

Minutes of the Town of Farmington
Special Town Council Meeting
April 11, 2016

Present:

Nancy W. Nickerson, Chair
Jon Landry
Peter M. Mastrobattista
Gary Palumbo
Amy Suffredini
Meredith A. Trimble
John Vibert

Kathy Eagen, Town Manager
Paula B. Ray, Clerk

A. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The Council and members of the public recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Chair informed the public the reason for the special meeting was to discuss how to address the expected shortfall in revenue for the 2016-2017 Fiscal Budget due to reduced State of Connecticut grant funding. She explained that the meeting was for discussion only and that there would be no votes taken.

C. Public Comment

Beth Kintner of 24 Farmstead Lane acknowledged the State budget was a mess but felt the Town of Farmington's budget was in good shape. She attributed that to generations of excellent leadership. She asked no cuts be made to the Board of Education operating budget. She suggested the shortfall could be made up with a combination of cuts suggested by the Town Manager and Superintendent of Schools, a contribution from fund balance and an additional increase to taxes.

Sarah Burns of 3 Hidden Spring Lane told the Council she was dismayed when she heard how much trouble the State budget was in. She asked the Council to be creative in how they made the cuts, so as not to hurt the schools.

Paul Kix of 53 Garden Street told the Council he had a daughter in first grade and twin boys entering kindergarten in the fall. He challenged the Council to show true character and that they value the schools by raising taxes to make up the short fall instead of cutting the Board of Education budget. He told the Council he moved here for the schools. He pointed out Farmington's taxes were low and could be raised without making them too high. He further suggested taking funds from fund balance even if it threaten the Town's AAA rating, which he didn't feel was as important as funding the Board of Education budget. He reminded the Council all of the parents that were speaking were asking for the same thing and that there were more Democrats in Farmington than Republicans. He told the Council they may find themselves out of office if any more cuts were made to education.

D. To consider the Town Council Proposed FY 2016-2017 Budget

The Manager; Joseph Swetcky, Director of Finance and Administration and Erica Robertson, Assistant Town Manager reviewed the newest proposed revenue situation regarding State of Connecticut grant funding.

The Manager explained the State informed the Town that the Education Cost Sharing Grant for next year had been cut by \$665,999, which was a result of removing the hold harmless funding for the ECS Grant and then cutting the ECS Grant by 1%. The Manager believed the loss in revenue needed to be addressed. She spoke with the State legislators, and they felt there was a good chance the reduction could be mitigated. The Manager's opinion was that with the mitigation to the ECS Grant and a probable reduction in the PILOT Grant the number the Council should be looking to cut would be \$500,000.

The Manager pointed out to the Council that the entire grant funding for the current fiscal year had not been received yet. There was still \$700,000 outstanding for the current year. The Manager believed that some but not all of the outstanding funds would be received.

It was the Manager's recommendation to cut the Capital Improvement Plan Budget as opposed to the operating budgets of the Town and Board of Education, because it would be easier to restore the funds if more money was received than expected to this budget.

The Manager reported that after reviewing her budget, she recommended cutting \$220,000 from the \$300,000 in the CIP Budget slated for Town Hall Parking Lot and \$30,000 from the Town Operating Budget slated for Workmen's Compensation Insurance due to a positive renewal. These two cuts would have made up half of the expected short fall in revenue.

The Council discussed the various options available to address the revenue short fall.

E. Adjourn to Executive Session

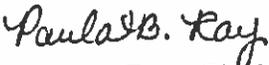
There was no Executive Session held. The shortfall was big.

F. Adjournment

Motion was made and seconded (Trimble/Mastrobattista) to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Adopted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,


Paula B. Ray, Clerk