

To: Town Council

From: Betty Wassmundt

RE: Budget

I ask that you consider the tax payers of this town, especially those not on government payrolls. I ask that you especially consider spending for the following:

- 1) An additional state trooper. I know this is what you "want" but there is no demonstrated need at this time.
- 2) Another employee in the Town Manager's office. Windham operates with 4 people and Coventry operates with two. Can't Mansfield operate with three?
- 3) A town published newspaper. There is no demonstrated need for this excepting that members of the Democratic Town Committee want a response to the Mansfield Independent News. We, the people, need to get timely information, at council sessions, from the Town Manager in his report. That is what is important. We don't get information now and I don't believe we'll get it from his newspaper.
- 4) The Board of Education increases. It's past time for accountability as to how our money is spent for education. Mansfield outspends other towns but test scores are not at the top.

You should be representing the people of this town. You should be questioning all expenditures. You should question:

- 1) The Health Insurance Fund – why town management allowed an excessive build up of reserves to occur and the wisdom of now drawing on that money for general expenses.
- 2) Why the fire department costs us as much as it does.
- 3) Why everyone has to pay for the Community Center yet not everyone can use it.
- 4) Why Mansfield spends so much more per student than other towns.
- 5) Why the town is now responsible for a second sewer pumping station at the Post Office.

And on and on and on.....

*I forgot the F-PADS + the monthly cost*

We are all aware of the tough economic times we are experiencing. Federal taxes and state taxes have been increasing, and we are now considering increasing Mansfield's tax structure as well. The cumulative effect of all these increases will be hard on many people, but especially on those living with fixed or reduced income. Please remember that fixed or reduced income includes not just those that are retired, but also many of the 44% of Mansfield's population that has not received the raises and benefits accorded state and municipal employees. As seen in the statistics presented by the Mansfield tomorrow project team, 37%, more than 1/3, of our households have incomes below \$50,000 per year – a level at which tax increases greatly affect one's ability to make ends meet.

Some of the individual comments by our residents at the Mansfield Tomorrow forum were:

- Change the cost of town government
- Maintain a high level of government without driving out the lower income residents
- Our residential taxes may make me have to sell and move because I cannot afford to pay my property taxes on my "forever house"
- Reduce top heavy administration costs to combat spiraling tax burden

We know our tax base is expanding, and we know we will eventually see enough revenue from the Storrs Center project to have a real impact in reducing the tax burden on our residents. BUT, that is not true today.

Therefore, I have two matters of policy that I wish to present as motions and then have us, as a council, without staff input, discuss.

I will present them one at a time.

Motion 1: As a matter of policy, Mansfield will not add positions or expand hours on present positions in FY 2013-2014.

Motion 2: As a matter of policy, Mansfield will not increase the amount of money allocated to the Board of Education in FY 2013-2014 from that allocated in 2012-2013.