

WINTHROP TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes

July 15, 2013 7 P.M.

Attendance: Chairman Kevin Cookson: Priscilla Jenkins, Linda Caprara, Sarah Fuller, Larry Fitzgerald, Ken Buck Sr., Don Ellis, Jeffrey Woolston (Town Manager) and Julie Winberg (Secretary). Lee Bragg (Town Attorney)

The meeting opened at 7:00 p.m.

Ordered that the Winthrop Town Council meet to consider the following items:

Item #53 – Hold a public hearing on the Budgets for the 2013-2014 Fiscal Year:

Resolution #101 Parts I – Municipal Budget

Chair Cookson did a quick review of the town's budget stating that it is \$112,000 less this year than last. Part time positions have been cut along with one police officer position. \$100,000 has been cut from the employee benefits to keep costs under control.

The public hearing closed at 7:05 p.m.

Motion by Fuller and seconded by Caprara to pass Resolution #101 Part 1. This passed with a unanimous vote.

Motion by Fuller and seconded by Caprara to waive the second reading also passed with a unanimous vote.

Part #101a Part II – School Budget

The public hearing opened at 7:08.

Gary Rosenthal was present and read a statement for the Council's consideration. He said, among other things, that the budget was 'built on two ethical considerations – flat level funding and transparency/credibility'. The Board has made substantial inroads to health insurance and

it is still in contract negotiations with employees. He stressed that the salaries as noted do not reflect any raises just step increases. Their new mission statement is a clear indication of the solid direction they are taking to develop short and long term goals. He reminded everyone of the schools high ranking in Kennebec County.

Public hearing closed at 7:15 p.m.

Councilor Fuller stated that the school budget as presented is 'not an even playing field'. In addition, what remains are outstanding questions that auditors raised. She went on to say that the public needs to have a clear sense of what the FY14 budget is and hopefully that will be decided by the beginning of the new school year.

Councilor Fitzgerald stated that he too had the same equity issues. All the town's departments (which include the schools) should not be left out of public scrutiny. "This is an unsustainable issue and the common theme is the benefits". The 100% health insurance coverage for school personnel is a source of contention not only to Councilors but to residents alike.

Councilor Jenkins stated that she is fully aware of these difficult times as well as the health care issue as a whole. But she strongly believes in collective bargaining. She also would like the auditors questions answered but would approve the budget as presented this date.

Lee Bragg informed the Council that their vote would have to be made and would be an indication of their commitment to approve again the 2013 budget. That would be the way the town and the school could move forward for property tax purposes.

The town manager told the group that the final report from the auditors would not come before October. Records from the credit union are crucial for the auditors to review.

Motion by Buck and seconded by Caprara not to pass #101a Part II School Budget until the auditors and town attorney are done with their review and the town would go with the FY2013 school budget (a \$500 difference). This motion passed with a vote of 6-1 (Jenkins in opposition).

Councilor Fitzgerald stated that the Board needs to resolve this quickly and even though continued negotiations are ongoing, the sentiments of the Council for parity in regard to health insurance should be weighed.

Chairman Cookson was in complete support of the Council's decision.

Mr. Bragg informed the group that In reference to these 'ongoing negotiations, the Councilors are allowed to state their position and they have a responsibility to provide information for all line items in order to promote good faith bargaining and prevent reaching unsustainable agreements. 'That is not meddling into school bargaining rights'. The referendum is planned

for September 10th and the town has shown their commitment to move forward by their vote of 6-1.

Item #66 – End of Year Money Movement Request – FY 12-13 School Budget

Gary Rosenthal requested the town approve a transfer from one cost center to another – moving from Article 3 \$19,409.64 to Article 6 – overextended was the explanation.

Motion by Fuller and seconded by Jenkins this request was approved and passed with a unanimous vote.

Other Business

The town manager asked for an approval of a quit claim deed that should have been discharged in 2009.

Motion by Fuller and seconded by Caprara approving this discharge passed with a unanimous vote.

Motion by Fuller and seconded by Caprara the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m. This passed with a unanimous vote.

/jcw