

REGULAR MEETING – MANSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
June 28, 2010

Mayor Elizabeth Paterson called the regular meeting of the Mansfield Town Council to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Audrey P. Beck Building.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Haddad, Keane, Kochenburger, Lindsey, Moran, Paterson, Paulhus, Ryan, Schaefer

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Paulhus moved and Ms. Moran seconded to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2010 Special meeting with corrections. Motion passed with all in favor except Mr. Ryan, Ms. Keane and Ms. Lindsey who abstained. Mr. Haddad moved and Mr. Paulhus seconded to approve the minutes of the June 14, 2010 meeting as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC HEARING

The Assistant Town Clerk read the notice of the public hearing.

1. School Building Project

A letter from Margaret Rubega in support of Option E (two elementary-schools) was included in the record of the public hearing.

Comments and notes from Bill Caneira in opposition of Option D (one elementary-school) were included in the record of the public hearing.

Thomas Weinland, 2 Nutmeg Court, spoke in support of a single school option. A single school would be considerably less to build and staff. Rebuilding or remodeling multiple schools could result in a tax burden on taxpayers, and may lead to larger classrooms and reduction of programs.

Mr. Weinland then read a letter written by Anne Rash, 35 Samuel Lane. Ms. Rash does not support the proposal to build two new schools. She feels that the town cannot financially handle the cost of building two schools and that the whole Board of Education's budget could be affected.

Bob Kremer, 67 Charles Lane, supports the one school option. This option creates the most efficient use of limited resources, maintains smaller class sizes and would improve curriculum. A two school option would have an enormous long term impact on the Town.

Jeff Smith, property owner in Mansfield does not feel that the community has the financial capability to bond the school projects. If the project goes forward as proposed resources would not be available for maintaining town buildings and current services, resulting in significant pressure on future budgets. His recommendation is to do nothing at this time.

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Crayton Walker, 65 Riverview Road, hopes the Council will seriously consider the one school option. The gains that are expected would not offset the cost of two schools.

Gene Nesbitt, Wormwood Hill Road, requested an explanation as to why at the time of the 2006 Plan of Conservation and Development the schools were in no need of major renovations, but now has become a major issue. What are the alternatives if State funding is not available. He would like to see the project postponed until the town achieves more progress on the two major economic developmental projects. He strongly endorses the town to be completely transparent in the total cost of the project.

Jeannette Picard, 72 Timber Drive, is against the one school option. Smaller school sizes are more beneficial to children. One school may be fiscally prudent but is educationally irresponsible.

Lynn Stoddard, 192 Ravine Road, as a member of the Sustainability Committee they will soon be submitting comments on the siting criteria from an environmental sustainability perspective.

Terry Berthelot, Coventry Road, feels 700 children to a school is too many and that she is not an advocate of economy of scale.

Carol Pellegrine, Clover Mill Road, stated that according to the Plan of Development the condition and capacity of the schools are fine. Due to the economic times and future school funding from the state being tenuous this project should be put on hold.

Christina Colon-Semena, 64 Woods Road, is opposed to the one school option and feels unless the town does something now it will put itself into major debt. Money has not been allocated for potential problems for the existing schools.

Jessica Higham, 14 Adeline Place, feels two schools are the best option at this time. The one school option is not supported by parents of young children. She feels this is an affordable time to build.

Ida Millman, 6B Sycamore Drive, cautioned the Council on making long-term decisions. She feels the design of a school can accommodate smaller groups and that they can function independently.

Gwen Sgro, 57 Browns Road, stated in her opinion, large schools don't work, children have below average reading and math scores and that teachers won't have time to collaborate.

Jay Rueckl, South Eagleville Road, believes the one school option is the wrong choice. Students' social and emotional development would not be promoted. Kids at risk will suffer the most. The two school option balances taxes with educational opportunity, and maintains community. He strongly supports the two school option.

David Freudmann, 22 Eastwood Road, would like to expand on the long term debt the town is accruing with all these projects. The town's debt outstanding could be over fifty million dollars by 2015. In less than 4 1/2 years the town could be facing a crisis resulting in drastically cutting services or having to precipitously raise taxes.

Rudy Favretti, 1066 Middle Turnpike, is against this project because of the throw-a-way attitude of the project. The Plan of Development states that there is a continuing decline in enrollment. Money should be used to enhance the current schools.

Brian Ross, 604 Browns Road, is in favor of the one school plan. Design of the school could accommodate team approaches and not be so opposing to young children. The two school project would be much too expensive.

The hearing was closed at 9:10 p.m.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Caitlin Dineen announced that she will be leaving The Chronicle and that Mike Savino will be taking her post.

Betty Wassmundt, Old Turnpike Road, is concerned with the debt structure that the town is occurring, and feels the town needs to be more conservative in its spending.

REPORT OF TOWN MANAGER

Report attached

A discussion was held on the position of the Senior Services Social Worker being supervised by a licensed clinical social worker and licensure for that position. It was decided that more discussion was needed and that the Director of Human Services Kevin Grunwald be in attendance. The item will be added to a future agenda.

IV. REPORTS AND COMMENTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Members discussed whether the School Building Project question should be included on the November ballot.

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. School Building Project

Members agreed that further discussion is needed to decide on how the Council should proceed on the school building project. It was decided a Special Meeting would be held in August. Ms. Paterson suggested that Council members submit their questions and issues to Mr. Hart prior to the meeting. Mr. Hart would like to meet with staff to develop a decision making matrix outlining the critical decisions.

