



**TOWN OF MANSFIELD
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

Monday, January 7, 2013

6:30 PM

Cafeteria

Mansfield Middle School

AGENDA

Call to Order

Old Business

1. School Building Project (Item #1, 12/17/12 Agenda)

New Business

2. Meeting with State Legislators re 2013 Legislative Session and Related Issues

Opportunity for the Public to Address the Council

Adjournment

SPECIAL MEETING – MANSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
December 17, 2012

Mayor Elizabeth Paterson called the special meeting of the Mansfield Town Council to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Buchanan Auditorium of the Mansfield Public Library.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Freudmann, Keane, Kochenburger, Moran, Paterson, Paulhus, Ryan, Shapiro, Schaefer

Also Present: Rick Lawrence of Lawrence Associates, Tom DeMauro, of Newfield Construction, Mansfield's financial advisor for debt service Bill Lindsey, Superintendent of Schools Fred Baruzzi, Director of Finance Cherie Trahan, Director of Facilities Bill Hammon.

II. SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT

Town Manager Matt Hart outlined the issues to be addressed at this meeting.

a. Mr. Lindsey presented an overview of the financial implications of staggering construction debt using four different scenarios. These scenarios do not include funds for repairs to the schools. Mr. Lindsey's analysis shows delaying the construction does extend the debt but additional construction and financing cost would be realized.

b. Mr. Lawrence reviewed the requirements for the renovate like new process as set out in CGS§10-282 (18). Mr. Lawrence stated Mansfield, without special legislation, does not meet the qualification which requires not less than 75% of the school building be at least 30 years old. The current reimbursement rate for renovate like new projects is 72.14%, for new construction 62.14%. The guidelines for eligibility were also reviewed including the provision which requires a renovate like new project be certified as less expensive than a new school. Current and planned square footage and state allotted amounts were also discussed.

c. Capital Region Education Council (CREC) estimates they will be able to present an independent analysis of the renovate like new requirements and a proposal to provide peer review services in early January. If the information is received prior to the meeting it will be distributed to Council members and the community.

d. The Town Manager has been in contact with the Town's legislators and is arranging a meeting which will also be scheduled in early January.

e. Ms. Trahan reviewed a summary of the steps and an estimated timeline which would be necessary to submit the grant application by June 30, 2013.

f. Council members agreed the next steps would include presentations by CREC and a meeting with legislators, both to be held in early January.

III. OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Greg Samuels, Wormwood Hill Road, stated he does not know anyone who supports this project, but if it does happen noted there are no water issues or

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additional land needs at Southeast School. Mr. Samuels is concerned about declining property values if Southeast is closed.

Charles R. Vermilyea, Sr. Middle Turnpike, questioned why the Town needs new schools if the student population is not increasing and commented the whole thing is a lie.

Pat Suprenant, Gurleyville Road, asked the following questions and clarifications:

- The new construction rate has been identified as 62.14%, what is the actual reimbursement rate when the square footage penalty and other factors are taken into account?
- The financing plan shows revenue projections for Storrs Center of \$500,000. Is not this figure only realized after the completion of Market Square, Phase 1C and the layoff of the additional public works personnel hired for the construction phase of the project?
- The financing plan shows the mill rate for the school building project. What would the impact be on the mill rate if all the identified future CIP projects are also undertaken?
- A comparison of Option B and Option E shows the 3 school renovate like new project would provide 154,000 square feet of space at a cost of \$14,000,000 each while the 2 new school option would provide 110,000 square feet of space at a cost of \$8,000,000 per school. Ms. Suprenant asked the Council not to look at only the overall cost of the options but also to look at the number of schools and the total square footage they would provide.

Alison Hilding, Southwood Road, questioned the cost per square foot used by Mr. Lawrence in tonight's presentation (\$400-\$450) compared to a previously used figure of \$800-\$900 for a renovate like new project. Ms. Hilding asked if during the 2008 study of the schools there was an analysis of the structural soundness of the existing buildings.

Bob La Rose, Olsen Drive, asked if since the increase in the mill rate, as presented tonight, is cumulative is the shown decrease also cumulative and is the increase in the mill rate in addition to the existing mill rate. The Director of Finance stated Mr. La Rose's understanding is correct.

Robin Weiner, Birchwood Heights Road, commented the new school option would be built at the expense of running some residents out of Town.

Silvia Dorado-Banacloche, Storrs Heights Road, thanked the Council and stated she is pleased the Council is considering an independent analysis of the work done to date. Ms. Dorado-Banacloche has been concerned with the student projection numbers offered to date since they seem to be based on faulty assumptions and have not been correct in the past.

Robin Weiner, Birchwood Heights Road, agreed with the comments offered regarding the student population projections.

