

**MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
DOVER CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
WEDNESDAY
MAY 22, 2002
7:00 P.M.**

SPECIAL MEETING

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Councilor Quigley led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Councilor Christenbury, Councilor Hindle, Councilor Hofemann, Mayor Nossiff, Councilor Quigley, Mayor Pro Tem Taylor, Councilor Tweedie, and Councilor Whitmore. Councilor Dunnington absent.

A. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Resolution RE: Fiscal Year 2003 Budget Appropriations, Property Taxes and Fees. Sponsored by Mayor Alexander G. Nossiff, by Request.

Norm Champagne - 13 Church Street. Mr. Champagne has a lot of concerns saying the previous council spent more money than they should have and borrowed more money than they should have and the taxpayers can't take any more. Now is the time if you talked the talk you need to walk the walk. He does not feel horses and take home vehicles is the real issue. He feels the City Manager, Police Chief and Fire Chief are highly paid. He would like the city council to give the City Manager the bottom line so he can provide the services to the people of Dover. The council has been generous with the contracts. He is convinced that whatever figure the council comes up with, the City Manager will run the city just fine. We can not afford the frills and extras this time; it is the City Manager's job to decide what is a frill or extra and what is essential. We do not have a North End Fire Station and we do not have money for our schools. We did have \$5 million to build an ice arena. Should it have been done knowing all the other things we should have done? A dollar just is not a dollar any more so be careful with the taxpayers. The school department is interested in giving the best education for the children that they can. Tell the City Manager to run the city and they (the council) will have kept their campaign promises.

Bob Latture - 25 Birch Drive. Mr. Latture wants to talk about the budget and what waste and mismanagement can be taken care of. The city officials have brought out the boogey man of threats about cutting city services. He continued reading a prepared statement. One city councilor asked for a list of city vehicles being taken home each night. Maybe this is overzealous vehicle use. Does the athletic director and city arborist really need to take vehicles home each night? The Police Department sends 13 city vehicles home each day with employees. Dover's budget can not justify such abuse.

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This is a lackadaisical regard for the taxpayers' money. If our city wastes just \$3, 000, it is a lot more than some of the taxpayers' bill. It is said the devil is in the details. How dare our \$95,000 a year salary police chief take a DARE officer out of our schools when he had 3 mounted patrol officers. Mr. Latture suggests that the City Manager purchase a Random House dictionary for each of the department heads and have them turn to page 595 that says "no", that is the only page they will need.

Richard Hughes - 51 New Rochester Road. Mr. Hughes had given an incorrect statement at a prior meeting and wanted to clarify that. He read a prepared statement on the budget; he feels this is far too much for a budget. He listed prior city services that have been cut, such as pay for trash; we have eliminated spring and fall cleanup and Christmas tree pickup, etc. It is time to look at everyday budget operations. Mr. Hughes mentioned the fund balance. The city assessor's office reports the city is only assessed at 80% as of April 15th. They will be acting on two labor agreements soon, can the taxpayers afford this increase. Other communities are dictating that you will have to do more with less. It should not cost \$100 million dollars to run a city of just 27,000 people.

Amy Jennings – 22 Samuel Hanson Avenue. Ms. Jennings is a resident of Dover and Chair of Dover Main Street Board of Directors. She has been involved in the main street approach for 12 years and is so pleased to be a part of it here in Dover. She mentioned the new train station and the awards that have been received on the state level. She passed out an annual report, (see folder of 5/22/2002). She realizes times are tight, so how do we justify a request for increased funding. She would like them to look at the program carefully. For the last 3 years, they have been trying to track what they have been doing. They play a significant role in what is going on in the city. And have for the past 3 years that the program has been going on. By having Main Street, they have increased employment here in the city. In the last 3 years, the Main Street organization has seen 13,000 volunteer hours (\$130,000). They are a lean organization and feel they have stuck with the current budget for 3 years but they are now a strong presence in this city and need an increase. They would like an increase of \$20,000 to \$30,000.

