



CITY OF DOVER

CITY COUNCIL - MINUTES

Meeting Type: Workshop Session
Meeting Location: Council Chambers, City Hall
Meeting Date: **Wednesday, May 5, 2010**
Meeting Time: **5:30 pm**

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. MOMENT OF SILENCE
3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilor Nedelka led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. ROLL CALL ATTENDANCE

Present: Mayor Myers, Deputy Mayor Trefethen, Councilor Carrier, Councilor Cheney, Councilor Cruikshank, Councilor Garrison, Councilor Hooper, Councilor Nedelka, Councilor Weston.

Also present: City Manager Joyal, City Attorney Krans, and City Clerk Lavertu.

5. FISCAL YEAR 2011 BUDGET OVERVIEW

Mayor Myers suggested to the Council that they add another Citizen's Forum after the Library and Recreation presentation, go to Special Meeting for the Public Hearing on the School Portion of the Budget, and then return to Workshop for General Budget discussion. There was consensus from the Council to follow this suggestion.

A. LIBRARY

Library Director Cathy Beaudoin spoke about the budget for the Library, and her position as advocate for Library Services. She started her discussion with her recommendations for changes in the fees. She recommended that non-resident student fees be lowered to \$80.00, because the Library hasn't sold one card this year at the present \$150.00 fee. She recommended that they drop the fee for the use of meeting rooms for non-profit organizations, and increase the fee \$10.00 for for-profit organizations. She said in her budget there is a 3% increase for the purchase of books, and a \$5,500 increase in capital outlay, which will be used for maintenance on the ceiling and woodwork that was damaged due to the previously leaking roof. She referred to the Citizen's Survey, and said 76% of the people of Dover said they have used the Library in the last 12 months, and 86% of them rated the Library as excellent or good. She said in 2004 it was 89%, and said she felt the drop was due to the reduction in hours. She said her proposed budget for FY2011 was \$1,026,574, which is \$4,600 higher than FY2005. She said their circulation has gone up as people borrow books instead of buying them in this economy. She said the library is breaking records with attendance and circulation. She spoke of all the services the Library offers and the increase in work with fewer staff and fewer scheduled hours. She asked the Council for the restoration of \$30,000 to the Library's budget, which would restore staffing for Saturday afternoons and the other 32 part-time hours that have been cut. She commended the employees, as part of the DMEA, who have offered to decline wage adjustments for the second year if hours are restored. She said no one will suffer physical harm or injury without Library services, but it is essential to the quality of life in Dover.



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Councilor Hooper asked about charging residents \$20 per year. She asked if there were some ideas to help fund the Library services.

Ms. Beaudoin said she felt it was taxing people doubly, because they are already paying \$70.55 out of their property taxes for Library Services.

Councilor Hooper started a discussion about volunteers and the rationale for not using more volunteers.

Ms. Beaudoin said for financial and auditing reasons volunteers cannot handle money, and because of State privacy laws they cannot access the patron database.

Councilor Nedelka said Friends of the Library is the fundraising force for the Library, and said they do raise a remarkable amount.

Ms. Beaudoin said the Friends of the Library just received 501c3 status so they can apply for more grants.

Deputy Mayor Trefethen said the few people that have commented on the budget and the proposed cuts to the Library have said they will adjust to the new hours. He suggested that if the Council restored the \$30,000 that she use it for more circulation.

Councilor Weston asked if there were additional fees to take out books on CD, Music CDs, and Movies.

Ms. Beaudoin said there weren't any fees, and that those items comprised 25% of their circulation. She said a lot of DVDs were donated to the Library. She said this week a 5,000 BTU air conditioner and a 50" HDTV were donated to the Library.

Councilor Weston also spoke about emails she had received regarding people adjusting their schedule to go to the Library, but she wondered who had stopped going.

Ms. Beaudoin said most people who have the Library habit will adjust their schedule.

Councilor Garrison asked about credit card usage.

City Manager Joyal said they are researching it for City-wide use, but right now it is not City policy to accept credit cards. He said there is a cost involved.

Mayor Myers thanked Ms. Beaudoin for her presentation.

