

June 22, 2015

Dear Mayor Paterson and other Town Council Members,

We are writing to urge you to reconsider the proposal to reduce the education budget by \$165,694. We recognize your hard work and efforts and understand the challenges that come with making these decisions. Nonetheless, we feel that such a proposal overlooks the voices of the residents of the town that have been actively involved in this process and the obligations we have to offer basic levels of services necessary to maintain the quality of our schools.

To begin, the original vote on May 12th overwhelmingly supported the budget, with 223 voting to approve it and 69 to defeat it. This clearly showed the intention of the community. This position is further reflected in the 783 referendum votes indicating that the education budget was too low.

Additionally, community members, including parents and educators, for several months have written countless letters and taken a lot of time to present their cases to the Board of Education and Town Council in person. They not only supported the original budget that was proposed by the Board of Education but also amended it for a slight increase.

Two main issues were at the heart of this collective work. First, the proposals supported the addition of teaching positions that are essential to meet district guidelines for class sizes, numbers that are supported by research. Second, they ensured that we maintain the Language Arts and Mathematics Coaches positions that are essential as we transition to the Common Core. As noted by Interim Superintendent Richard Kisiel, the proposed cut would result in reductions in personnel, programs, and technology, all of which are necessary to maintain the quality of our schools. We anticipate that such a drastic cut to the education budget may result in the elimination of some of the staff positions.

Further, the education budget has remained flat in recent years. Our district has been in a gradual decline in services when you factor in the inflation adjusted revenue, and it is important that we bring the levels back to those established prior to the recession. We hope you recognize the challenges this has presented and feel that the district has made judicious decisions to try to maintain acceptable levels of service. However, given elimination of staff positions in the past few years, the proposed cut at this scale has reached a tipping point that the district should not be in a position to make. We understand that keeping the \$165,694 in the education budget would cost the median homeowner less than \$30 per year. This is a bargain and well worth the investment.

As long-term residents and parents of three children who attend the Mansfield schools, the decision to cut the education budget has real and lasting implications regarding the quality of education we expect for our children. We, along with other parents, strongly support ensuring we maintain or increase the level of services offered in our schools. We expect that our elected officials respond both to the views of the entire community and also to make decisions that will benefit all in the future. We hope that you not move forward with the proposed cut in the education budget. Thank you for your attention.

Regards,
Tutita and Douglas Casa
75 Maple Road



**Town of Mansfield
Agenda Item Summary**

To: Town Council
From: Matthew Hart, Town Manager
CC: Maria Capriola, Assistant Town Manager; Cherie Trahan, Director of Finance; Amy Meriwether, Accounting Manager
Date: June 18, 2015
Re: Proposed Adjustments to the FY 2015/16 Budget

Subject Matter/Background

The FY 2015/16 Budget adopted at the Town Meeting on May 12, 2015, was petitioned to referendum and subsequently defeated. At their Special Meeting on June 17, 2015, the Town Council discussed a number of potential reductions to this budget. Council requested staff to prepare a recommendation for adjustments to specific line items to accomplish the reduction proposed.

In addition, the State adopted budget changed the reimbursement rate charged to municipalities for the Resident State Trooper program. The current reimbursement rate is 70% of salaries, benefits and overhead. This rate has been changed to 85% for the first two (2) troopers and 100% for all additional troopers. Changes to the budget need to be made for this increase in cost.

Lastly, the Council needs to adopt a final budget and set the mill rate. If Council is ready to proceed this evening, staff is ready to get the tax bills out by July 2, 2015 with a due date of August 3, 2015. The lead time for our vendor printing the bills will be tight, but assuming no unforeseen issues on their end, this can be accomplished.

Financial Impact

The FY 15/16 General Fund budget adopted at Town Meeting totaled \$38,646,120 and is comprised of \$22,140,150 for the Mansfield Board of Education and \$16,505,970 for Town operations.

The proposed reduction presented by Councilor Raymond for the Board of Education portion of the budget totals \$165,694 (\$165,700 as rounded). Attached is a memorandum from Interim Superintendent Kisiel to Town Manager dated June 19, 2015 for your information.

The proposed reduction for Town operations is \$233,028 - \$237,028 and includes eliminating the balance remaining for the additional fire fighter, a 10% attrition reduction to various line items, eliminating the \$148,000 contribution to fund balance in FY 15/16 and making this contribution with FY 14/15 yearend funds, and finally finding an additional \$25,000 in spending reductions.

