

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MAY 20, 2008 – 7:00 P.M.
LINCOLN CENTER HEARING ROOM
SECOND MEETING OF THE MONTH

PRESENT: Mayor Spadaccini, Deputy Mayor Peak, Secretary Pelletier, Directors Tweedie, Beckman, Zingler, O'Neill, Topping, and Sheridan

ALSO: General Manager Shanley and Town Attorney Naab

7. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mayor Spadaccini.

8. AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS.

There were no awards or presentations.

9. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING.

- A. **ADOPTED** - Actions, April 1, 2008 – Regular Meeting
- B. **ADOPTED** - Minutes, April 1, 2008 – Regular Meeting
- C. **ADOPTED** - Minutes, April 2, 2008 – Public Hearing on Recommended Budget FY 2008/2009
- D. **ADOPTED** - Actions, April 8, 2008 – Regular Meeting
- E. **ADOPTED** - Minutes, April 8, 2008 – Regular Meeting

Secretary Pelletier moved and Deputy Mayor Peak seconded the motion.

Nine Voted in Favor

- F. **ADOPTED** - Minutes, April 22, 2008 – Policy Briefing Meeting

Secretary Pelletier moved and Deputy Mayor Peak seconded the motion.

Eight Voted in Favor
Zingler Abstained

10. OPENING OF MEETING TO ELECTORS OR TAXPAYERS WHO WISH TO BE HEARD ON ANY SUBJECT WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

Bob Samuelson, 108 Hemlock Street, believes the Board of Directors is receiving unfair criticism. It seems anyone who tries to control a Board of Education budget is considered to be against education. The Board of Education spends \$13,571 per student per year. The student/educator ratio at Highland Park School is 1 educator per 8.57 students. When a school

roof leaks, it needs to be fixed to control further damage. Mr. Samuelson believes it is time for a fresh look at the school system.

Joe Brooks, 601 Bush Hill Road, asked the Board of Directors what it is questioning about what he says during public comment and questioned how the Police Department measures credibility. Mr. Brooks spoke about the timeline between the time he was suspended in November until a meeting held in August. He says even the reason given for termination is stated differently in different situations. Mr. Brooks asked where the reduction of crime by 57% has been reported.

Milt Perlman, 3 Sanford Road, congratulated a student who won a scholarship to go to NASA and asked why there was no publicity in the local papers about it. He spoke about the timing of the budget hearing and his disappointment in the lack of attention given to the auditor's report. Mr. Perlman would like to see the Department Heads explain to the public where the department budget goes.

Bonnie Schuetz, 12 Conway Road, extended best wishes to Directors Topping and Sheridan. She asked the Board of Directors to help Mr. Brooks with his issue. There are problems in the schools proven by fighting at the High School and at Illing. She doesn't believe crime is down in this Town. Ms. Schuetz thanked the Police Department and urged the Board of Directors to get extra help for the dispatchers.

Matthew Galligan, 22 Packard Street, thanked the Board members who are leaving for their service. He is not thrilled with the raise in his taxes but thanked the Majority for "reigning in the beast." Manchester citizens cannot pay tax increases with money they do not have. Overall, he is happy with the budget.

David Svalestad, 64 Bette Drive, thanked Directors Topping and Sheridan for their service. He asked the Board of Directors to leave the General Manager's proposed budget the way it was and not cut \$2.1 million from it. In the past, when budget cuts were made, the Board of Education robbed Peter to pay Paul. In Manchester, we have dilapidating facilities with great teachers. Mr. Svalestad's children attend Highland Park School and he does not see anywhere near the 8:1 ratio mentioned earlier.

Jackie Madore, 13 Centerfield Street, listed some of the cuts being considered by the Board of Education and stated that these are unacceptable. The adopted budget is not even close to the best. Special education class sizes will double, creating problems. Ms. Madore stated that the budget is unacceptable. She is sorry to say she lives in Manchester because the school system is not doing well.

Tim Becker, 72 Scarborough Road, supports the Majority budget and believes it has done a magnificent job. The Republicans made a promise to hold the line and kept it. Mr. Becker has heard there will be no Board of Education layoffs and class sizes will not increase. The compensation of educators in Connecticut including salary and benefits calculates to \$400 to \$600 per day, not including sick days and the cost of substitute teachers.

Bill Ogden, 137 Branford Street, has heard people talking about layoffs at the schools and asked for a full and detailed report on the salaries of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents. Mr. Ogden suggested saving money by taking vehicles away from employees who live out of Town. He asked for a report of vehicles leaving Town and has not received it yet.

Jamie Sterling, 33 Golway Street, asked the Board to investigate other avenues the Town can take so cuts do not have to be made to the Board of Education budget. She moved to Manchester thinking that the Town believes the children are the most important, but doesn't see that through recent actions taken.

