

WINTHROP TOWN COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, May 3, 2010

Minutes

Attendance: Kevin Cookson, Chair; David Rheame, Linda Caprara, Ken Buck, Sarah Fuller, Priscilla Jenkins, James Lattin. Cornell Knight, Town Manager, and Julie Winberg, Secretary.

Called to Order at 7:00 p.m.

Approve the Minutes of April 5, April 12, and April 19, 2010.

Motion made by Fuller and seconded by Rheame, the minutes of the meetings held on April 5, April 12, and April 19, 2010 were approved with a unanimous vote.

Tabled Item #29 (from April 5th) – Consider options available for the Masonic Building.

Motion by Rheame and seconded by Fuller Item #29 was taken off the table with a unanimous vote.

The town manager informed the Council that he did check with the town's attorney and the options at hand meet the requirements of the ordinance and that preserving the footprint status of the grandfather clause. You can remove the building to the first floor decking and keep that status. By doing this, you preserve the footprint and you remove the hazard in the process. There would be no gravel pad for parking.

The concern the Library Committee has however is that taking the building down to the first level would, in the long run, cost more to demolish the building. The Building Committee and Trustees are divided and further discussion will be had at their meeting on April 10th.

Motion by Buck and seconded by Fuller to table this item to the next Council meeting in June. This passed with a unanimous vote.

Item #34 Presentation of the 2010-2011 School Budget – Stephen Cottrell, Superintendent of Schools.

Stephen Cottrell was in attendance to present the School Budget. The budget proposal includes an additional \$375,000 in property tax commitment over last year's amount. This budget is built on projected revenues. He explained that the four retirements that are planned will not be filled and that two people have left and their positions will not be filled either. Departments are being reduced right through the food service department. The Board is privatizing the custodial service, there are significant reductions on insurance and his position as Superintendent will be reduced to two days a week.

He agreed that this is a difficult situation during difficult financial times. He explained that he is holding a meeting on April 5th and further negotiations and cuts will be pursued. Unless agreement is reached, mediation will occur.

The Board was unanimous that they were looking for and expecting a budget from the School Board that reflects no increase in salaries. This will mirror the budgets for the town and the police department union as their budgets reflects a 0% increase in salaries.

The Council reviewed the expenditures in the Fun After School Program, expressing their concerns that the amount budgeted is too high.

Recommendations from the Council were presented such as putting a sliding scale into effect charging parents for this service.

Some Councilors recommended that the School Board not wait until next year to cut programs as it has already been determined this year that they will be further in the 'red' next year. The recommendation was to 'bite the bullet now' and cut those program as everything is on the table.

A comparison was made in the health insurance benefits that the employees working for the School get compared to the private sector. The school employees are covered 100% and 80% for family members. This total benefit package makes personnel compensation unreasonably high. Figures

of the total benefit package will be given to Council members within a few days for their review.

Councilors expressed their concern that a 0% increase in personnel compensation was not presented as requested. With 9% unemployment and a large percentage of underemployment facing all of us. It is important to think creatively.

The Councilors reiterated how supportive they have been towards acceptance of the School Budgets in the past but those were different times. They explained again that they want to see a 0% increase in personnel costs and the negotiations have to emphasize that as the Council can't support anything else.

Reminders were made that the four construction bonds will be expiring in November of this year and the figure totaling all four is approximately \$626,000. The Councilors reminded the Board that they signed an agreement with the town that any retiring bonds will go to the summer wage liability.

Item #35 Hold a public hearing on the annual Victualer's License renewals.

Public hearing opened at 8:03 p.m...

There were no comments from the public.

Public hearing closed at 8:04 p.m.

Item #36 Consider the annual Victualer's license renewals.

Motion by Rheaume and seconded by Caprara, Item #36 – the annual Victualer's license renewals were approved with a unanimous vote for: American Legion Post #40, China Express, China Noodles, Cumberland Farms, Dead River Convenience, Fast Eddie's, Full Court Deli, Mia Lina's Italian Express, Moonshadow Farms, Hannaford Brothers, Old Colony Ice Cream, Peppers Restaurant, Pond Town Tavern, RT Farms, Subway, Sully's Tavern, Wicked Bean, Winthrop House of Pizza

Item #37 Consider a transient sellers license for the Farmer's Market

Motion by Rheaume and seconded by Caprara, Item #37 - The transient sellers' license for the Farmer's Market was approved with a unanimous vote.

