

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING/WORKSHOP
DOVER CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
THURSDAY
MAY 24, 2001
7:00 P.M.

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

1. ROLL CALL

Mayor Pro Tem Berry, Mayor Boc, Councilors Dunnington, Hindle, Mayberry, Nossiff, Reese, Schmidt, and Andrews Parker were all present.

The Mayor opened the meeting and read a proclamation on Public Works week. He then presented the proclamation to Pete Lavoie, Director of Community Services.

2. PUBLIC HEARING:

A. CITY PORTION OF:

Resolution RE: Fiscal Year 2002 Budget Appropriations, Property Taxes and Fees. Sponsored by Mayor Wil Boc, by Request.

Mayor opened Public Hearing, asking if anyone wished to speak.

Roland Hofemann, of 18 Wellington Avenue is here representing the Seacoast AARP Chapter here in Dover and also those who can't be here tonight because they are working 2 or 3 jobs trying to keep up with the increase in taxes. He urged the council to remember one word, that is: balance. Balance improvements with the ability to pay. He reviewed some of the pending projects in the City and how worried the elderly are right now. The Mayor had mentioned a few days ago we don't mind paying if we get something in return. He suggested that we need paint on the roads to show the lines. In closing he said, please remember balance improvement with the ability to pay.

Ray Bardwell, of Spur Road, echoed some of Roland's sentiments and asked when was the last time you got a raise in your pay. All these increases are built in year after year and it has just snowballed. When State surveys are considered, he went over some items in Portsmouth's budget. He has another issue he will discuss with the Police Chief, and that is the speed limit on Dover Point Road. The last couple of days he has nearly been run over by some students as he was coming out of his driveway. Where are the police when things like this are going on? When was the last time that you got a 12 % increase in your salary. He assumes all of our big increases from the taxes on the big budget houses have been spent already. He would like to see the entire budget put on one piece of paper so we don't have to read the big book.

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING/WORKSHOP
DOVER CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
THURSDAY
MAY 24, 2001
7:00 P.M.

Norm Champagne, of 13 Church Street has been reading the newspaper about how the council is struggling with costs. He never hears about this when the money is being spent during the year, but only at budget time he hears there are fixed expenses with built in costs. We still have to pay a COLA to these people. He buys health insurance for himself and his wife; he realizes how expensive it is for everyone. But there is some limit on what should be paid. Some of the insurance premium should come from the employees. He always goes back to look at how we got here. He also read in the newspaper that Mayberry wanted to spend the fund balance; he does not feel this is the answer. This will only be asking for a bigger tax increase in future years. He felt that when we elected the Council as city officials that our money would be looked at in a more caring manner. \$4.40 is a tremendous increase. If you were running a business you could not run it this way. He feels the council should give department heads so much money and that is it; but not at the \$4.40 rate. There are an awful lot of people that cannot pay this amount. He feels Nossiff's \$2.50 proposal is still too much.

Richard Hughes, of 51 New Rochester Road is here to address several items in the budget. He told of how many vehicles have been purchased lately and the net number that have been retained in operation by the city. He explained about some of the fire apparatus. He went on that payments on the long term debt bonds are up to 67 million, the highest in history, of this amount, 46 are attributed to the Council's recent spending, even if you take out the Middle School's 31 million, we have spent more than any other council. He went on with several examples of high spending by this council. He continued that most business saw a decrease in their tax bill, while homeowners paid more of a tax. He said some councilors acted surprised by the amount of the proposed increase. After years and years of commendable work by Mr. Beecher and Mr. Harrington, some councilors want to put the city's bond rating back at risk. He quoted an editorial from Fosters of last week. He went on, time is running out and some sense of fiscal order must be maintained.

