

TOWN OF CROMWELL
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, MARCH 22, 2007
CROMWELL TOWN HALL 7:30 P.M.
ROOM 224/225

AMENDED MINUTES

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Michael Gengler called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL:

Present: Chairman Michael Gengler, Loraine Caruso, Julius Neto, Jack Henehan, Jeremy Shingleton, and Edwin Maley, Jr.

C. Seating of Alternate: A motion was made by Julius Neto, seconded by Jack Henehan and it was unanimously approved to seat alternate Jeremy Shingleton. Motion Passed.

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

A motion was made by John Flanders, Loraine Caruso seconded and it was unanimously approved to approve the agenda. **Motion passed.**

A motion was made by Julius Neto to amend the agenda, Jack Henehan seconded, and it was unanimously approved to amend the agenda to delete item J.1. No Action. Amendment passed.

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

1. Regular Meeting, February 22, 2007.

A motion was made by Edwin Maley Jr., seconded by Julius Neto and it was unanimously approved to rewrite the minutes of February 22, 2007. All were in favor.

F. CITIZENS COMMENTS: ***Francis Monnes of 7 Old Colony Lane***

provided a survey on area police staffing levels with comparison data and feels that there was very little done with the town budget and town tax rate. Cromwell is a small town and currently has 25 officers. Next year we may have two more and need two more vehicles to accompany them. The overtime also seems to be a bit high.

Jeremy Shingleton examined per capita and per square mile data and noted that there are inefficiencies in staffing levels relative to other towns. He thought that tax dollars could be put to better use.

Marc Corvo of 382 Main Street asked about the 3-5 schedule and if this was something new.

Chairman Michael Gengler cautioned that the data might not be accurate. The Chairman asked Jeremy to further research the issue. The FBI was recommended as a source, to ensure the reliability of the data. Jeremy Shingleton agreed to help with the research and committed to completing a preliminary analysis before the budget deliberation.

Al Waters of 86 South Street stated that we have 3 different parties here to help the taxpayers of Cromwell. At the last Board of Selectman the 2-5 schedule would be reduced if they did not receive this money. The Board of Selectmen referenced the budget vote coming in at 3-3 and the First Selectman broke the tie. Mrs. Salvatore voted for her husband's budget. If she did not vote he would have lost, and the police budget would have been cut from 50,000-75,000. The grand list continues to grow. Finally, Mr. Waters stated that we need more vehicles not just for two individuals but for training they will also need two vehicles. The tax relief for business owners is starting to hurt. Mr. Waters would like to see advanced written notice, so that we can adequately plan for openings for retirements.

Dick Coughlin of 19 Glenwood Terrace read a letter into the record from Nancy Weighman of the forecast and projection of the un-funded health care costs and issues with the retirees.

Chairman Mike Gengler reflected on the cost sheet to follow the same process for the un-funded liability. The total estimated costs of pensions fund hopefully will decline over time.

The First Selectman stated that the health care is 100% funded.

Mr. Maley asked if we are acting appropriately and if so there is no sense to move to a situation to pre-fund healthcare as we do for a business.

Dick Coughlin of 19 Glenwood Terrace spoke as a professional from Pratt & Whitney the budget line items eat the increase cost of living and we need to get a handle on the growth in the population for consolidation. The Budget review should be looked at for the increase in salary and the generation of hours for the proposed increase. Someone has to exercise authority and ask the hard questions.

Rich Waters of 84 South Street discussed the bus situation and how most of the people are driven to school by their parents. The roads continue to be in

need of rebuilding and he stated his concerns about the budget for the highway department being cut.

Joe Corlis of 17 Redwood Court Cromwell Hills Drive discussed that for the last 2-3 years the police came out on bike patrols and cruisers to go through the complex which seems to work very well. He has concerns with the overtime and would like to see this area reduced. The police have up to 4 Sargent's on duty and there may be 5 officers taking retirement within the next two years.

Al Waters of 86 South Street discussed the overtime and retirement and that it takes about 6 months to hire someone.

Craig Stevenson of the EDC discussed the appropriation of a \$500,000 grant. In 2002, \$445,000 was appropriated for improvement of the Shunpike Road Sewer station to the north of Coles Road to the Rocky Hill Border. The state requires a comprehensive environmental analysis to be done. The policy funding for this grant was not violated but took longer than planned. The amount of \$188,000 was spent on a study to cover the industrial land for the town. The town is seeking funding from the State.