John Prytko, 224 Saddlehill Road, thanked the Board for holding the budget down. He referred to a list of 30 countries in the world that rates education. The United States is rated 28 out of 30, but we spend more than any other country in the entire world on education.

Eric Heinrich, 41 Brent Road, noted the great ideas and experiences related by the public and hopes the Board will listen. He believes Manchester is a great Town and is disappointed when people leave. He suggested some fuel savings ideas, including unnecessary trips and fuel used for leaf collection.

Terry Werkhoven, 88 Santina Drive, referred to some chastising that took place regarding the Budget Adoption meeting and commented that he will never forget the request to delay the budget adoption to provide a public hearing. Mr. Werkhoven is concerned with the large sums of money being spent on consultants and architects. Debt service is the largest single driver of the budget increase. He visited Highland Park School several times, made recommendations to fix the roof and was ignored.

11. COMMUNICATIONS.

Director Sheridan acknowledged many kind, thoughtful and generous communications he received thanking him for his service and wishing him well in the future.

Director Topping also received letters and phone calls thanking him for his service and appreciates the comments and kind words. He received a communication regarding a discipline problem at Waddell School and believes the Board of Directors needs to be informed about what is going on at the schools.

Director Zingler received an e-mail regarding a local business installing a solar panel on its roof and thanked the individual for bringing this to his attention.

Secretary Pelletier also received the communication regarding the situation at Waddell School. She suggested the Board of Directors and the Board of Education engage in its own courageous conversation regarding bullying and violence prevention training. Youth and violence is a problem throughout the country.

Director O'Neill received an e-mail regarding the Manchester Arts Commission Hall of Fame Awards to be held Wednesday, June 11, 2008, at 6:30 p.m. honoring people involved in drama, visual arts, music, instrumental and vocal, dance, and education.

Mayor Spadaccini noted that the Arts Commission has asked for a representative from each Caucus to be a presenter.

Director Zingler received an internal memorandum from Mark Carlino regarding the solar power speed feedback sign installed on Vernon Street. A small white strobe flash goes off when a driver exceeds the speed limit, but a photograph is not being taken.

Mayor Spadaccini noted an agreement to retain the auditing services of Blum Shapiro that requires his signature and asked if any Board members had concerns before he signs it. He received a communication from a Gardner Street resident with a question about sidewalks that he will forward to the Director of Public Works. Mr. Spadaccini received a letter from Dr. Fred Spaulding who is leading an effort to include the word "Memorial" in the name of Center Springs Park. He would like to hear opinions from the community on this idea. Mr. Spadaccini received a petition from the Green Manor neighborhood regarding sidewalk replacements and has received a report from the Director of Public Works with various options. The Board of Directors has been invited to participate in the Memorial Day Parade on Monday, May 26 at 9:30 a.m. He received a communication from Jared Kupiec resigning from his positions on the Human Relations and Housing Commissions, as well as a communication from Barbara King resigning from the position of Republican Registrar effective May 31, 2008.

12. REPORTS.

Director Zingler announced Pride in Manchester week and mentioned several events such as the Concert in the Park on June 7, Heritage Day on June 14, and Strolling on Main Street on June 12. He acknowledged the donors, the steering committee and Town staff.

13. PRESENTATION OF BID WAIVER REQUESTS.

General Manager Shanley explained that a specialized piece of fire equipment needs major repair and the request is to go directly to the authorized dealer for repair.

Director Topping noted that the wording "Manchester Fire Department" should read "Town of Manchester."

14. ACTION ON ITEMS OF PUBLIC HEARING.

There were no items requiring action.

15. UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

- A. Appointments to Boards and Commissions which have members with terms expiring in November/December 2007. *T represents appointments that were tabled; *R represents reappointments; *A represents newly appointed members to the Boards and Commissions.

<u>Board/Commission</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Term Expiring</u>
Cable TV Advisory Committee	T-Vacancy, Town Appointment	July 2009

Secretary Pelletier moved and Director Zingler seconded the motion.

Nine Voted in Favor

- B. **ADOPTED** - Adoption of a resolution appropriating \$7,950,000 to be added to the capital accounts of the 2007/08 budget for the purpose of paying the costs of certain water treatment system improvements at the Globe Hollow Water Treatment Plant; financing said appropriation by the issuance of Water System Improvement Temporary Notes pursuant to Chapter 102 of the Connecticut General Statutes in an amount not to exceed \$7,950,000; the rescission of a resolution adopted by the Board of Directors on August 7, 2007 authorizing the appropriation of \$5,950,000 for the Globe Hollow Water Treatment Plant Improvements and the issuance of notes to finance said appropriation; and such matters relating to the foregoing as may be properly considered at said hearing.