Ronald Huml - 199 Mast Road. Mr. Huml has a question on the 24 vehicles the city lets employees use in the city. In computing at \$500 per month, that is \$144,000 per year. That is quite a bit of money. He stated, when he worked at the hospital the CEO had a vehicle and got caught by the IRS for not reporting the breakdown of personal use and business use. He got a copy of the publication from the IRS, he hopes the city is reporting to the IRS, as they should be. Then he has concerns about the school budget; he feels they are in excess by one million dollars. He agrees with Mr. Quigley that this should be a level funded budget. Mr. Huml mentioned his taxes on his own house and the increase. He also mentioned the 12% increase in health insurance costs. He wants them to level fund.

Claudette Boutin of the Strafford County Homemakers Association located in Rochester but they service the county including Dover. Ms. Boutin stated their aim is to keep people in the home. They fund raise and have grants for the clients but she has looked at the different cities in the county to help them with their mission. She mentioned the spreadsheet that she emailed to the City Clerk. (in file folder of May 22)

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She is asking the council to split the difference with the Homemakers Association and they will fund raise the rest of the cost.

Gil Hartman - 624 Sixth Street. Mr. Hartman is here on behalf of the Parks & Recreation Board. He has done some research with Dr. Barcelona at UNH. He talked about the Parks & Recreation budget and how much of the recreation budget is returned to the citizens. Mr. Hartman knows this will be picked on; the arena is not part of our budget. They, as a board, have talked about what cuts could be made. They would like to keep what they currently have. This is very important to the quality of life; we have an outstanding community but it is expensive. We have a top-notch program and we are very proud of the city. He is asking them not to cut as the senior citizens and youth value their time in the pool, the fireworks, and other recreation. Please consider this 1% of the total budget.

Peter Schmidt - 46 Fourth Street. Mr. Schmidt mentioned one item and the new roof on the senior center. He wanted to put this into context with Reverend Latture's sermon and the school board budget and how there was no maintenance done on the schools. Maintenance that is deferred now will be needed greatly in the future. He urged the council to be judicious with the cuts that you make. The previous council did spend a lot of money so they have a great task in front of them. He cautioned them not to succumb too easily to the silent song on the referendum on city spending. Quigley has left the room he hopes it is not because of his remarks. Quigley voted every time unanimously with the school board to increase the budget. Now he is talking about level funding. Schmidt urged them to do their job diligently and remember the infrastructure. He mentioned the house that was torched a few days ago, would the city be really served by a lesser city service.

2. Resolution RE: Collective Bargaining Agreement Between the City of Dover and the IAFF- Local 1312 (International Association of Firefighters). Sponsored by Mayor Alexander G. Nossiff by Request.

The Mayor opened the public hearing on IAFF.

Seeing no one, he closed the public hearing.

3. Resolution RE: Collective Bargaining Agreement Between the City of Dover and the DPAA (Dover Police Administrators Association). Sponsored by Mayor Alexander G. Nossiff, by Request.

The Mayor opened the public hearing on DPAA.

Norm Champagne - 13 Church Street. Mr. Champagne stated, these contracts are what they are. He understands the health insurance. Some people are going to pay

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more for their insurance. This has all been negotiated by people representing the City of Dover. He would give them the contract then tell them how much money they were going to have to run the departments. Give them their contracts, then let the brains of the organization figure out how they are going to do it; then give us our services.

Mr. Huml has a question on something he read on a retirement statement.

Peter Schmidt stated regarding this firefighters contract and Mr. Latture's comment on the enormous COLA increase, but he made no mention that the employees are paying a larger percentage of their health care costs. He is in support of these two contracts as well. This council voted in the affirmative on the prior contracts.

Seeing no one else, he closed the public hearing.

2. OTHER BUSINESS

Quigley has 2 items, first he is asking that the lights in lower Central Square have a delayed left turn on Henry Law Ave. He would like an extra light installed. He wants the City Manager's input and answer on this.

Also, he and Christenbury are looking into departments taking vehicles home at night. For instance the fire on Saturday afternoon. How often does this happen? We need to be fair to them before we cut these vehicles or say we take away vehicles. We must take this into consideration. How often do they have an emergency and need to use these cars during non-business hours.

Hofemann says the citizens of Central Towers have asked him to look into the increase in their rent. He wants the City Manager to check on this.

3. ADJOURN

Taylor moved to adjourn, seconded by Quigley at 7:55 p.m.

**Judy Gaouette
CITY CLERK**