Parks Christenbury of 98 Cocheco Street commented on some of the items in the School budget that were mentioned last night. He feels we have a fine school system. This proposed increase in taxes along with the increase in water and sewerage and the bag and tag program. But in this case when you talking \$1,000 increase in a two-year period, you truly are forcing some people to choose between mortgages, food and medicine and they will have to make some tough decisions. He remembered, back when he grew up, there were still the mills downtown and the train wrecks. He remembers Henry Law Park and a vital downtown. Most people here used to be blue-collar workers. We have City services that are second to none and this takes a lot of money to get this level of service. He feels there is a goal and that is to bring Dover back with community spirit, but now we have hit a

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING/WORKSHOP
DOVER CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
THURSDAY
MAY 24, 2001
7:00 P.M.

bump in the road and there are people that just cannot afford these increases. We have to keep the community affordable. The decision lies with the city council and he implores you to do the right thing and take a serious look at the budget and make it more affordable for the people.

Ronald Huml of 199 Mast Road agrees with everything he has heard here tonight, as he is one of the elderly. He talked about other towns compared to Dover; he also mentioned the health insurance situation. He also talked on the budget itself; he would like a budget with a 9-month estimate, and his taxes went up over \$400 last year. He is now assessed at 73% of market value of \$137,000.

Paul Vatcher, of 27 Richardson Drive, said it was kind of neat to honor the Veterans tonight with a diploma. He went over his figures from last year when he got home from last night and he's a lot worse off than he thought, as he had forgotten the re-evaluation. If taxes go up again 10% in evaluation, his tax increase will be up \$800. In 1980 he paid \$54,000 for his house which is a 1,200 square foot building. He will be paying 12.2% of his income in taxes. He cannot live in the legacy of Dover, its nice to have all these items but somewhere we must say no to something. Those on fixed incomes do not get raises; his quality of life is going down and he does not like it.

Nick Skaltsis of 6 Erik Drive took the opportunity to talk about the tax rate and tax increase. He will be affected by a four-figure increase. He mentioned the cut that was proposed to be taken from the school of \$150,000 last night. He hears that Mayberry has proposed another \$150,000. He is prepared to show the consequences that this cut would have. He thanked the Mayor for allowing the School Department to defend their budget. Proportionality concerns him with regard to city and school. He tried to clarify that the school is only a quarter of the problem. Nobody wants a four-dollar tax increase but he is asking for proportionality. The mayor and manager have done a good job of creating a good impression on the community. He's asking them to spend a reasonable amount on the schools.

Kevin Quigley of 8 Woodman Park Drive is a School Board member At-large. Last year he did not say anything about the budget, but if they cut too heavily into the school budget, he stated we would have to change our curriculum. We are replacing books again this year that are over 20 years old. The \$150,000 cut will come out of the maintenance side. If you go more than that, you will hurt the education of our children. As Nick has said, we are only 7% of the budget increase.

Ray Proulx, 545 Cataract Ave, Ward 5 member of the School Board asks that the Council pass the School budget as submitted. They have attempted in the last year and a half to put the buildings back to how they used to look. Also they are

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING/WORKSHOP
DOVER CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
THURSDAY
MAY 24, 2001
7:00 P.M.

spending a lot of money for curriculum; please consider the schools when making cuts tonight.

The Mayor made a last call for speakers. Then he closed the Public Hearing.

3. RESOLUTIONS:

- A. Resolution RE: Award of Purchase Order for the Estimated City Share of the Proposed Passenger Rail and Platform Facilities Construction. Sponsored by Mayor Will Boc by Request.

Berry moved to adopt, seconded by Mayberry. Nossiff asked about any issues left or a problem with Guilford; we do not need a rail station with no trains. Motion passed on a roll call vote of 9-0.

- B. Resolution RE: Award of Purchase Order for a New Police Motorcycle. Sponsored by Mayor Wil Boc, by Request.

Berry moved, seconded by Mayberry, to adopt. Motion passed on a roll call vote of 9-0.

- C. Resolution RE: Award of Purchase Order for Architectural Design Services: Butterfield Gym Entrance and Henry Law Park Renovations. Sponsored by Mayor Wil Boc, by Request.

