

9 April 2012

Happy Easter and Happy Passover to all.

As I look at the town manager's Proposed Budget, I see a good attempt at proposing a responsible budget. The movement towards a more fiscally prudent direction, by increasing the General Fund, is a good thing. Pay-as-you-go as opposed to bonding is an important step in insuring our childrens' future without imposing unwarranted debt on them. For this I say bravo.

But looking through the detail I see an increased spending plan, wrought with taxpayer increases, mainly in the form of "Storrs Center Angels".... Additional employees provided to take some of the workload imposed on current staff due to the project across the street. A project, as was said by our town manager, would not cost taxpayers a dime, but appears to be costing us a lot more.

So if additional people are absolutely necessary, we should find a way to pay for them that does not involve the taxpayers. The knowledge of future plans should guide you, the council, towards providing a budget that has no increases or perhaps providing a budget that actually gives us a break.

I know this is a daunting task so I would like to volunteer to provide specific cuts for the council to review, perhaps you might find something I suggest to save us some money.

I will reserve further comments on this budget until seeing the town manager's zero increase version.

Ric Hossack
Storrs

Mansfield, Connecticut Public Hearing April 9, 2012
Public comment by David Freudmann, 22 Eastwood Rd.,
Storrs, CT 06268, 860-429-0763, davidf235@yahoo.com
Topic: Budget for 2012/2013

I open by reiterating my support for Town Manager Matthew Hart and Finance Director Cheryl Trahan's promotion of an increase in the town's fund balance and for a proposed pay-as-you-go, not bonding, basis for the capital improvements program. Now for my criticisms, and they are for the Council, for it is you, not staff, that should be setting priorities and guiding policy.

Regional School District #19 (E.O. Smith High School) seeks to increase its gross expenditures budget by over 3%, from \$18.9 million to \$19.5 million. (Please focus only on that number, not the \$9.5 million proposed proportionate share to Mansfield, a decrease from the current year, as that decrease reflects the high school's revenues from other sources, such as additional students tuitioning in, and the temporary anomaly of lower census numbers from this town.) Last Thursday (4/5), Director Trahan explained that Region 19 asserts that a reduction from \$19.5 million would force a curtailment in programs. That to me is neither a threat nor a problem, but rather, a desirable prescription.

In my view, both Boards of Education budgets are bloated with fat. Mansfield ranks 29th out of Connecticut's 169 towns in expenditures per pupil per year. Andover (at 137th) and Hebron (163rd) spent \$3394 and \$4347, respectively, less than Mansfield, according to the most recently available data from the State Department of Education. (Please see Note 1.) And by the way, those towns do as well as Mansfield, actually slightly better, on state aptitude tests. (Both the CMT for K-8, and the CAPT for HS)

The Mansfield Board of Education is requesting a level funded budget of \$20.5 million, the same as this fiscal year. I urge the Council to pass a resolution stating that Region 19's referendum of May 8 earns the Council's endorsement only if it is based on a gross expenditures budget that is level funded, and not one dollar more.

Fiscal year 2013 is shaping up to be good year for creating jobs in Mansfield. From pages 65 through 167 of the Town Manager's Proposed Budget (TMPB), I totaled an additional 7.39 full-time-equivalent (FTE) employees. (Note 2) I would urge the Council to view this with a skeptical eye, and follow up with a firm 'no' to this surge. Does not Coventry (population appx. 12,000) get by with some 69 FTEs, compared to Mansfield's (population appx. 13,000 when not counting UConn students living on campus) 155 FTEs?

Time does not permit going through each questionable additional full or fractional FTE request, but I'll mention a few.

- (1) Regarding Police Services, the completion of Storrs Center Phase 1A, it is claimed, "will increase calls for service"

(TMPB, pg. 97) and is cited as the cause for needing an extra state police officer. Let's wait till the project opens and see how well existing police resources cope.