B. RECREATION

Recreation Director Gary Bannon gave a PowerPoint Presentation regarding the Recreation Department's proposed budget.

Councilor Cheney started a discussion about changing rates and hours at the pools. She compared the costs and revenues for the pools and the facilities at the McConnell Center.

Mr. Bannon said they are bringing a coalition together to work on solutions to save the pools.

Councilor Weston asked if the pools ever break even.

Mr. Bannon said lap pools do not make money.

Councilor Weston asked about lowering the rent fees at the Ice Arena to below \$300.00 per hour to encourage more people to come to the Arena.

Mr. Bannon said the rate structure is more flexible during less desirable times. He said the \$305.00 per hour rate is the prime time rate.

City Manager Joyal said there is no more prime time to sell.

Councilor Weston asked if the proposed budget reflected the energy savings from the energy efficiency contract.



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Mr. Bannon said it does reflect the estimates on energy savings.

Councilor Nedelka started a discussion about what volunteers do.

Mr. Bannon said that affiliate programs are run by volunteers, but the Recreation Department facilitates everything.

Councilor Garrison started a discussion about marketing and the need to reestablish the recreation mailer that used to be sent out.

Mr. Bannon said the brochure was put back into the budget, because it is believed that it pays for itself.

Deputy Mayor Trefethen asked Mr. Bannon to explain why the indoor pool can't be closed during the summer.

Mr. Bannon said the indoor pool cannot be drained and kept drained, because of the damage the pressure could cause to the shell. The pumps need to be kept running so they won't seize up, and to keep the chemicals moving around so they won't solidify.

Deputy Mayor Trefethen asked Mr. Bannon to explain the issues involved in closing the outdoor pool.

Mr. Bannon said it would entail the same maintenance issues, but it would also affect the businesses, summer camps in the area, that rely on the outdoor pool. He said the pools are meant to be used.

Deputy Mayor Trefethen started a discussion on the fees, and the rates being too high and people not using the facility.

Mayor Myers asked about opening pay for the outdoor pool and the need to hire staff. He asked if there was a binding commitment with the hockey camps and Camp Kool to have the pool open.

Mr. Bannon said the pools filled and available. He said there were no promises in the commitments to have the pool. He said Camp Kool just promises a variety of different activities. He said staffing is at a crisis point, because they're having trouble keeping the people he has now.

FIRST CITIZEN'S FORUM

Citizens are invited to speak on the subject matter of the Library and Recreation Department Presentations. Statements shall be limited to five minutes.

Dawn Haines, 17 Elm Street: She said people didn't understand the problem, but are asking for more time. She spoke about the first meeting of SOS, and listed all 18 people who were present. She referred to the peaceful march that will be held on May 26th. She spoke about the goal of the committee to come up with a proposed business plan for raising revenues. She said they will work on a short-term plan to convince the Council to save the pools, which would give them time to work on the long-term plans to save the pools. She said the people didn't understand the problem.

Mayor Myers asked for the Council to be included on their distribution list.



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Timothy Paiva, 4 Cailey Anna Lane, President of Seacoast Swimming Association: He said he is now convinced that the Council doesn't want to close the pool. He said it will take everyone to come up with long-term viable solutions. He said he is asking for some time.

Edward Bleiler, 4 Isaac Lucas Circle: He asked why the Council was putting people through this misery. He said the people want the Library and Pools. He said the City has lots of money. He spoke about his email from the LGC Executive Secretary and the \$100 million surplus, \$2 million belonging to Dover. He told the Council to give the Library the \$30,000 and keep the pools open. He said they money get the money from the \$6 million in Dover's surplus fund.

Mayor Myers asked Mr. Bleiler to forward the email from the LGC Executive Secretary.

Joseph Tenuta, 262 Long Hill Road, Chairman of the Dover Recreation Advisory Board: He said he was unaware that approximately 40 organizations use the pools. He said overriding the tax cap is not easy, he doesn't envy the Council's position, but pools provide a large service to the community.