Berry moved to adopt, seconded by Mayberry. Reese asked about funds that were appropriated earlier. He continued, we have done this a number of times. Bannon explained that it includes improvements to the park and a new entrance to the gym for the entertainment area. Reese asked if this is tied in with the Rotary's suggestion of taking the gym for the arts. Also, could it tie in with the proposal of moving the gym to the old Dover Junior High School? Motion passed on a roll vote of 9-0.

- D. Resolution RE: Award of Purchase Orders/Change Order for Projected Additional Work: Thompson Pool Facility and Filtration System. Sponsored by Mayor Wil Boc, by Request.

Berry moved, seconded by Mayberry, to adopt. Gary Bannon explained. Schmidt asked the about groundwater problem and if it will affect the bottom of the pool and will it infiltrate the pool at all. Gary says not at all. Mayberry asked when will the pool open, and will it be on time? Gary says it will open about the middle of June. It will be open to the public at the regular time on June 26 this year. Mayor Boc asked where funds are going to come from, the dam fund. The City Manager says there is Capital set aside for this, Andrews Parker asked what happens when that project

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING/WORKSHOP
DOVER CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
THURSDAY
MAY 24, 2001
7:00 P.M.

comes through. Mr. Beecher says hopefully it won't be that much. Andrews Parker asked why this scope was not discovered before; aren't we hiring good contractors to find out what is going on? Gary explained he only asks for just enough money, not an expanded figure.

Hindle agrees with Andrews Parker and Nossiff. They are sick and tired of having change orders that keep coming to us. Nossiff will oppose this change order for just this reason that we do not predict these changes. The Mayor stated he would support it. Motion passed on a roll call vote of 7-2, Hindle and Nossiff opposed.

- E. Resolution RE: Transfer of Appropriations for the Alternative School. Sponsored by Mayor Wil Boc, by Request.

Berry moved, seconded by Hindle, to adopt. Reese says, reluctantly the Planning Board had decided to take this item up on their next agenda. He does not know why they need the Planning Board's opinion. His question is, what is the \$500,000 change in exterior of the high school? The City Manager deferred to Nick Skaltsis. Reese wondered why we are taking this amount out of here, this is a titillating issue, what is it doing there as the amount has been expended. The City Manager said you approved \$500,000 for improvements in the CIP. Jeff Harrington says this is an error and should say Dover High School FY2002 CIP. Reese asked what were the renovations supposed to be for. Nick says there were two options on the table for the alternative school. One was the old middle school. The other option was for a new facility for \$700,000 – \$1,000,000, the decision had not been made. The record will show that \$500,000 was to go to the high school with \$250,000 for the alt school. Reese says we should not be putting something in print that says exterior. Schmidt asked about school "energy conversation". Jeff stated there are typos on the resolution. Mayberry asked Nick if this is coming in at \$1,050,000. Are we 50,000 over budget? Nick says the answer is no, we are 10,000 under budget. This building is several square feet larger. If it looks as if we are going to go over \$1,000,000 due to ledge, they will shrink the budget. Nick assured him that they would not spend more than \$1,000,000 on the alternative school.

- F. Parade Permit – New Hampshire Special Olympics

Berry moved, seconded by Mayberry to grant, motion passed by all.

Berry moved, seconded by Hindle, to suspend the rules to introduce items 3.G. and 3.H., motion passed on a roll call vote of 9-0.

- G. Resolution RE: Award of RFP #B01033 For Architectural Design Services-North End Fire Station. Sponsored by Mayor Wil Boc, by

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING/WORKSHOP
DOVER CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
THURSDAY
MAY 24, 2001
7:00 P.M.

Request.

Berry moved, seconded by Andrews Parker, to adopt. The City Manager cannot comment, as he has not seen either one of these items.