Deputy Mayor Peak moved and Director Tweedie seconded the motion.

Nine Voted in Favor

16. NEW BUSINESS.

- D. Discussion: Green awards initiative.

Director O'Neill received an e-mail from a citizen who suggested the Board of Directors collectively discuss and acknowledge a business or group each quarter for green initiatives.

Director Zingler thinks this is a great idea and suggested possibly extending it to residential as well. He suggested the Alternate Energy Commission be given the task of developing criteria.

Deputy Mayor Peak agreed this is a good idea and is excited to see where it can lead. This idea is consistent with the New England Community Energy Challenge. He suggested asking the Conservation Committee to develop criteria.

Mayor Spadaccini agreed this is a worthy initiative.

- E. Establishment of Demolition Fund - \$250,000 – Sanitation.

Mayor Spadaccini referenced a memorandum dated March 26, 2008 recommending a cap of \$1 million if the Board of Directors were to create and fund a demolition fund out of the sanitation enterprise fund. The proposal now is to set aside a sum of \$250,000 from the sanitation reserve

fund to create a dedicated demolition fund to enforce nuisance status properties. The funds will be used as a last resort for the removal of uninhabitable buildings, not for owner occupied purposes. Any funds used will be secured by a lien on the real estate with interest accruing. This is another tool to combat blight. The very possibility that this authority can be exercised may motivate the property owner to take action.

Deputy Mayor Peak intends to support the creation of a demolition fund. He emphasized his need to make certain this fund will not be used to take down occupied housing.

Director Sheridan supports the idea of a demolition fund as it is good policy to have resources set aside to cover all costs connected with a problem property. He believes, however, it is an unwise policy to tap the sanitation reserves for that funding. Mr. Sheridan prefers to use funds out of General Revenue. This year the projected revenue of the Sanitation Fund will not cover the projected expenditures for the first time in seven years. He does not know if this is a trend that will continue, but at some point there will be a negative cash flow situation. At that point, the more money we have banked in cash reserve, the longer we will be able to pay for curbside collection without using money from the General Fund.

Director Zingler believes it is a good idea to have a demolition fund. The Town will soon be paying for curbside collection and the money should grow and be there when we need it. He asked the criteria for the demolition fund and whether the task force can use the fund at its discretion or if it needs to come to the Board of Directors for permission. Mr. Zingler is concerned that if a property owner knows this fund is available and that the Town will foot the bill up front, it may be taken advantage of.

Mayor Spadaccini asked for clarification on the Sanitation budget. General Manager Shanley noted a scheduled policy breakfast and will go into more detail then. He quickly reviewed that two pieces of capital equipment will be replaced this year and next year we will be going out to bid for a new contract for collection.

Secretary Pelletier said that the Property Maintenance Enforcement Committee recently provided a list with 20 blighted business properties. She does not think the demolition fund is a cookie; owners are responsible for costs incurred plus 18% interest.

Director O'Neill expressed her concern about the negative cash flow of the landfill and asked where the demolition materials will be disposed of. A property with a lien and huge amounts of interest will be more difficult to sell. This becomes a grant from the taxpayers to property owners rewarding them for bad behavior. The Town will end up inheriting these properties. Ms. O'Neill is very concerned about this proposal and does not believe it has been carefully thought through.

Director Tweedie explained that this is only \$250,000 for a demolition fund. The funds will be used and repaid with interest. Neighbors of houses that have burned are sick of looking at them. He would rather look at a vacant lot than a burned down house. This is a necessary action.

Director Topping can see pros and cons in this action. He suggested tabling the item until after Tuesday's policy breakfast.

Mayor Spadaccini explained that if a property is sold, the lien will be paid out of funds from the sale. This will take care of pollution on some neglected properties. First the task force will look at the history of the property and weigh that into the decision making process. The alternative to this is a burned out house that never comes down, sitting on the property abandoned, empty, and in terrible shape. The Town needs some mechanism to be able to go in and clear out the structure.

F. Discussion: EPA New England Community Energy Challenge.

Deputy Mayor Peak explained that the two goals this energy challenge will help the Board meet are being good stewards of the environment and being good to the taxpayers in the process. By participating in this challenge, Manchester will make a pledge to make a good faith effort to reduce energy expenditures by 10%. In exchange for participation, the EPA will provide free software that will allow us to assess energy usage in each building. This initiative will provide us with a building by building baseline report. Seventeen Connecticut communities are already participating, including West Hartford, Danbury, and Stamford.

Director Zingler reviewed this plan and compared it with the Mayor's agreement suggested previously. This is a start in the right direction. He asked if there have been estimates of staff time for entering data.

