

TOWN COUNCIL
Budget Management
January 18, 2005

Present: Kenneth DiFazio, Chairman, Susan Kay, Michael Molisse, Colin McPherson, Paul Leary

Also Present: Richard Swanson, Auditor
Franklin Fryer, Town Clerk
Jane Hackett, Chief of Staff

Recording Secretary: Janet Murray

Chairperson DiFazio called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Kay to take Item #04 233 out of order and was seconded by Councilor Molisse and UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

04 233 – Appropriation request - \$17,088 – School Maintenance Collective Bargaining Agreement

Joseph Rull, Superintendent, and Mary Jo Livingstone, Assistant Superintendent, appeared before the Committee.

This is a request for the Maintenance unit and represents 19 employees. It was ratified by the School Committee on December 2, 2004.

Mr. Rull noted that the changes that resulted from this contract are as follows:

- Probationary period for new employees of 90 days.
- Friday work day changed to 7:30 – 4:00pm.
- Overtime clause regarding overtime being offered to union members first.
- Paid holiday provisions
- Paid leave of absence
- Bereavement
- Grievance procedure
- Uniform allowance
- Wage agreement is 2% in FY 05, 3% in FY 06, and 4% in FY 07
- Longevity payments

Councilor Kay asked if these employees work for the entire school system, as well as helping with general government. Mr. Rull stated that these employees do work for the general government when needed. He also noted that this is a decrease in employees from 21 to 19.

A MOTION was made by Councilor McPherson to recommend FAVORABLE ACTION on Item #04 233 and was seconded by Councilor Kay and UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

04 179 – Community Preservation Act

Councilor DiFazio noted that this item was scheduled for tonight because the public hearing is set for this evening. He noted that Ron Cogliano was set to discuss this tonight but had called to say he could not make it.

Councilor Kay noted that the Community Preservation Act has worked well in other towns. She noted that the matching money from the state makes it worth putting this on the ballot for the voters to decide. She also noted that she would be in favor of an amount of 1% with allowable exemptions for seniors and low income, but not for commercial.

Councilor Leary agreed with Councilor Kay except that he would be in favor of an exemption for the first \$100,000 only, which does not include commercial property. It was noted that you could include commercial property in the act.

Councilor McPherson noted that he is opposed to this measure.

Councilor Molisse stated that he has concerns regarding the state match. He noted that as more communities pass this act, the amount available will not necessarily increase. He also noted that there have been other fees imposed in the recent past and he is concerned that these small amounts are adding up. It was noted that the average amount per homeowner is \$25 per year.

Councilor DiFazio noted that this measure is to place the Community Preservation Act on the ballot for voters to approve or disapprove. If it were to fail this year, it could certainly be resubmitted in the future.

Councilor Leary stated that the people have the right to vote on this. He noted that this is only a five year commitment and could be voted out at that time on a ballot question.

Councilor Kay noted that residents pay into this fund through the fees paid. She believes that it is worth putting forth to the voters to decide.

After discussion what exemptions to place on the act, it was decided to split the vote.

A MOTION was made by Councilor McPherson to split the question and was seconded by Councilor Kay and UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Leary to use the 1% surcharge and was seconded by Councilor Kay and was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Leary to allow the \$100,000 exemption to all residents and was seconded by Councilor Kay and was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

A low income exemption is defined as property owned and occupied by a person who would qualify for low-income housing or a family of four making less than \$66,080 per year or moderate income senior housing for a person over 60 making less than \$57,820, or for a couple making less than \$66,080.

Councilor Leary noted that he is opposed to this specific exemption because of the work involved in administrating this exemption.

Councilor Kay stated that although she agrees that it is difficult to administer this exemption, she does want to place any additional burden on this population.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Kay to include a low income exemption and was seconded by Councilor DiFazio and approved on a 3-2 vote with Councilors DiFazio, Kay, and Molisse voting in favor, and Councilors Leary and McPherson opposed.

Councilor McPherson stated that he would like to know what the total revenue generated would be. Municipal Finance will have this information at the next meeting.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Leary to CONTINUE Item #04 179 and was seconded by Councilor Kay and was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:55pm there being no further business, Councilor Kay MOTIONED to adjourn and Councilor Leary seconded and was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Approved by: _____
Kenneth DiFazio, Chairperson