Item #38 Consider a transient seller's license for the Curbside hot dog grill, Main Street

Motion by Rheaume and seconded by Caprara, Item #38 - a transient seller's license for the Curbside hot dog grill on Main Street was approved with a unanimous vote.

Item #39 Consider the Cobbossee Watershed District's budget assessment.

Bill Monagle was in attendance to present CWD's budget along with two Winthrop Trustee members.

Chairman Cookson reiterated that at the last Council meeting in April, he stressed that the only budget that he would consider reviewing was a line item budget. Since what was presented on this night was 'not' a line item budget, he would not review it. He also reiterated that the Council requested a budget with a 0% increase in personnel. Clearly, the budget presented on this night showed a 3% increase in personnel.

He directed the Town Manager to request information from the town's attorney on how the town could disband from the CWD. The Chair went on to say that he go so far as 'freezing' the budget allowing for no increase in any department.

Frustration on obtaining specific information that was clearly stated at the April 5th meeting came to a head. CWD was requested to submit a line item budget this week identifying factors under personnel, including benefit packages along with a comparison to last year's budget which will reflect either an increase or a decrease. This information is vital for the Councilor's to make a final determination.

Item #40 Consider the installation of speed bumps on Greenwood Avenue

The Town Manager presented an estimate for a speed hump which would cost the town \$1,700 per location. The issue of speeding still persists with several residents in attendance. The Police Department's representative notified the Council that patrols have been set up in that area and the average speed was 26 to a high of 31 miles per hour, thus, not reflecting a major problem. The posted speed is 25 mph. The Chief of Police will be having a meeting with the residence of Greenwood and discuss what options are available to them. At that point after meeting, they will come back to the council with specific information and resolution.

Motion by Caprara and seconded by Jenkins to table this to the June 7th meeting after the meeting is held by the Police Department with the residents. The vote was unanimous.

Item #41 Consider a request from the Kennebec Land Trust for the remaining cedar planks and posts on the Mt. Pisgah trail.

Jim Connors was in attendance and explained that there is planking left as a significant donation of crushed rock from the Tower Company completed the project.

An option offered was to take the left over planking and use it on other trails in the Kennebec Trust. He came this evening to see what the Councilors would agree to. Storage of the planks proves to be a significant problem. The land trust has \$500.00 in the budget for Mt. Pisgah. There are 107 planks left at the cost of \$1,200. Keeping the planks in Winthrop for Winthrop use was definitely on the table.

Storage in Annabessacook was a viable option. A consensus was to store them to use for Winthrop trails was evident. Volunteers would have to be gathered and the use of the town supply truck was necessary to move the planks.

Motion by Fuller and seconded by Jenkins to approve the town to retain ownership for the cedar planking, storing it in Winthrop and donating 20 planks to the KLT for use at other locations. This passed with a unanimous vote.

Item #42 Consider a letter of intent for a grant to the Department of Economic and Community Development on behalf of Alternative Manufacturing Inc.

A letter from Kim Vandermeulen was enclosed in the Councilor's packet explaining the grant request for building improvements, software and a marketing plan.

Motion by Caprara and seconded by Jenkins with a unanimous vote to approve a letter of intent for a grant to the Department of Economic and Community Development on behalf of Alternative Manufacturing Inc.

Item #43 Consider the disposition of a tax acquired property.

The only property that was tax acquired from the 2007-2008 tax year was a parcel in the Brandywine subdivision, which has a value of \$4,300. The owners are deceased and no family was located.

Motion by Rheaume and seconded by Caprara with a unanimous vote to approve the proposed disposition of the tax acquired property which will put it up for bid (1/2 acre).

Item #44 Update on the DOT's Main Street drainage project and Route 202 work.

The work will start the week of May 17th for the drainage project on Route 202. It will take approximately 6 to 8 weeks. Paving will not be a part of it. Paving will be done next year but there is a small possibility that it will be looked into this year. This is a State project and scheduled by DOT.

Manager's Report

Council Budget meeting will be held on May 10th at 6:30 p.m. The Comprehensive Plan Committee and Town Council will hold a joint public hearing on June 28th at 7:00 p.m. A draft plan will be presented. This draft plan is on the website and the Councilors will get a copy of it ahead of time as well.

If any of the Councilors want to serve on the MMA legislative policy committee to let the Town Manager know.

Motion by Buck and seconded by Rheaume, the meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m. with a unanimous vote.