

TOWN OF MANSFIELD  
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
BUDGET WORKSHOP

Monday, April 19, 2010

Mansfield Senior Center  
Arts & Crafts Room  
7:30pm

A G E N D A

Work Session

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Adoption of Budget and Recommended Appropriations
3. Other
4. Adjournment

Town of Mansfield  
Proposed FY 2010/11 Budget  
Mill Rate Estimates

|  | 2009/10<br>Current Rate | Manager's<br>Proposed | Flat Rate | .10% Increase | .25% Increase |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| Mill Rate  | 25.71                   | 25.62                 | 25.71     | 25.74         | 25.77         |
| Increase in Funds Available<br>(Over the Manager's Proposed) |                         | \$                    | 89,000 \$ | 112,500 \$    | 150,000 \$    |

| Impact to Median Single Family Taxpayer                             |    |            |            |            |            |         |
|---|----|------------|------------|------------|------------|---------|
| Median Single Family Valuation<br>(Average reval increase of 1.13%) | \$ | 167,790 \$ | 169,686 \$ | 169,686 \$ | 169,686 \$ | 169,686 |
| Estimated Taxes   |    | 4,314      | 4,347      | 4,363      | 4,367      | 4,374   |
| Increase in Taxes   |    |            | 33         | 49         | 53         | 60      |
| Percentage Increase   |    |            | 0.8%       | 1.1%       | 1.2%       | 1.4%    |

**General Fund Adjustments:**

**Motion:** To adjust the Contributions to Area Agencies as follows:

Increase:

|                              |          |
|------------------------------|----------|
| United Services              | \$ 1,000 |
| Sexual Assault Crisis Center | \$ 1,000 |
| CT Legal Service             | \$ 1,000 |
| Community Companion          | \$ 1,000 |

Decrease:

|             |          |
|-------------|----------|
| Safe Havens | \$ 2,000 |
|-------------|----------|

for a net increase in the General Fund budget of \$2,000.

**Motion:** To increase funding for the Senior Center Social Worker position by \$6,300 allowing an increase of 8 hours per week beginning in January, 2011.

**Motion:** To add funding in the amount of \$8,200 for a Transportation Coordinator position (estimated at 10 hours per week) for the volunteer driver program

**Motion:** To increase the General Fund "Fund Balance" by \$5,000.

**Motion:** To increase the General Fund Transfer Out to Capital Projects (via the CNR Fund) by \$67,500.

**Capital Nonrecurring Fund Adjustments:**

**Motion:** To increase the Capital Nonrecurring Fund the Transfer Out to Capital Projects by \$67,500.

**Capital Projects Fund Adjustments:**

**Motion:** To change the proposed Bond Funding to Capital Non-recurring Funding for the following items:

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Replacement Boat                  | \$10,000 |
| Fire Ponds                        | \$ 5,000 |
| Playground Surfacing              | \$ 5,000 |
| Amenities-Lions Park              | \$10,000 |
| Restroom Improv-BCP               | \$ 3,000 |
| Trail Improv/Parking-Commonfields | \$ 4,000 |
| Pickup Mounted Message Sign       | \$10,000 |
| Snowplows                         | \$ 5,500 |
| Tree Replacement                  | \$ 5,000 |
| Small Bridges                     | \$10,000 |

for a total of \$67,500 to promote "pay-as-you-go" funding rather than borrowing.

**Motion:** To increase the Capital Projects Fund budget by \$1,000,000 for the Open Space account, to be funded through the sale of bonds.

**Motion:** To move the \$13,000 for Improved Security at Town Buildings from the Proposed 2010/11 Capital Projects Fund Budget to the Five Year Capital Improvement plan in 2011/12, to allow for the development of a specific plan for this project.

Town of Mansfield  
Proposed Motions -- Recap of Budgets  
FY 2010/11

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| General Fund - Manager's Proposed               | \$ 13,024,895        |
| Proposed Adjustments:                           |                      |
| Increase Area Agencies                          | 2,000                |
| Increase for Sr Center Social Worker            | 6,300                |
| Increase for Transportation Coordinator         | 8,200                |
| Increase to Fund Balance                        | 5,000                |
| Increase to Transfer to Capital Projects/CNR    | 67,500               |
| General Fund - As Amended                       | <u>\$ 13,113,895</u> |
| <br>  |                      |
| Capital Non-recurring Fund - Manager's Proposed | \$ 900,045           |
| Proposed Adjustments:                           |                      |
| Increase Transfer to Capital Projects           | 67,500               |
| Capital Non-recurring Fund - As Amended         | <u>\$ 967,545</u>    |
| <br>  |                      |
| Capital Projects Fund - Manager's Proposed      | \$ 19,074,420        |
| Proposed Adjustments:                           |                      |
| Increase for Open Space (bond funding)          | 1,000,000            |
| Remove Town Building Security Improvements      | (13,000)             |
| Capital Projects Fund - As Amended              | <u>\$ 20,061,420</u> |