(2) How fortunate for so many other departments to have this Storrs Center project! Such a growth opportunity! We have the Fire Marshal (TMPB, pg. 105), Fire and Emergency Services (TMPB, pg. 111), Grounds Maintenance (pg. 129), Engineering (pg. 135) and a most adept empire builder - Building Inspection (pg. 161) (as distinct, you see, from Housing Inspection, a separate island of municipal growth), all asking for more personnel, based on the purported demands of Storrs Center. Is this what was meant by the promise of the downtown project creating jobs?

(3) The Youth Services program seeks a program assistant and a school readiness coordinator, (pg. 145), and notes that staff "serves as the social workers for the public schools." (pg. 143) Perhaps that program, like school nurses and school psychologists, should be based at the schools' facilities and paid for out of the Board of Education's formidable \$20.5 million budget.

(4) The Planning Administration program seeks a 0.43 FTE for a position described as a natural resources and sustainability coordinator (pg. 167). I do not need a sustainability coordinator. I need good roads, a responsive fire and police department, and want decent schools. Also, let's back off on those "green", feel-good environmental projects like solar panels. They create jobs for consultants, vendors and sustainability coordinators, but always leave taxpayers' wallets lighter.

Notes:

1. Financial & Budget Overview, 2/27/12, pg. 71.
Data is for fiscal year 2010.
2. Town Managers Proposed Budget for 2012/2013, 3/26/12, (TMPB):
page number/additional FTE: pg.65/0.09 FTE, 79/1.00, 99/1.00,
105/0.50, 110/0.45, 111/0.50, 129/1.00, 135/0.15, 135/0.50,
135/0.55, 145/0.43, 145/0.15, 153/0.14, 161/0.50, 167/0.43.
3. Abbreviations: CMT - Connecticut Mastery Tests, for
kindergarten through 8th grade. CAPT - Connecticut Academic
Performance Tests, for high schools.

DF

April 9, 2012

To: Members of The Mansfield Town Council
4 South Eagleville Road
Mansfield, Connecticut, 06268

From: Richard A. Cheney
87 Highland Road
Mansfield Center, Connecticut, 06250

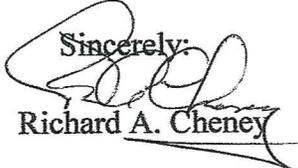
Subject: Town of Mansfield Hiring an Attorney

I am the owner of Highland Ridge Golf Range at 164 Stafford Road, Mansfield Center, Connecticut. We provide golf recreation to Mansfield and surrounding communities. We work with youth and adult groups, schools with golf teams such as Uconn and E. O. Smith, and Mansfield Parks and Recreation golf classes. The range provides my son David a job and also, from time to time, jobs for others.

My sons and I have met with the representatives of CL&P. (see enclosure). They indicated to us that to change anything now, such as moving poles or go underground is too costly. My sources have indicated to me that CL&P does not intend to change anything. We own the land under the power lines on our property, not CL&P. We should have some rights. We feel that if they went underground near businesses and residents close to the lines that it would be much safer for all concerned. If CL&P does not compromise and goes ahead with their current plan, we feel we will probably have to go out of business. The Council should also keep in mind that this new line does not benefit Mansfield, but other communities in the State that didn't want the line in their back yard.

Finally, We feel that Mansfield should hire an attorney to represent and protect the rights of our citizens who will be effected by this new power line to be constructed in Mansfield.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Cheney

enclosure

March 21, 2012

To: Linda Roberts, Executive Director
Connecticut Siting Council
Ten Franklin Square
New Britain, Connecticut, 06051
E-mail: siting.council@ct.gov

From: Richard A. Cheney
Highland Ridge Golf Range LLC
87 Highland Road
Mansfield Center, Connecticut, 06250
Tel: 1-860-423-4112
E-mail: hrggr@sbcglobal.net

Subject: Impact of Power Lines in Docket 424 on our Business

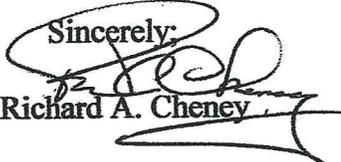
I am the owner of Highland Ridge Golf Range LLC in Mansfield Center, Connecticut that will be impacted by the new power lines going through our property. Up until now, we have been able to co-exist and run our business with the location of the existing power lines.

