

*Special Meeting
Winthrop Town Council
Meeting Minutes
June 25, 2012*

Attendance: Chairman Kevin Cookson: Linda Caprara, Priscilla Jenkins, Sarah Fuller, Ken Buck Sr., Larry Fitzgerald, Jeffrey Woolston (Town Manager) and Julie Winberg (Secretary). Absent: Jennifer Currier

The meeting opened at 7:10 p.m.

Chairman Cookson explained to the audience that the Council called this special meeting to ask the counselors to vote on opening the municipal budget which was adopted June 4th. The School Board approved a series of cuts prior to this meeting reducing their budget for 2012-2013 by \$117,000.

Motion by Fuller and seconded by Caprara the motion to reopen the municipal budget passed with a vote of 5-1 (Jenkins).

Motion by Caprara and seconded by Buck to take \$120,000 out of undesignated surplus and use it for road maintenance costs rather than increasing the proposed budget. \$1.2 million will be the balance left in surplus after this transfer. The motion passed. 4-2 (Cookson, Jenkins).

These cuts made by the School Board and the Town will bring the tax rate for the Municipal Budget to \$14.24 per \$1,000 worth of property value. It is now \$13.68 per \$1,000. Approval of a \$2.3 million municipal budget.

Note: discussion from the public did center on some dissatisfaction. Frustration was apparent about the process and what seemed to be the lack of transparency and long-term planning. A closer look into the Police Department was suggested by Councilor Fitzgerald leaving the present 24/7 coverage the town has now. Working closer with the school and the town was echoed by many which some view that the lack of cooperation between the two entities could lead to a division in the town. Frustration was also evident with the Federal Government and the mandates for special education which some called "Outrageous". It was recommended that the vacancy rate with the school and the municipal side be explored and worked into the budget.

The 4% increase for the school and town employees was criticized during this time of need where everyone is feeling the downward turn in the economy. Commitments were made by the councilors that the police union contract will be reevaluated and renegotiated next year, specifically their benefit package. It could not be done this year. Note: this 4% increase for employees has been held in abeyance for the past three years and could not be held off this year.

Motion by Fuller and seconded by Fitzgerald, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m. with a unanimous vote.