

TOWN OF CROMWELL
ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET MEETING
Thursday, May 5, 2011
7:00 P.M., Cromwell Middle School
(See preceding Legal Notice)

First Selectman John Flanders called the meeting to order at 7:17 p.m.

Motion to nominate Alice Kelly as Moderator was made by Linda Duren, seconded by Michael Gengler. There were no other nominations from the floor. Mrs. Kelly was unanimously approved.

The moderator asked the Town Clerk to read the Call of the Meeting. Motion to accept the call as read was made by Anthony Salvatore, seconded by Michael Gengler.

The moderator then opened the floor for discussion.

Sue Jahn, 15 Bellaire Manor – asked where the money was coming from for the Public Works second in command to drive to Bethel in a town vehicle every day, and why he was keeping his private vehicle in the town garage.

First Selectman Flanders explained that no money was coming out of any other line item in the budget. He also said that the town was not responsible for the keeping of a personal vehicle. Ms. Jahn asked who was liable if there was an accident involving the town truck while he was driving to or from work. Mr. Flanders said that the town would be liable.

Caroljoyce Cannito, 3 Blackhaw Drive – asked if we were really paying for this person to drive back and forth from work.

Mr. Flanders said yes. Ms. Cannito asked why we would do this for one person and not for any other employees. Mr. Flanders said we do pay for a number of town employees to take home vehicles, but that we are currently in the process of reviewing the town vehicle policy.

Ray Duffy, 24 Oxford Lane – is concerned about this and wanted to know who decided to allow this person to drive from home to work and back.

Mr. Flanders said that he as First Selectman and the department head. Mr. Duffy asked if there was a signed contract for this, and Mr. Flanders replied no. Mr. Duffy asked about other town employees who take home vehicles, and Mr. Flanders said that there are a number of employees who take vehicles home that were in place prior to him being elected. Mr. Duffy asked if Mr. Flanders could have said no, and Mr. Flanders said that he could have.

Al Waters, 86 South Street – said that this truck was \$34,000 but we bought it for \$33,000 with a plow after we traded in another truck. He stated that this truck uses \$26,000 in fuel alone a year, and puts on about 15,000 miles a year traveling to and from alone. He feels that we will only get about 10 years out of this vehicle at this rate, and all of this is not taking into consideration the other expenses such as the wear and tear on tires, etc. This one particular person has not been called in at any special time, and everyone in the Highway Department is on 24 hour call 7 days a week. He feels this is a waste of taxpayers' money.

The moderator asked that people please keep the discussion about the budget and not individual people.

Sue Jahn, 15 Bellaire Manor - as far as the budget goes how much is allotted, how many vehicles are for town employees, and isn't it true that the department head you had the discussion with is the person using the car.

Mr. Flanders said that he did not have the discussion with the person in question, that he had the discussion with the Public Works Director. He also stated that there are 6 other employees that have take-home vehicles.

Richard Coughlin, 19 Glenwood Terrace – asked what this purposed budget represented in increased personnel, either full time or part time.

Mr. Flanders replied there are no new full time or part time positions added to this budget. Mr. Coughlin asked what amount of revenue is anticipated from the State of Connecticut relative to sharing of state resources to cities and town to last year's budget. Ed Maley, Chairman of the

Board of Finance, explained that the numbers change every day. That the number they were working on a few days ago was \$4,902,980. Mr. Coughlin asked if that number was for the Board of Education or the town. Mr. Maley explained that none of the money goes directly to the Board of Education, but that it goes into one pot and is distributed to the Board of Education and other things as needed. Mr. Coughlin said that the governor spoke of a two billion dollar shortfall, and that his intent was to raise taxes 1.5 billion dollars, and then get concessions from the state employees' unions for 2 billion, but if there were no concessions he would be laying off people, and cutting aid to cities and town, and as of this afternoon there were no union concessions.

Mr. Coughlin asked if we are anticipating revenue from the state which is equal or greater than last year. The governor has already put on the table that cuts were going to come, and he is concerned we may not be conservative enough in the way we are looking at the estimated income. Mr. Maley would like to correct Mr. Coughlin on a variety of assumptions that are not true. Mr. Maley feels that there is certainly a need for employee concessions in the next two years. The 2 billion dollars is a 2 year number not a 1 year number, roughly a billion dollars each year. He doesn't believe that the governor said it was going to come entirely out of municipal aid to cities and towns. Mr. Coughlin is right that these are estimates and that if state aid is reduced, which it was not in the budget that was recently passed, but if it was we would have a hole in it, and if it increases we would have more money than expected. This happens every year that the state budget is not done by the time we have to vote on our town budget.

Mr. Coughlin asked why are we running a Referendum on Monday with the big cloud hanging over us. Mr. Maley recalls that we have always had our budget vote in early May. Marianne Sylvester, Director of Finance, said that we have to vote on our budget by the second Tuesday in May per our Charter.

Barbara Coughlin, 19 Glenwood Terrace – would like the Board of Finance to consider giving an estimated mill rate before the voting. She feels they have a more positive reception.

There being no more questions the moderator adjourned the Town Meeting at 7:45 p.m. to a Referendum vote on Monday, May 9, 2011 at the Cromwell High School, between the hours of 12:00 noon and 8:00 p.m. Absentee Ballots are available at the Town Clerk's Office, but cannot be mailed out in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Sections 9-140 and 9-369c.

Respectfully submitted,

Darlene A. DiProto, CCTC, CMC
Town Clerk

Dated at Cromwell, Connecticut this 6th day of May 2011.