

**TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES  
BUDGET/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
Town Hall Council Chambers  
September 17, 2008 - Wednesday**

Present: Kenneth DiFazio, Chairperson  
Patrick O'Connor, Vice Chairperson  
Arthur Mathews, Councilor  
Michael Molisse, Councilor  
Kevin Whitaker, Councilor

Also Present: James Wilson, Chief Financial Officer  
Maureen Duffy, Town Auditor  
Michael Gallagher, Director IT/Administrative Svc.  
Sean Guilfoyle, Chair, School Committee  
James Lockhead, School Committee  
Gail Sheehan, School Committee  
Mary Jo Livingstone, Superintendent of Schools  
Matt Ferron, Asst. Superintendent of Schools

Recording Secretary: Mary Briggs

Chairman Kenneth DiFazio called the Budget/Management Committee meeting to order at 6:45 PM.

A MOTION was made by Councilor O'Connor to take item 08 115 out of order and was seconded by Councilor Molisse. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

**08 115 – Appointment to the Board of Elder Services-Judy MacDonald**

Ms. MacDonald was invited to introduce herself to the committee and briefly explain her interest in serving on the board. She noted that she had a conversation with Mayor Kay following the cancellation of the Senior Citizen's picnic this year. She noted she served on the board of Weymouth Youth Soccer for the past 5 years, and is in her 4<sup>th</sup> year as president of the Nash School PTO, and is interested in volunteering.

A MOTION was made by Councilor O'Connor to forward item 08 115 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor Molisse. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Chairman DiFazio invited her to be present at the Town Council meeting on September 22, 2008.

**08 104 – Reappointment to the Board of Assessors- Jill Reddish**

Councilor DiFazio reported this item was continued from its meeting of September 9, 2008, due to a communication mix up. Ms. Reddish was also unable to make this meeting. This appointment is subject to 30-day action by the full Town Council.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Molisse to forward item 08 104 to the full Town Council, with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor O'Connor.

Councilor Mathews reminded the other members that he wanted Ms. Reddish at the committee meeting specifically because he had some questions with regard to the Board of Assessors review process, and he wanted it in this venue rather than before the full Town Council-which is televised. Chairman DiFazio noted there will be a chance to ask questions at the next Town Council meeting. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

**08 105 - Appointment to the South Shore Tri-Town Board of Directors- Joseph Connolly**

Chairman DiFazio noted that Mr. Connolly was unable to make the September 9 or 17<sup>th</sup> meetings and this appointment is not subject to 30-day action, and that Mr. Connolly has indicated he would be available for the September 22, 2008 Town Council meeting.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Molisse to continue item 08-105 and was seconded by Councilor O'Connor.

A SUBSTITUTE MOTION was made by Councilor Whitaker to forward item 08 105 to the full town council with a recommendation for favorable action. The MOTION was not seconded. Substitute MOTION FAILED.

The VOTE on the MOTION by Councilor Molisse to continue item 08 105 was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

**08 094 – Community Preservation Committee- Community Housing Request**

Chairman DiFazio reported that this item was before the committee previously, but that this discussion is for the purpose of obtaining more information with regard to the application process, to determine the probability that the people who will live in this housing have a Weymouth background. The measure is for the purpose of using Community Preservation Committee funding to provide housing.

Norman Grenier, Executive Director of Neighborhood Housing and John Yazwinski, CFO of Father Bill's were present to answer questions. The concern of the committee is that Weymouth residents benefit from Community Preservation funds provided essentially by the taxpayers of Weymouth and what will determine residency.

Mr. Grenier gave a brief review of the process. Since the 1990's when the McKinney Vento Act was passed, federal funding of \$10M has been leveraged to provide for

housing for the homeless. Weymouth and Quincy formed a consortium, known as Quincy Weymouth Continuing Care. The group meets monthly, and submits annual requests for federal funding to shelter the homeless.

Mr. Yazwinski noted that in the last fiscal year, each month 12 - 17 Weymouth families were sheltered through the Wellspring program, which services families from Weymouth and Quincy. Under the legislation, children from Weymouth who are sheltered elsewhere are required to be bused back to home schools to be educated. There is a great need for permanent housing for the homeless in Weymouth. Between 50 and 80 students from Weymouth were homeless in the last year and bused back to Weymouth from shelters elsewhere to be educated.

The goal is to be able to provide permanent supportive housing. Families who fit the criteria will be given priority. Referrals from the Department of Transitional Assistance will try to prioritize Weymouth residents being placed in Weymouth, and he anticipates 70-75% of the placements will have Weymouth roots.

Chairman DiFazio asked by what determination will proof of Weymouth residency be made. Mr. Yazwinski noted that there are several indicators of last known address, such from the state (child support), or from the Department of Transitional Assistance, or a call from Town Hall.

Chairman DiFazio asked for how long would the placement be? Mr. Yazwinski responded that there is a 3-day state policy of placement for sheltering purposes.

Chairman DiFazio asked if there would be any scenario where an out of town person could take precedence for placement over someone with Weymouth roots. Mr. Yazwinski responded that the sheltering program will take anyone without preference; however the units planned are the first in Weymouth where funding is going toward permanent supportive housing instead of subsidizing placement or to a landlord. Chairman DiFazio asked what length of time these would average; Mr. Yazwinski noted these are not considered shelter or transitional housing, but permanent affordable housing.

Councilor Whitaker asked if there is a scoring system with the application process, or if Weymouth is involved in the selection process. Mr. Grenier responded that referral and homelessness come under the guidelines of the Fair Housing laws and that members on the Quincy /Weymouth Housing Consortium include a member from the Planning Board, a Weymouth citizen and a representative from South Shore Savings Bank, so Weymouth has a fair voice in the organization.

Councilor O'Connor thanked Mr. Grenier and Yazwinski for providing further information. He requested whether there are benchmarks set for the applicants, and how are those monitored. Mr. Yazwinski responded that there are several goals set by both HUD and the QWHC, including increasing income and learning basic skills to remain good tenants. Families have service plans to meet these goals. The QWHC is available 24/7 to respond as needed. There are currently 40 families in Quincy and Weymouth

being served, and the success rate is about 87% (success being measured as not returning to homeless status and remaining good tenants).

There was a brief discussion with Mr. Wilson regarding the amount of the request, the reimbursement rate and the amount remaining in the undesignated fund balance.

Councilor Whitaker congratulated them on the award of the grant.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Mathews to forward item 08 094 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for FAVORABLE ACTION and was seconded by Councilor O'Connor. Councilor O'Connor reminded members that the original request was for \$250,000 but was reduced to \$125,000 which is the request before the committee, and which he will support.

Councilor Molisse noted he still has concerns with regard to the amount of the appropriation. He noted that although this is being brought forward via the Community Preservation Committee, it is taxpayer funded.

Councilor Whitaker asked if the public hearing has been set. It is scheduled for the September 22, 2008 Town Council meeting and he invited the two petitioners to be in attendance then.

Chairman DiFazio summarized that there are two issues; the project itself and whether it is appropriate use of tax money to the CPC. He noted these are tough economic times; however CPC money does have to be utilized as one of the CPC objectives.

VOTE passed 4/1 (Councilor Molisse – NO).

#### **Discussion with School Administration on Supplemental Budget**

A handout was provided by the school administration.

Superintendent Livingstone noted that passing of the previous item (08 094) will have a positive effect on the School budget. Under the McKinney Vento Act, Weymouth is responsible for the cost of transporting those students displaced from wherever they are sheltered back to their home schools.

Ms. Livingstone noted the formatting of the school budget is different than the general government formatting provided by Mr. Wilson.

The first handout she reviewed represents an overview of the budget process. A budget was prepared with the requested reductions in order to begin the school year.

The second handout sheet is a list of the reductions as requested in expenses and personnel. Personnel list includes specific positions. Some positions were also removed from the operating budget and moved to revolving funds. Ms. Livingstone reviewed some

of the increases in fees, which will generate revenue. She noted that this does not cover it all, but fundraising will help.

The School Department was still hiring staff up to the day before this meeting. Vacancies include resignations, non-renewals, and retirements. In total 157 positions were vacated; of those 85 were eliminated but 71 were filled. She reviewed the class sizes and the programs which will be impacted by the reductions.

Chairman DiFazio asked what decreases in services is being offered as a result of the reductions. Ms. Livingstone noted that as far as academic impact, the largest is the loss from the district instructional line for textbooks. Family Consumer Science Program was also eliminated. Also eliminated are the Information Literacy Specialists, which will affect instruction for students in library services at the primary schools. These positions were originally put in place to address a need with MCAS and will be a critical loss. Additionally, the loss of the curriculum coordinator positions means one assistant superintendent is now overseeing the district. It will also mean the building administrators will have more direct oversight of their building. Another problematic loss is the health paraprofessionals. Health offices in the schools are responsible for administering medication to students. At Adams, the health grant needed to be rewritten to fund a paraprofessional position in the health office, to mitigate exposure and address a safety issue.

Ms. Livingstone also noted that the utility lines are still a gamble. There is no back up plan, and this is based on the assumption that this winter will be mild. A program is in place with National Grid to switch several buildings from oil to gas-fired heat, realizing a \$300,000 savings. One of the buildings is being done with capital budget funding; the remaining are being financed over a three year period in an agreement with the utility.

Special Education cuts will also be jeopardized by any additional students who move into the district and require services.

Chairman DiFazio asked how this will affect the NEASC accreditation process. Ms. Livingstone responded that the loss of the curriculum coordinators and the business offerings and Family & Consumer Science Program will impact the “well-rounded” status of educational offerings. He also asked if this round of cuts affects the Advanced Placement offerings. Ms. Livingstone noted the current cuts affect mostly elective offerings.

Ms. Livingstone reviewed for Councilor O’Connor the number of cuts to professional staff and the number of new hires. Of the original 71 positions eliminated, 34.5 were eliminated, other positions were shuffled, and 30 were new hires.

Ms. Livingstone reported in order to be pro-active, the school department will actively seek ways to mitigate the reductions. The grants department will be aggressively seeking competitive funding.. One of the grants currently sought will fund a full day kindergarten program. They will also look to partner with the business community.

Councilor O'Connor asked if the school department had considered participating in energy audit programs offered by the utility companies. Ms. Livingstone noted that the oil to gas conversion program currently underway is as a result of that. She added that there is a lighting program also in use which automatically shuts off lighting in areas of the high school after hours. The schools have also been issued a challenge to reduce their energy consumption with a reward system which will put the cost of savings back into the schools to obtain supplies.

Mr. Ferron also reviewed an incentive program the school department is participating in an effort to raise funds – Our Kids Win, which is a web platform fundraising program, with no initial investment required from the school system. It offers the schools credit for participating families who register their credit cards, credit in the form of rebates for online purchasing or who make purchases through participating local merchants. Banner signage is up on school buildings advertising the program. Weymouth Bank is sponsoring the program.

Chairman DiFazio asked how reductions affect the music program and athletics. Ms. Livingstone noted that the same music program is still offered, but with less instructional time at the middle school level. Reductions have not been made in athletics, in fact a girl's hockey team has been added, but there will be more fundraising required. Mr. Ferron noted there is a waiver system in place for those athletes who cannot afford it, but that the system is actually seeing a reduction in the number of requests for waivers this year.

Chairman DiFazio noted that \$1.6M was to cover raises to union members. Ms. Livingstone responded that that figure also includes a 3% adjustment to all members of the school department. Councilor Molisse asked if it is included in the retroactive payments due to the union. Ms. Livingstone responded that it did; 1% for the first year and 2% for the second.

Chairman DiFazio asked if the department has noted any change in the participation in sports. Mr. Ferron responded that any change is minimal.

Ms. Livingstone reviewed the makeup of the new hires for Councilor Whitaker; of the 30 brand new hires they are evenly distributed amongst those right out of college, those with a few years experience and those with many years of experience.

Councilor Whitaker also cautioned the school department against heavy reliance on grant funding and likened it to the town government use of non-recurring revenue sources. Ms. Livingstone reviewed the two types of grants available to the schools; entitlement which are grants allocated by the federal government through the state such as SPED and Title 1 funding, and the competitive, which are actively sought and are not used to fund permanent staff.