Nossiff mentioned the last meeting, and how he does not recall voting to put in another fire station. He does not feel he can support this project ever. He does not want to go down this path to explain about it without proper discussion about an architect. Andrews Parker says we did agree to get plans. The time frame was determined and needs to be done. We will be able to get the best bids by the fall. Dunnington states he shares Nossiff's concerns, but councils have been talking about this project for years. This is a public safety issue and we should vote it up or vote it down. We need fire protection in the north end of the city. We do not have to vote to build the fire station tonight, just to put us in a position when it comes before us. Mayberry says we have also had other opportunities to have this conversation; this is not new in the CIP. Nossiff wants to table this item, Reese seconds the motion. Motion to table failed, Reese and Nossiff in favor, everyone else was against tabling. Just because Andrews Parker is with child, we should not hurry this resolution. There is no emergency tonight. There may be an option for other land if we scale back now. Just because we own that land, we should not determine that this is the best place for the fire station. Schmidt says because Andrews Parker is pregnant only moves the project one month earlier. He feels it is appropriate to pass this tonight, to provide adequate fire safety for the north end of the city. Schmidt says Chief Bibber says we are not in an emergency situation in the north end of the city. We simply need a design firm to execute a plan. Schmidt feels a personal obligation to the north end citizens for fire safety. Motion passed on a roll call vote of 8-1. Nossiff opposed.

- H. Ordinance #16-05/24/2001, Chapter 166, Vehicles and Traffic, Stop Sign, Maglaras Park Access Road. Sponsored by Matt Mayberry.

Berry moved, seconded by Andrews Parker, to refer to a public hearing on June 13. All in favor.

1. ADJOURNMENT

Reese moved, seconded by Andrews Parker, to adjourn. Motion passed by all.

WORKSHOP:

1. BUDGET REVIEW

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING/WORKSHOP
DOVER CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
THURSDAY
MAY 24, 2001
7:00 P.M.

The Mayor called the meeting back to order stating they would be voting on the budget next Wednesday. He asked if anyone wanted to comment. Reese made a proposal for discussion's sake to cut \$650,000 off from the school budget, because of what Mr. LaSelva had said that his budget would not increase by 10%. Reese also received the paper on the one time expenditure of \$900,000. He then continued with the taxpayer's story of an old lady in Dover who lives on a limited social security income. Her husband is deceased. The person is Reese's mother. Berry asked if this amount would be just the school. Reese says he wants the same amount from the City side. Nossiff wants to establish our method tonight. He feels this is foolish and not our job. We should talk about this; he is comfortable with somewhere around \$2.50. He echoed what Mr. Hofemann said tonight and how we should not be taxing the elderly out of their homes. He feels there are hidden items here such as positions that were previously hired by grants, but those employees always seem to stay on. Mayberry passed out a handout, stating he went line by line as he feels they are the boss. He feels this is a good example to show. He talked about the fund balance; this is a goal not set in stone. Mayberry will not vote for a 4 million tax base increase. He continued, we're the boss. We are elected, Mr. Beecher is not.

Berry wants to discuss Nossiff's suggestion of a block figure. He notes a number of us have put a lot of time on the budget. Are we going to go line by line or by a block number? The Mayor says we can say we will cut this budget by \$650,000 but we need to know what this will do, what impact will this have if we cut by this amount.

Nossiff is a proponent of using the fund balance but he doesn't know if it will make us lose our bond rating. The City Manager wants to discuss in general terms. He explained how it will affect us if they make cuts and what we need to survive as a community and what he will do from this point on. Contract costs are up one million, that is a buck. This is the highest tax increase in his nine years as City Manager. The only way to make a dent is in personnel, what don't we have to have? He agrees with Nossiff that the grant positions will have to go. He went on about the proposed positions and how he justified asking for them. The City Side debt service is up one million dollars. The decisions he makes are based on what our fixed needs are; such as lights, gas, insurance and computer services. All these items are up and what he will have to do since he does not want to touch the fund balance because we may have a down year. We are already \$190,000 over in the snow budget. This will be taken out of the fund balance. He can almost assure them he will have to eliminate a position, unless we are willing to make a decision on the number of people we employ. Then they will give him a number and he will tell you what could be eliminated. Mayberry reiterated, there are a lot of things that could be cut without laying off anyone. Housing sales are through the roof. He knows, as he is a realtor. There is \$600,000 in just surplus and a nice to