The change in the Resident State Trooper reimbursement rate results in an increase in the cost of our current program of \$426,730. Staff has prepared a recommendation for changes in trooper staffing and a reallocation of the proposed budget to meet police service needs without increasing the overall budget.

These adjustments reduce the proposed mill rate from 30.22 to 29.82 mills required to fund the FY 2015/16 budget. This is an increase of 1.87 mills or 6.68% over the current year mill rate of 27.95 mills.

The proposal of June 22, 2015 would reduce the mill rate from 30.22 to 29.92, an increase of 1.97 mills or 7.04%.

Recommendations:

Board of Education Budget: The proposed reduction to the Board of Education budget is \$165,700. If the Council wishes to move forward with this reduction, the following motion is in order:

Move, effective June 22, 2015 to reduce the FY 2015/16 budget for the Board of Education by \$165,700.

The proposal of June 22, 2015:

① **Move, effective June 22, 2015 to reduce the FY 2015/16 budget for the Board of Education by ~~\$92,499~~ 117,400**

Town Operations: The Town budget reduction of \$235,000 could be accomplished by the following:

1. In the mill rate calculation for FY 15/16, eliminate the \$148,000 contribution to Fund Balance. Tax collections and other revenues in excess of budget for FY 14/15 would roll into Fund Balance at June 30, 2015 to compensate for this reduction. This would be a minimum of \$148,000 but could be higher based on actual collections for the fiscal year.
2. The remaining funds from eliminating the additional firefighter would be directed to the ~~overtime line item~~ contingency account. There are still concerns regarding staffing levels and we are concerned about a continued shortage of funding.
3. Reduce various line items (detailed on the attached schedule), including several overtime accounts, professional improvement reimbursement, travel and conference fees, work and protective clothing, staff

development, training, mileage reimbursement, consultants, drug testing, printing and binding, community events, various supply accounts, books and materials, non-capitalized equipment. These adjustments total \$31,700.

4. Defer hiring the Public Works Specialist until September 1, 2015, maintaining the existing 14 hours/weekly of administrative support until that time. Resulting savings \$8,520.
5. Reduce the payment into the Workers' Compensation Fund by \$10,000. The Town received \$13,625 from CIRMA as an equity distribution this year. These funds will reduce the amount needed from the Town for workers' compensation insurance for FY 15/16.
6. Reduce the transfer to Capital/CNR for Road Resurfacing by \$12,000. This funding will come instead from the remaining balance in the Stone Mill bridge account. A Capital Improvement adjustment will be necessary at yearend FY 14/15 for this.
7. Reduce various salary line items for unanticipated retirements which result in savings from positions to be filled at lower salaries and/or deferred starting dates - \$24,780. Positions affected - Youth Services Coordinator, Youth Services Counselor, Assistant Town Clerk, and Zoning Officer.

If the Council wishes to move forward with these adjustments, the following motions would be in order:

- 2 *Move, effective June 22, 2015 to eliminate the \$148,000 contribution to fund balance in the mill rate calculation for FY 15/16.*
- 3 *Move, effective June 22, 2015 to reduce the FY 15/16 General Fund (Town operations) budget by \$87,000 as detailed in items 2 through 6 above.*

The Proposal of June 22, 2015:

- 4 *Move, effective June 22, 2015 to increase the FY 15/16 General Fund (Town operations) budget for Contingency by \$27,400 for potential fire service costs.*
2,400

Resident State Trooper Program: The reimbursement rate change increases the cost of our current program by \$426,730. Staff recommends reducing the force from (10) 12-month troopers to (6) 12-month troopers and (3) 8-month troopers. This would reduce the shortage to \$135,000. The following reallocation of the FY15/16 budget is needed to accommodate this additional cost without increasing the overall budget:

1. Reduce the budget for part-time constables by \$21,000. This would reduce the budgeted hours from 21 hours weekly to 8 hours weekly.
2. Reduce the budget for the additional firefighter by \$11,000.
3. Reduce the transfer to Capital/CNR \$103,000 for the following projects:
 - a. Strategic Planning \$5,000

- b. Comm. Development Future Projects \$3,000
- c. