

MINUTES
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, JUNE 29, 2009 AT 8:00 AM
RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO COUNCIL CHAMBER
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

- 1. ROLL CALL:** A Special Town Council meeting was scheduled for 8:00 AM in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Chamber, Administration Building. Present for the meeting were Councilors Stephen P. Corbett, Marilyn M. Petitto Devaney, Susan G. Falkoff, Jonathan Hecht, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., John J. Lawn, Jr., and Council President Clyde L. Younger. Councilors Kounelis and Sideris were absent. Also present were Town Manager Michael J. Driscoll, Town Attorney Joe Fair and Council Clerk Valerie Papas. School Committee members Anthony Paolillo, John Portz and David Leon were present, along with Superintendent Ann Koufman-Frederick and School Director Allie Altman. Councilor Sideris and Kounelis were absent.

The Chair stated that the purpose of the special meeting was to have additional discussion on the school department budget which was “passed” on at the June 23rd meeting.

Mr. Paolillo provided a review of Circuit Breaker monies which were reduced by 42% due to the State fiscal budget crisis. It was noted that the School had budgeted the Circuit Breaker monies at 60% and thus have a \$154,000 shortfall which cannot be made up within the budget. Mr. Paolillo further noted that the school year has now ended and teachers are off for the summer, though he sees nothing on the horizon with the respect to negotiations.

The Chair stated that negotiations have been ongoing and will continue with the return of teachers in September.

The Manager stated that to say negotiations are ongoing would be inaccurate. Prior discussions with the union indicated that they were not interested in negotiations.

Councilor Portz reviewed a school budget document (attached).

Dr. Coughlin noted that the Circuit Breaker monies side swiped all school districts.

Councilor Devaney commended school officials for their thorough explanation of the budget shortfall.

Councilor Devaney moved the \$154,000 from Council Reserve to the School budget, seconded by Councilor Hecht, for discussion purposes.

Councilor Hecht stated that this is a tough situation and moving forward, the schools will be a leaner department for a number of years. He inquired what help was asked of the Teacher's union prior to the end of the school year.

Mr. Paolillo stated that the Teachers' union was asked to defer their step increases to a late date and to agree that 2 of their 5 professional days would be voluntary in attendance and if they chose to attend, would be without pay. Mr. Paolillo stated that school officials felt the request was reasonable and would have prevented layoffs.

Mr. Paolillo indicated that the response from the Teachers' union was, no.

Ron Meehan, President Union indicated that negotiations are problematic at this point in time as teachers are off for the summer.

Councilor Piccirilli stated that he is a parent of two children in the school system and that he has great respect for the teachers. He noted that the budget crisis is a shared responsibility of the parents, teachers and students. Sacrifices have been asked of the parents and students and that he is very disappointed in the union's response.

The Manager read the school budget line item as amended: \$32,927,708.

Councilor Falkoff asked about Special Needs services and programs. Dr. Coughlin stated that they are building for the future with the use of government Stimulus monies. She noted that language based programs are not yet in place.

Councilor Falkoff inquired if Councilors would be willing to Table the matter until the end of the summer until teachers have returned to work.

The Chair stated that he would not be in support of that and urged Councilors to vote the School's budget as amended.

Upon a roll call vote, the motion to amend the budget was adopted by a vote of 6 for and 1 against and 0 present.

Councilor Hecht moved to reconsider the school budget with the hopes that it fails, seconded by Councilor Piccirilli and defeated by unanimous roll call vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 AM.

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the Town Council for which a quorum was present, the above minutes were adopted on August 11, 2009 as written.

Clyde L. Younger, Council President