ESTIMATED TAX WARRANT AND LEVY  
TOWN OF MANSFIELD  
2010/11

| Amount to Raise by<br>Taxation |  | Dollars      | Equivalent<br>Mill Rate |
|--------------------------------|--|--------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Proposed Budget             |  |              |                         |
|                                | Mansfield School Board                     | 20,588,160   |                         |
|                                | Town General Government                    | 13,113,895   |                         |
|                                | Total Town                                 | 33,702,055   |                         |
|                                | Region 19 General Fund Contribution        | 9,924,230    | 45.02                   |
| 2. Less:                       |  |              |                         |
|                                | Tax Related Items                          | 510,000      |                         |
|                                | Non-Tax Revenues                           | 18,654,930   |                         |
|                                | App. Of Fund Balance                       | 19,164,930   | 19.78                   |
|                                | Amount to Raise<br>by Taxes (current levy) | \$24,461,355 | 25.24                   |
| <u>Tax Warrant Computation</u> |  |              |                         |
|                                |  | \$24,461,355 | 25.24                   |
|                                |  | 420,000      | 0.43                    |
|                                | 3. Elderly Programs                        | 34,300       | 0.04                    |
|                                | Tax Warrant                                | \$24,915,655 | 25.71                   |
| <u>Mill Rate Computation</u>   |  |              |                         |
| 1.                             | Tax Warrant                                | 24,915,655   |                         |
| 2.                             | Taxable Grand List                         | 969,090,991  | = 25.71                 |
|                                | Proposed Mill Rate                         | 25.71        |                         |
|                                | Current Mill Rate                          | 25.71        |                         |
|                                | Increase (Decrease)                        | 0.00         |                         |
|                                | Percent Increase (Decrease)                | 0.00%        |                         |

We would first like to thank the town manager and his staff for all of their hard work in preparing this budget. Our town benefits from their hard work.

Mansfield's budget is under assault from many corners: increasing costs of employee benefits, an increase in our debt service and a loss of revenue. Revenue is decreasing: non tax revenue is projected to continue to diminish; money from the federal Education Cost Sharing grant, under the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) is expiring next year, potentially leaving the town short 1.4 million. The municipal fiscal prospects for the next couple of years in CT are bleak – especially for a town that relies so heavily upon state funds.

Therefore, it was surely surprising and pleasing to our residents to see the town manger propose a budget that afforded them a mill rate decrease that would give them an opportunity to stabilize their household budgets and prepare for the sure to come increases over the next couple of years. However, when funds are drying up and budgets need to be balanced, we believe it is time to change the philosophy of spending that the council has employed for many years and look at the impact of nonessential purchases. As a council we need to examine the luxuries we want immediately and those for which we can reasonably delay gratification. Are these nonessential purchases needed now, or can we postpone them until a better financial climate or utilize grant opportunities? Are there other ways to pay for some nonessential items?

As a result of this budget philosophy, we have requested for several months to have a budget reflecting a 5% reduction in general services to compare with the proposed budget. However, as this 5% reduction budget was not generated, we asked the town manager for areas where further cuts could be made. His recommendations to us were:

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Eliminate the proposed additional trooper position | \$80,600  |
| Membership in Metro Hartford Alliance              | 2,400     |
| Limit funding for fee waivers                      | 23,000    |
| Remove funding for Early Childhood Initiative      | 20,000    |
| Further reductions to area agencies                | 6,000     |
| TOTAL  | \$132,000 |

We agree with some of his suggestions:

1. Why would we engage an additional trooper position when our study of police services has yet to be begun? (80,600)
2. Metro Hartford Alliance has shown itself inconsistent in protecting the needs of our part of the state. (2,400)
3. Further reductions to area agencies are certainly a possibility. We would suggest eliminating the 2,000 to Safe Havens, reducing the amount earmarked for United Services which serves the

same population of clients as other large agencies in the area by 3,000, and reducing the amount given to the Veteran's Advisor at WRCC, whose referral service is duplicative of services provided to veterans by other agencies, by 5,000. (10,000)

As to the other two suggested areas of budget reduction, we would need supplemental information to understand why they were targeted to be reduced.

Along with the suggestions for reduction by our town manager, we would suggest examining the following items from capital improvement, most, if not all, that may be reasonably eliminated from the proposed budget:

1. The community center fitness equipment can continue to be maintained as best as possible (34,000)
2. The community center locker room ventilation system has been working for many years. While maybe not optimal, it is functioning for the purpose for which it was installed. (20,000)
3. Amenities at Lions Park are to benefit a select group of people for a select period of time. Perhaps waiting for an appropriate grant or fundraising by those who will be using these amenities may be a better course of action at this time. This approach was used with success for the concession stand at South East fields and construction of the skate park. (10,000)
4. Hiring an architect for Bicentennial Pond seems premature when the ADA improvements and assessment of those improvements is yet to come. Perhaps this should wait for a package approach to the park. (3,000)
5. A first stage security improvement implies future stages for continuation of the project during the hardest budget years. Whereas there is not an apparent immediate and urgent need, this could wait. (13,000)
6. Surely we can find a better way to ensure our oil tank is not overfilled? (6,000)
7. Is this the right time to buy a road works electronic message board? (10,000)
8. How much of the Professional and Technical Services for the Storrs Center Project allocated last year to negotiate a development agreement between the developer and the town were expended? What product did we get for our expense? Is it necessary at this time to put additional funds into this item? (50,000)

While we agree in large part with the town budget proposal, we have an important philosophical difference. We believe this is the time to begin diminishing our budget and give our taxpayers time to regroup their families' budgets, while preparing for what the town will be asking of them in the next few years. This is not the right economic time to be growing our budget larger. This is not the time to be increasing the tax demands on our community members, unless absolutely necessary. This philosophy does not necessarily require drastic cuts and elimination of services, but rather a careful assessment of each line item and planned new purchase. Are these items essential now, this year, for immediate gratification without delay?