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING/WORKSHOP
DOVER CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
THURSDAY
MAY 24, 2001
7:00 P.M.

have savings account. Andrews Parker feels it's the schools call on what they delete. Andrews Parker is proposing 96 cents off from the city side, what does that do? The City Manager assured Andrews Parker that he would look at Mayberry's items before cutting personnel. The City Manager stated they appropriated an additional \$35,000 for COAST this year. We do look at the long-term finances of the City. In the long run, it ends up costing us more. Andrews Parker asked, are we over 6% in the fund balance. The City Manager asked Jeff for the current fund balance figure. Jeff says there is \$250,000 currently left over. Jeff says Moody's does not like to see less than 10%. He continued, \$250,000 is good.

Hindle feels it's nice to sit and discuss cuts and line item issues. The City Manager mentioned part of the increase is \$1.00 in debt services. That increase is due to the new Public Works facility and the new Arena. He mentioned how Nick Skaltsis had let them know how much Dover spends on kids and how the State average is a \$532 difference from other communities. The contingency is there for emergency projects. He would like to leave \$25-30,000 in contingency because down the road there will be other issues. The school buildings are appalling; Dover spends one million on recreation, not including ball fields and the arena. He wants to take half and leave it in the contingency fund.

The Mayor was in Philadelphia last weekend and met a couple that is moving to Dover because of the good schools. The City Council is supposed to set policy and the way we do this is by setting the budget.

We pay for things two ways, through the increase of tax bills and secondly we want businesses to move into Dover. The Schools have taken the worst hit of all in the last few years, but he questions adding fifteen new teachers this year. We cannot cut the City side \$650,000 but we can take \$150,000 from the school.

Discussion ensued regarding the merits of the City and how we have to have the courage to pay for items we need. He is for a \$150,000 cut from the City and a \$150,000 from the school side. Mayberry reminded the citizens about the fixed county tax. He goes on, this is the School Board's only shot; they cannot come back to us for more money. Jeff say 5% is Moody's fund balance figure. Nossiff is still opposed to the North end fire station, as it is just more long-term debt. Loss of personal should be a last resort. When their grants are up they should be able to transition to another job. Nossiff says we could do away with consulting services. He continued, could we wait on \$100,000 worth of water meters? There are tens of thousands of dollars in the fleet maintenance budget. Discussion ensued.

Dunnington commented on the Mayor's statement, saying he is right about the image that people perceive but we forget the people who are already here and the original, fixed income people cannot afford Dover any more. We must take the people already here into account; he will vote for something much larger than \$150,000. The Mayor agrees we need to find the balance. Schmidt is very torn as

**MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING/WORKSHOP
DOVER CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
THURSDAY
MAY 24, 2001
7:00 P.M.**

he has been fighting for a fair tax structure since 1983 here in NH. The tax structure in the State is crazy. He will be 63 years old next week and he does not have a lot of income, either. He wants the City Manager to tell the Council the maximum amount we can cut the budget by. If we cut one million, we are reducing the taxes by \$100 on a \$100,000 home. He is not prepared to reduce the City's services to hurt this City.

We need to have the courage to provide services the City needs; he's looking at reasonable cuts of not more than \$200,000 from the School. It will hurt no matter what we vote. Nossiff says, in principle Schmidt is right. He gave a ship in the river as an example, he also agrees with Reese, Dunnington and Hindle that we have to slow the rate down. Hindle moved, seconded by all, to adjourn at 9:55 p.m.

Judy Gaouette
City Clerk