Wendell Smith, 13 Apache Street: He said he is a lifelong resident and still swims at both pools. He said it was a tough decision, but he felt the Council will do the right thing. He spoke about his research of the recreation department and pools. He said 70,000 to 90,000 people use the pools every year. He spoke about the efficiencies that have been put in place. He said the pool will not break even without donations. He said they need be told that the pools are going to remain open so they can hire staff immediately. He said he was prejudiced about the pools, but he also wanted to save the Police, Fire, School, and Library. He said it was all part of the system that is wonderful in Dover.

Aviva Grasso, 1 Pebblewood Drive: She said she has no solutions. She said she has never used the pools, but she grew up using a municipal pool and felt it was a valuable tool. She said she is a member of the recreation facilities at the McConnell Center and goes to the Library a lot. She spoke about the hours at these facilities and the importance of keeping them open at times when people can use them.

Richard Arnold, 8 Alder Lane: He said he was part of the group that met to organize a plan to save the pool. He said they will be creating a business plan. He said the cooperation he has already received from Mr. Bannon and the City Manager has been great. He said they plan to use the Dover Ice Arena and Seacoast YMCA as models. He said you can't fundraise for the pools if they are closed.

Kathleen Morrison, 62 Maple Street, Member of the Dover Recreation Advisory Board: She said the Recreation Department is fortunate to have Mr. Bannon.

Gregory McCrone, 239 Knox Marsh Road: He said he has lived in Dover all his life. He was a lifeguard at the pools during the 70's. He spends every weekday morning at the pool, and said it was very busy.



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Patricia Campbell, 17 Hamilton Street: She said she was a nurse. She said studies show that swimming helps to improve insulin availability in diabetes patients. She said without the pools she would worry where the elderly will get this type of exercise.

Michelle Holt-Shannon, 14 Florence Street: She said the evening hours at the Library are very important. She said her spouse can't go to the Library during the day.

Bart Jordan, Central Towers: He spoke about the social network of the City, and how all the issues have to be seen in a serious way. He said when you learn to swim, you can in your old age jump into the fountain of youth and not drown.

Mayor Myers, seeing no one else wishing to speak, closed the Citizen's Forum.

Councilor Carrier made a motion to adjourn at 8:19 pm to the Special Meeting; seconded by Councilor Nedelka.
Vote: 9/0.

C. GENERAL BUDGET DISCUSSION

City Manager Joyal referred to his three mandates: Budgeting Personnel Positions by Department, Proposed Schedule of Fees – FY10, and Proposed FY2011 Budget, Budget Adjustments with Tax Bill Impact to Maintain Existing Service Levels and Related Options. He said next week he will be creating an options list of places to tap funds, such as the Sand and Gravel Fund.

Mayor Myers started a discussion regarding the City employees who offered to take pay freezes if the Council restored eliminated positions and reduced-hour positions.

Councilor Nedelka asked if teachers retain their tenure if their position is restored.

City Manager Joyal said State law says they would retain it even if they aren't hired back until the next school year. He said he doesn't know the specifics of the teachers' contracts.

Councilor Carrier started a discussion about the tax implication for returning the \$350,000 to the School's Budget.

City Manager Joyal said it would affect the average taxpayer by \$30 to \$31.

Councilor Cheney referred to the proposed fee schedule and the reductions in fees to use the pools.

City Manager Joyal said the plan is that the lower rates will attract more people to the pools.

Councilor Cheney asked for figures on the cost to maintain the pools until Labor Day.

Deputy Mayor Trefethen referred to the Citizen's Forum comments about the LGC, and said they were not accurate. He referred to the comment that the Council take the money to cover the budget out of the City's General Reserve Fund, and said it would have a direct impact on next year's budget.

Mayor Myers said one-time money should not be used in the operating budget. He said the City needed a sustainable budget. He said the Council can't keep letting the employee's take pay freezes.



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Councilor Hooper said her priorities are to restore Police and Fire. She said everything else is quality of life. She said the School Board did a good job on their budget. She said she was disappointed that the teacher's union didn't step up and offer wage freezes.

Councilor Carrier spoke about a portion of the gravel funds being put towards the operating expense for the pools.

Councilor Garrison resumed the discussion of restoring the \$350,000 to the School Department. Mayor Myers said the Council didn't have authority to restore the Firefighters program at the School.