Alison Hilding, Southwood Road, also questioned the student population projections as they were done before the announcement of the tech park and other projects and requested a revaluation of the cost of both options from an independent source. Ms. Hilding would prefer the legislators be invited to a meeting that did not include the presentation by CREC.

Mr. Paulhus left the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Betty Wassmundt, Old Turnpike Road, asked for the specific reference which identifies \$400-\$450 per square foot as the standard and for a chart showing the breakdown of the square footage in each school. Ms. Wassmundt also questioned why the Town has so much more square footage than the state allows for reimbursement purposes.

Alison Hilding, Southwood Road, asked if there is a difference in the square footage allotted for special education. The Superintendent of Schools reported there is no difference in the allocation of space.

Art Smith, Mulberry Road, asked if anyone has done a study of the schools systems that have applied for variances from the state guidelines and what they have been granted.

Ed Wazer, Maple Road, questioned whether the school building project will drive up our cost per student significantly.

Jim Raynor, Moulton Road, offered the following observations:

- To base a budget on projected net revenue from Storrs Center, which is questionable, is a mistake.
- Delaying the debt until future years makes no sense.
- Since the \$400-\$450 figure is from 2009 material an updated figure is needed.
- People want their small schools.
- He supports the presentation of the CREC report.
- A 2008 report showed all the schools were in about the same state of repair so why do we need to tear down the elementary schools and just update the middle school?

Betty Wassmundt, Old Turnpike Road, asked the Council to listen to the public and asked that the project be sent out to bid prior to Council action on the resolutions.

Charles R. Vermilyea, Sr., Middle Turnpike, believes the call for new schools is driven by real estate developers and outside forces.

Robin Weiner, Birchwood Heights, questioned Lawrence Associates' analysis of the project.

Mayor Paterson declared the public comment session closed. These questions will be answered at the next school building project meeting.

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Councilor Shapiro asked for a moment of silence together and asked everyone to think of what happened in Newtown.
A moment of silence was observed.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Shapiro moved and Mr. Ryan seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m.
Motion passed unanimously.

Elizabeth Paterson, Mayor

Mary Stanton, Town Clerk

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CCM 2013 STATE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Proposals Adopted as of November 20, 2012

Below are legislative proposals adopted by the CCM Legislative Committee as part of CCM's 2013 State Legislative Program, as of November 20, 2012. They are grouped according to the CCM issue-area committee in which they originated.

EDUCATION

1. **Provide needed relief from special education mandates and dependability of state funding of local special education services by:**

- (a) The State adopting the federal standards pertaining to the "burden of proof" for special education services, as is current procedure in almost all other states;
- (b) The State taking on 100% of special education costs. In lieu of taking on 100% of costs, providing, at a minimum, special education funding to municipalities as follows: (i) a guaranteed level of funding that does not change during the course of the fiscal year; (ii) decreasing the Excess Cost reimbursement threshold to at most 2.0 times the district's average per pupil expenditure or \$25,000, whichever is less; and (iii) fully funding the state's portion.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT & ENERGY

- 1. Require DEEP to ensure regional disposal options for Fats, Oils, and Grease.
- 2. Create state-local economic development teams -- which include appropriate state agencies, regional and municipal officials -- to work jointly and simultaneously on permit applications for development projects to reduce bureaucratic delays.

LAND USE, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- 1. Provide meaningful unfunded state mandates relief by modifying the requirements for posting legal notices in newspapers to allow municipalities the **ability to publish notice of the availability of a particular document on their website**, instead of having to publish the entire document.

MUNICIPAL LABOR RELATIONS

1. Amend CGS § 31-53(g) to: **adjust the thresholds that triggers the prevailing wage mandate for public construction projects for (i) renovation construction projects, from \$100,000 to \$400,000; and (ii) new construction projects, from \$400,000 to \$1 million.** Both thresholds would be indexed for inflation thereafter. State prevailing wage mandate has not been amended since 1991. A modest adjustment would free-up state and local dollars and jumpstart and expand projects.
2. **Modify state-mandated compulsory binding arbitration laws to:**
 - (a) Amend CGS § 7-473c within the Municipal Employee Relations Act (MERA) – to impose deadlines for interest arbitration which would require that the negotiation process and binding arbitration be completed no later than one year from the date binding arbitration is imposed by the State; and
 - (b) Amend CGS § 31-98(a) and to § 31-107 to **require that grievance arbitration and unfair labor practice awards be issued no later than 60 days following the date post-hearing briefs are filed.** This would establish timelines for the issuance of decisions in cases before both the State Board of Mediation and Arbitration, and the State Board of Labor Relations.
3. **Increase the statutorily set employee contributions to the Municipal Employee Retirement System (MERS) by 1% annually over the next three years (but, not to exceed 15% of a pension per year) to a total employee contribution to MERS of 5.25%.** From 2002-2012, municipal contribution rates have risen 444% (3.75% of payroll to 16.65%) for public safety employees; and 392% (3% to 11.76%) for all others employees. **Employee contribution rates have never been adjusted,** and remain 2.25% of payroll for those participating in the Social Security system, and 5% for those employed in non-Social Security communities. Only legislative action can authorize such a modest increase in the employee contribution rate.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