Another grant the town is seeking is for \$500,000 which may wait until the next fiscal year. The installation for the sewer utility requires a substantial amount of work.

The third steep grant is for a \$250,000 grant towards downtown improvements to add to the look of the Cromwell Riverfront.

Chairman Michael Gengler asked Craig Stevenson how long the steep grant would need to be put into place. Mr. Stevenson stated that he does not have expertise in this area. The \$188,00 for the first grant can be returned for a \$90,000 reimbursement and can be returned from the general fund fund grant.

Edwin Maley asked about the fund balance credit market for the close of the fiscal year and to be sure that work is completed.

G. REPORT OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN:

The First Selectman reported on the following issues:

- Long Range Capital Planning.
- 40,000 Reimbursement fee for boiler not needed from the BOE
- Middle School Roof Replacement
- Legal expenses slowed on labor side and accelerated on the town side due to planning and zoning land use issues.
- Tax Relief Ordinance

H. BUDGET REPORT:

The Finance Director reported that the current year looked healthy on the labor side and there is a deficit in the attorney line. The expenditures look reasonable. The general expense budget appropriations will be released. The Town needs to exercise with caution because in another year the town may be looking at bonding.

Mr. Maley asked why we have a Town Improvement Fund.

Chairman Michael Gengler asked if we were close to close-out.

The Finance Director discussed that in the spring we will be finalizing. The construction budget is ok. Some bids came in more than what was appropriated. She also stated that we need to establish appropriation to set aside for when we incur these costs.

Jack Henehan discussed the 50,000 toward Watrous Park for a skateboard park and the irrigation of the football field.

I. REPORT OF THE TAX COLLECTOR: None.

J. OLD BUSINESS: None.

K. NEW BUSINESS:

1, Discussion and action on a recommendation to a Special Town Meeting for an additional appropriation of \$500,000 for the Industrial Park development on Shunpike Road (STEAP Grant). Increasing the existing appropriation to \$945,000. These funds will be fully reimbursed by the State of Connecticut DECD as they are expended. Any funds not used for this specific purpose would be returned to the General Fund fund balance upon completion of the project.

Deleted.

2. Authorize Chairman to request additional budget information on behalf of the Board of Finance.

A motion was made by Chairman Gengler, seconded by Jack Henehan and it was unanimously approved to **request additional information** on behalf of the Board of Finance.

3. Preparation for budget hearing.

The Board will hear the General Government hearing and then the Board of Education. They will keep to a minimal amount of staff for the hearings. There will be two nights of deliberations for the General Government with adjournment by no later than 10:30 p.m. The hearings and official notices will be posted in the newspapers as appropriate to meet with the legal deadlines.

Discussion regarding the concerns with the police budget was presented. The Board of Finance would like to see the cost of the 3-5 schedule on spreadsheet. They need to look at a whole host of different things with officers and the per hour per capita expense.

Julius Neto mentioned setting up a cost model to compare with other towns.

Edwin Maley's concerns were that there are no guarantees.

Loraine Caruso asked about their overtime.

Chairman Michael Gengler stated that we have a good feel for the financial impact by basis comparison.

Jeremy Shingleton mentioned that outside services and the general fund true expense covers holiday and vacations.

Loraine Caruso asked who sets the hourly rate because there is a big difference from other town wages and it depends on the contracts.

Julius Neto agrees that we need a baseline of variables and statistical analysis to be done by the FBI.

The Finance Director mentioned that the Chief may have some worksheets.

L. BOARD OF EDUCATION – LIASON REPORT:

Julius Neto reported that the auditors saw for the first time how the board of education operates and did not agree.

The Finance Director would be happy to guide them as to what is needed. They need special fund grants onto software for the next fiscal year.

M. CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS:

Chairman Michael Gengler commended Marianne on her power point presentation.

N. VICE CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS:

Loraine Caruso discussed the IWA meeting on Wednesday the 28th at 7:00 p.m.

O . GOOD AND WELFARE:

A CD disk and information packet went out for Colon Cancer in honor of Support for Allan Kaplan our Social Service Director who recently passed away to this disease. A moment of silence and prayer was held at this time.

P. ADJOURNMENT: Julius Neto **made a motion to adjourn at 10:02, seconded by Jack Henehan. All were in favor. Motion Passed.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Milardo
Clerk