Councilor Whitaker noted the Council should make positions, grants and revolving funds a part of its scrutiny next year when they review the town budget and that there may be room for analysis. He also asked if the schools could rely more on a volunteer base, and Ms. Livingstone noted that it is usually too difficult to organize.

Councilor Whitaker also asked what the status is of the capital budget project to repair the roof of the Adams School. Ms. Livingstone believes it involved sections of the roof and was completed over the summer. Mention of the removal of asbestos at the Maria Weston Chapman Middle School occurred, notably that 5 ½ million was allocated as part of the capital improvement plan to rectify.

Councilor Whitaker noted Boston Magazine recently had an article scoring towns for their “bang for the buck” in which Weymouth scored very well. Ms. Livingstone noted that was a testament to the current and former staff.

Councilor Mathews asked the costs to retrofit heating systems in the schools. Ms. Livingstone approximated the amount to be about \$260,000.

Councilor Mathews asked how much of the school budget went to snow removal overtime. Ms. Livingstone responded that none is school funded. The DPW pays for snow removal costs. Councilor Mathews then asked if school employees are paid overtime for snow removal. Ms. Livingstone confirmed that they are. Councilor Mathews asked who is responsible for oversight of snow removal overtime worked by school employees. Does the employee punch a clock? Ms. Livingstone responded that she believes time cards are turned in to the DPW. Councilor Mathews asked how the time cards are tracked. Ms. Livingstone responded that she does not have oversight of time cards for snow removal overtime. She will find out for the committee who is responsible for tracking snow removal overtime.

Councilor Mathews noted his concern as to whether employees are being tracked correctly. He would like to know what the policy is regarding snow removal. Chairman DiFazio asked that the school administration provide what Councilor Mathews is looking for- who, what, where, when, etc., on snow removal policy and overtime. School committee chair Sean Guilfoyle asked if this is for an individual or group. Councilor Mathews noted he is looking for direction in policy.

Chairman DiFazio thanked the school administration for their input and noted that they may be asked to appear again prior to the committee’s action sometime in the middle of October.

08 103A- Town Council

08 103B- Mayor’s Office

08 103C-Reserve Fund

08 103D- Municipal Finance

08 103E- Town Solicitor

08 103F- Information Services

08 103G- Town Clerk

08 103H- Planning and Development

08 103I- Town Hall Maintenance

08 103J- Administrative Services

08 103K- Human Resources

08 103L- Police Department

08 103M- Fire Department

08 103N- Licensing and Inspections

08 103O- Department of Public Works

08 103P- Health

08 103Q- Library

08 103R- Veterans' Services

08 103S- Parks and Recreation

08 103T- Elder Services

08 103U- Civil Defense

08 103V- Commission on Disabilities

08 103W- Youth and Family Services

08 103X- Debt

08 103Y- Pensions and Benefits

08 103Z-Schools



08 103X- Schools

08 103AA- State and County Assessments

08 103BB- Overlay to Abatements

08 103CC- Health Insurance

08 103DD- Snow Removal

08 103- General Government Supplemental Fiscal Year 2009 Appropriation

A MOTION was made by Councilor O'Connor to CONTINUE items 08 103A through 08 103DD, inclusive, and item 08 103 to the next meeting and was seconded by Councilor Molisse. Chairman DiFazio noted that 08 103 was included since the committee just received the information requested at this meeting from the school department and would need some time to review before making any recommendation. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Councilor Mathews noted he has spoken with Town Council President Smart regarding the snow removal overtime issue. He reported he is uncomfortable with conflicting information he has received from the school department on snow removal overtime policy. Councilor Mathews made a MOTION to request the Town Auditor perform an internal audit of snow removal overtime.

Chairman DiFazio requested that Councilor Mathews submit a formal request to the Budget/Management chair for an investigation by Ms. Duffy of the snow removal budget with a report back to Council upon completion.

At 8:40 PM, there being no further business, Councilor O'Connor made a MOTION to ADJOURN the meeting and was seconded by Councilor Molisse. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Mary Briggs  
Recording Secretary