2. UConn Landfill, Long-Term Monitoring Program

No action required.

3. Community Campus Relations

Members discussed UConn's Spring Weekend; Mr. Kochenburger stated that he would like to see what legal leverage is available against private land owners. He suggests getting a comprehensive legal review. Mr. Kochenburger volunteered to draft a proposal to the Council.

Mr. Hart reviewed a spreadsheet on nuisance issues at area addresses. It was suggested the list be more specific by distinguishing between single family residences and apartment complexes.

4. Community Water and Wastewater Issues

Mr. Hart gave an update on the June 17, 2010 meeting of the Water/Wastewater Policy Advisory Committee. The discussion included Ponde Place's request for emergency connection, no action was taken at the meeting. The Advisory Committee requests are reviewed on four criteria; is there sufficient supply; is the request consistent with the University's Plan of Development; is the request consistent with the Town's Plan of Conservation Development and upon approval any applicant would be responsible for getting all required and state and local permits. Connecticut Water has reached a tentative agreement with Tolland Water Authority to connect to the Tolland system.

5. Fee Schedule for Rescue Services

By consensus the Council agreed not to pursue the proposed ordinance.

6. Dog Lane/Bundy Lane Parcel

By consensus, staff will pursue Joshua's Trust to see if they have an interest in the property and to advise them that the town has no interest in acquiring the property as open space.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

7. Resolution Reapproving Appropriation for Proposed Four Corners Design
Mr. Haddad moved and Mr. Paulhus seconded to approve the following resolution:

RESOLUTION REAPPROVING THE APPROPRIATION OF \$330,000 FOR COSTS WITH RESPECT TO DESIGN OF PORTIONS OF THE PROPOSED FOUR CORNERS AREA WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS, AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF BONDS AND NOTES IN THE SAME AMOUNT TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION.

RESOLVED, in accordance with Sections 406 and 407 of the Town Charter, the Town Council hereby reapproves the resolution entitled "RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$330,000 FOR COSTS WITH RESPECT TO DESIGN OF PORTIONS OF THE PROPOSED FOUR CORNERS AREA WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS, AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF BONDS AND NOTES IN THE SAME AMOUNT TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION" as originally adopted by the Town Council at meeting held June 14, 2010 and approved by the voters of the Town at Special Town Meeting held June 28, 2010.

Motion passed unanimously.

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8. Transfer to Suspense for Tax Collections

Mr. Paulhus moved and Mr. Schaefer seconded, effective June 28, 2010, to transfer \$68,846.31 in uncollected property taxes to the Mansfield Property Tax Suspense Book, as recommended by the Collector of Revenue.

Motion passed unanimously.

VII. QUARTERLY REPORTS

VIII. DEPARTMENTAL AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

IX. REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Ms. Moran, Chair of the Committee on Committees, made a motion that the Council reappoints Katherine Paulhus to Mansfield Advocates for Children as a regular member of the public.

Motion passed with all in favor except, Mr. Paulhus abstained.

X. PETITIONS, REQUEST AND COMMUNICATIONS

8. G. Cole re: Masonicare
9. A. Hilding re: Mansfield Should Close the Apartment Door
10. L. Bailey re: Library Hours
11. C. Trahan re: Fiscal Status of Fund 833
12. C. Trahan re: Revaluation Contracted Services
13. Notice of Primary
14. Press Release: New Senior Center Coordinator Hired
15. State of CT Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services re: Medicaid Expansion Approved by CMS
16. Community Energy re: Renewable Energy Certificate
17. Chronicle "Letter to the Editor" – 6/8/10
18. Chronicle "Mansfield feted for open space commitments" – 6/10/10
19. Chronicle "Letter to the Editor" – 6/11/10
20. Chronicle "Petitioners plead: Save us from April's mayhem" – 6/11/10
21. Chronicle "Mansfield to host three hearings" – 6/12/10
22. Chronicle "Four Corners sewer project to go to vote" – 6/15/10
23. Chronicle "Residents: Land gift not really a good deal" – 6/15/10
24. Chronicle "Letter to the Editor" – 6/16/10
25. Chronicle "Parking ordinance will go to the voters" – 6/16/10
26. Chronicle "Letter to the Editor" – 6/18/10
27. Chronicle "Letter to the Editor" – 6/19/10
28. Chronicle "Letters to the Editor" – 6/21/10
29. Chronicle "Mansfield spending goes to voters" – 6/21/10
30. Chronicle "Letter to the Editor" – 6/22/10

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31. Mansfield Today "Mansfield is part of \$4.1 million Neighbor to Neighbor Energy Challenge" – 6/18/10
32. New York Times "Room for Debate: Should People Be Paid to Stay Healthy?" – 6/14/10

XIII. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Betty Wassmundt, Old Turnpike Road, requested an explanation on where volunteer donations come from. Ms. Wassmundt expressed her concerns on the data contained in the comparison chart related to the contracted revaluation services.

Ric Hossack, Middle Turnpike, would like to see some form of memorial honoring the late George Savoie for his service to the community. Mr. Hossack asked to have the final decision regarding the last Freedom of Information Hearing included on a future agenda.

XIV. FUTURE AGENDAS

Mr. Ryan would like to discuss revising the Town Charter.

Mr. Hart will include the decision from the Hearing Officer from the Freedom of Information Commission on the next agenda.

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Paulhus moved and Mr. Schaefer seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Elizabeth Paterson, Mayor

Christine Hawthorne Assistant Town Clerk

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