1. **Equip towns and cities with adequate state resources (including educational materials and guidance on remediation efforts) and support to combat bed bug infestations.**

PUBLIC SAFETY, HOMELAND SECURITY AND CODE

1. **Clarify Section 51-56a(c) to ensure that funds collected under this statute, and allocated to the Police Officer Standards & Training (POST) council, are specifically earmarked for costs associated with the tuition and training of municipal police officers.**
2. **Allow local police departments to be reimbursed by another department for the initial POST certification training costs of a police officer, who has been employed**

with the department for less than four years, and decides to transfer to the other department. The reimbursement rate should be tiered over the four year period to allow for 100% reimbursement if transferring within the first year of employment, 75% if transferring within the second year of employment, 50% if transferring within the third year of employment and 25% if transferring within the fourth year of employment.

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Eliminate silos of communication which significantly delay the completion of local projects, and establish a Municipal Project Liaison program within the State Department of Transportation (DOT). This proposal would codify state DOT staff (liaisons) be responsible for overseeing, coordinating, and streamlining communication and permits among state agencies (i.e. DOT, DECD, DEEP, etc.) for all approved, local bridge and rail construction projects – and until the completion of such projects. The State’s permitting process is uncoordinated and inefficient.
2. Enact legislation that improves the development of sidewalks in our communities and empower municipalities to collect fees-in-lieu-of-sidewalk (FILOS) installation (*similar to provisions allowing payments in lieu of open space*) that would:
 - Impose no new costs on developers;
 - Require FILOS to be deposited into an account to be used for sidewalk installation;
 - Limit FILOS to be no more than the costs of installation that would have been incurred; and
 - Allow municipalities to provide incentives to developers opting to pay the FILOS.

TASK FORCE, CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

1. Promote healthy alternatives and nutritional education to stimulate anti-obesity efforts for children and families by:
 - (a) Providing **incentives for local Farmer’s Markets**, which provide healthy and locally-grown produce and stimulate local economies, and
 - (b) Providing **incentives for school-based and community gardens**, wherein children can learn and adhere to healthy eating habits.



CCM 2013 ITEMS TO SUPPORT AS OPPORTUNITIES ARISE

Proposals Adopted as of November 20, 2012

Below are legislative proposals to support as opportunities arise adopted by the CCM Legislative Committee as part of CCM's 2013 State Legislative Program, as of November 20, 2012. They are grouped according to the CCM issue-area committee in which they originated.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT & ENERGY

1. Amend the "Virtual Net Metering" law to allow municipalities to operate leased renewable energy equipment.
2. Ensure that municipalities have the tools needed maintain school grounds and facilities.
3. Continue efforts to find relief for municipalities from DEEP's phosphorus reduction strategy, both financially and through alternative solutions.
4. Allow bow hunting on Sundays on private property.
5. Support the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Microgrid Grant and Loan Program.

LAND USE, HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1. Provide municipalities the necessary tools to provide proper oversight of street vendors, to ensure they do not have an unfair advantage over brick and mortar businesses.

MUNICIPAL LABOR RELATIONS

1. Exempt municipal seasonal and temporary employees (including poll workers) – either employed by the town or board of education – from eligibility for unemployment compensation.
2. Amend Connecticut General Statutes (pursuant to Public Act 52-11) to exempt municipalities from the paid sick mandate, which requires employers of 50 or more employees to provide certain paid sick leave benefits. Exempting towns and cities from this unprecedented mandate could relieve local governments from various administrative, fiscal and legal burdens.

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PUBLIC SAFETY, HOMELAND SECURITY AND CODE ENFORCEMENT

1. Allow sworn members of local police departments the authority to arrest for misdemeanors outside of their jurisdiction, while on duty. Local officers currently have such authority for felonies.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

1. **Allocate a portion of federal transportation funding to support a comprehensive, statewide public awareness campaign** on road safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. Such campaign should include publicizing key safety rules and regulations, as well as information on accessible biker-friendly roads throughout the state.
2. **Allow municipalities the option to utilize photographic traffic enforcement technology.** To accomplish this, amend state statutes to include various traffic infractions to the list of registered owner - presumed operator violations, and provide that revenues collected from such enforcement be allocated directly to municipalities. Current law in Connecticut does not enable law enforcement officials to effectively use such technology to apprehend these specific traffic violators, and ultimately make roadways safer