Recently, I met with Jeffrey Buckley and Lorraine Eckenroth of Burns and McDonnell and Mark Kimball of CL&P. As I am almost eighty years old and a disabled Veteran, I had my two sons walk the property with them. At the end we had a meeting and I was asked to write a letter to the Citing Council.

The two poles that will effect our business, are pole thirty-eight (S-38) and pole thirty-nine (S-39). We first suggested that they change the location of these two poles to the other side of the Range, where we could give additional land to the existing right of way. The CL&P representative did not think this was feasible due to costs. As we had no other alternative, we said, if these two poles were installed as close to the other lines as possible and are 110 feet high as the CL&P representative said they would be, that this might work. Remember that our underground utilities should be flagged before any construction begins.

Finally, we feel that we should be financially compensated anytime we have to shut the Range down due to construction, and after construction, if the range becomes unusable. We also feel we should be compensated for any loss in appraised value of the Range due to the installation of these poles in the proposed location.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Cheney

cc: Anthony Mele Project Manager

Mr. Greg Frantz, Chair
Mansfield Transportation Advisory Committee
Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
4 South Eagleville Road
Mansfield, CT 06268

Dear Mr. Frantz and Committee Members:

I am writing because a problem is brewing in my neighborhood as the Storrs Center project proceeds.

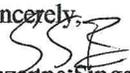
My family has lived on Willowbrook Rd. since 1995, making us one of the families with the longest neighborhood memory. We have had traffic issues in the past. There was once a sorority house at the Rte. 195 end of Willowbrook before the residents relocated to the "Greek Village" that was constructed across from Horsebarn Hill. Though the sorority women kept a low traffic profile since they parked on site, their incessant guests did not. Their guests were invariably young and in a hurry. It was unsafe for the neighborhood children to be near or on the street. When the neighborhood reached its saturation point, we contacted the Town, which began an informal traffic study. It was determined that the volume of traffic did not necessitate remediation. At the time, however, volume was only part of the problem. Speed and the nature of youthful drivers were the other relevant factors. I believe the Town sent some police now and then to ticket speeding offenders, but the safety issues never resolved until the sorority house was permanently vacated.

When my eldest daughter was in middle school nearing high school age, I became concerned about her safety while walking to and from EOSmith (we are happily within walking distance). At the time, our neighborhood students could either walk on Dog Lane, literally, or walk through the woods behind Bishop Center to get to EOS. I remember witnessing EOS students habitually tearing out of the Greek Center parking lot on Dog Lane after school while adjusting their radios, lighting up, cavorting with their passengers, and generally not paying attention to the road. It was extremely hazardous for anyone to be walking on the street. The obvious solution was to put in a sidewalk along Dog Lane. That was done. I am grateful to the Town of Mansfield, especially to Mr. Hultgren, for acknowledging the problem and fixing it. It took 2-3 years (I forget exactly) to get it done, though. Fortunately, we had started early to resolve the problem so that the sidewalk did turn out to be ready by my daughter's first day at EOSmith.

But youthful and impatient drivers are really hard to keep up with. Eventually it became necessary to install speed humps on Dog Lane. Now, in addition to fiddling with their music playlists, we see them texting.

With the new Dog Lane apartments and garage due to open in Sept., it is certain that Willowbrook Rd. can expect a significant increase in volume of youthful, impatient, and distracted drivers as they discover it is much quicker to use Willowbrook Rd. than the stretch of Rte. 195 between Dog Lane and Willowbrook. My neighbors and I are deeply concerned. We would very much appreciate your consideration of our neighborhood's past experience and hope that you will address our safety and quality of life issues preemptively and aggressively before driving patterns are established by new apartment residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Singer Bansal
67 Willowbrook Rd.
Storrs, CT 06268
April 9, 2012

c: Mansfield Town Council