Councilor Weston started a discussion about mandatory recycling.

Councilor Garrison said the City has a 65% recycling rate, which is well above normal.

Councilor Weston referred to Citizen's Forum comments regarding health insurance, and going out to bid like the Schools.

City Manager Joyal said they did try to go out to bid with the School, and the City rates went up substantially. He said the City cannot find a comparable program that gives the City a better rate than the LGC.

Mayor Myers referred to the comments that the City needs to keep people rather than things, and started a discussion on capital improvements that need to be funded in the budget.

Councilor Cruikshank agreed with the list of priorities so far: Police, Fire and Capital Improvements. She also agreed with Councilor Hooper's comments regarding her disappointment of the School employees not offering to freeze their wages.

Councilor Nedelka agreed with public safety being a first priority. He talked about fees and property taxes. He said the fees do not come out of the same wallet proportionately. He asked the Solid Waste Advisory Committee to look into raising the price on trash bags. He asked that the City look into raising ambulance rates to higher than the Medicare rates. He spoke about little things to save money. He spoke about the return envelopes that come with the water bills and tax bills, and asked how much those cost. He asked if some of the billing can be reduced to postcards, because it's all public information.

City Manager Joyal said the format for tax bills are set by State law, but they probably could do away with the return envelope. He referred to the Budget book and the costs involved in mailings. He said it would also cause more people to come into the office instead of using the return envelope.

Mayor Myers started a discussion on the bidding process for the Solid Waste contract.

Councilor Garrison said some of the costs did go down. He said he should have more information next week.

Deputy Mayor Trefethen said he would like to fully restore public safety, capital reserve funding, and the Planner position.

Councilor Cheney asked why the City doesn't fund the Strafford Regional Planners.

City Manager Joyal said the service was geared to smaller communities that don't have a planning staff, and some services have additional fees.

Councilor Cheney said she wants to fund the Police and Fire. She said the Council needed to honor the spending cap. She said they should find the money within the budget. She said everything should be on the block.

Mayor Myers asked Councilor Cheney where to cut the budget in order to restore Police and Fire.

Councilor Cheney said she had nothing right now.



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Councilor Carrier started a discussion on areas where fees can be increased at the Recycling Center.

Councilor Weston agreed with the Deputy Mayor's priorities of restoring the Fire, Police, and Planning Department staff. She asked for the City Manager's recommendations on where else to cut the budget.

Councilor Hooper said she was willing to restore the budget, but she was not willing to add to the budget.

Councilor Nedelka said the Council cannot discuss restoring the Police, Fire, and all important items without an override of the tax cap.

Mayor Myers said he appreciated the employees offer, but said there was a net cost to doing it, because it involved restoring the staff to its present level. He said no one is looking to cut the pools, but the Council will need an aggressive business plan. He said he was willing to give them a little time.

Councilor Carrier made a motion to suspend the rules to continue the meeting after 10:30 pm; seconded by Councilor Cheney.

Roll Call Vote: 9/0.

Deputy Mayor Trefethen referred to Councilor Weston's comment to the City Manager to find the \$550,000 needed to restore police and Fire somewhere else in the budget. He said the City Manager already gave the Council a budget that met the tax cap. He said the Council could pass this budget as is, and then the State may downsize the City more. He said the City Council will get blamed for the amount of the tax bills in November.

Councilor Cruikshank said she would like to stay within the tax cap, but she was more focused on the long-term health of the City.

Councilor Cheney said it was important not to say that this is it. She said there are solutions, and the budget can be changed at any time.

6. SECOND CITIZEN'S FORUM

Citizens are invited to speak on the subject matter of the Workshop. Statements shall be limited to five minutes.

Mayor Myers, seeing no one wishing to speak, closed the Citizen's Forum.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Deputy Mayor Trefethen moved to adjourn; seconded by Councilor Weston.

Vote: 9/0

Ms. Beaudoin's notes for the Proposed Library budget, Mr. Bannon's PowerPoint Presentation for the Proposed Recreation Department budget, and the City Manager's handouts will be archived with the minutes.