Mayor Spadaccini observed that the Board reached a consensus to send the letter in the packet to the EPA indicating our desire to participate.

G. Discussion: Naming a softball field/referral to Advisory Recreation and Parks Commission.

Mayor Spadaccini placed this item on the agenda because he received a number of requests to consider naming something in honor of Randy Smith. There is currently no formal policy, but the Board has been using a draft policy as a guide. The ultimate authority to name municipal property is vested in the Board of Directors. It is recommended that nominations be held in abeyance for one year. Mr. Spadaccini believes this request is worthy of consideration and would like to get the process started.

Director Zingler agreed that Mr. Smith deserves recognition. He suggested that if the Board is following an informal policy, it should not sway from that policy. Mr. Zingler also suggested adopting a formal policy on this matter.

Mayor Spadaccini agrees the Board should follow the policy and will put it on the agenda to formally adopt it.

Secretary Pelletier is not opposed to waiting a year if that is what the policy requires.

Director Tweedie agreed it is wise to follow the policy. Randy Smith was a pillar of our sports community. In the interim, a track meet and PAL 3-on-3 have been named after him.

Mayor Spadaccini recommended, and the Board members concurred, referring the naming of a sports facility after Randy Smith to the Advisory Parks and Recreation Committee and asked General Manager Shanley to send a letter to that effect.

17. COMMENT AND DISCUSSION BY BOARD MEMBERS ON ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA OR OF GENERAL CONCERN.

Director O'Neill asked when the Alternative Energy Commission will meet. She would like to see an anti-idling policy on a future agenda for discussion. Ms. O'Neill asked for a status report on the number of Police Officers. She has heard the numbers have dropped and is concerned about summer incidents.

Director Topping suggested a future Board look into part-time employees who receive insurance benefits. The Registrar is a part-time position that receives benefits and it might be a good time to sunset those benefits to save money.

Director Beckman reminded the Board about a neighborhood meeting at the Senior Center. He had asked that someone look into speeding on Fern and Hamilton. In previous minutes, this was recorded as an intersection but these are two separate streets. Mr. Beckman suggested displaying contact information of Board members on the broadcast, maybe during recess. He asked some questions regarding the dark fiber project and after a little discussion, Mr. Beckman and Mr. Shanley agreed to meet to discuss this issue further.

Director Zingler asked for a cost estimate to install cameras in the Manchester Room. He encouraged Manchester residents to recycle because we pay for trash disposal by the ton. The more that gets recycled, the less we have to pay for. He suggested offering residents four reusable shopping bags with the Town seal on them with the opportunity to purchase more. This may jump start residents into thinking about recycling. Mr. Zingler is looking for a cost estimate and if there is a consensus of the Board to take this route. He asked for a copy of the solar RFP and the RFP for the library consultant.

Secretary Pelletier asked what will be happening with the dial-a-ride van that will soon be coming off line.

Deputy Mayor Peak asked for a primer or memorandum on whistleblowers, what types of laws protect them and what happens if nothing comes of a complaint. Mr. Shanley explained that this is a complex issue and the Board may want Attorney Murray to come in and speak regarding this issue. Mr. Peak asked if the form that a school PTA needs to fill out for a fundraiser could be simplified; currently it is an 8-page form.

Mayor Spadaccini remembers that some time ago there was a proposal to put a plaque in the Police Department waiting room commemorating the first police officer. He has received some comments about the reception of Board meetings over the cable channel and asked that it be

addressed. Mayor Spadaccini thanked Directors Sheridan and Topping for their contributions and experience and wished them both the best.

Director Zingler asked for an update on video archiving of Board meetings so they are available on the Town's website. He echoed the Mayor's comments and stated that Directors Sheridan and Topping will be missed.

Secretary Pelletier thanked Directors Topping and Sheridan for their years of service. Despite disagreements, she never doubted their sincerity for the community.

EXECUTIVE SESSION.

The Board went into Executive Session at 10:04 p.m. and returned at 10:13 p.m. Present for the matter of Real Estate Negotiations were Mayor Spadaccini, Deputy Mayor Peak, Secretary Pelletier, Directors Tweedie, Beckman, Sheridan, Topping, O'Neill, and Zingler, General Manager Shanley, and Town Attorney Naab. There were no votes taken.

Director Tweedie moved and Deputy Mayor Peak seconded the motion.

Nine Voted in Favor

18. ADJOURNMENT.

The meeting was adjourned until the June 3, 2008 Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors at 7:00 p.m. in the Lincoln Center Hearing Room.

Director Sheridan moved and Director Topping seconded the motion.

Nine Voted in Favor

Adjourn: 10:12 p.m.

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APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Secretary, Manchester Board of Directors