a 5% increase with a 7% reduction in students.

Adjournment: 8:27 p.m.

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APPROVE:

ATTEST:

Secretary, Manchester Board of Directors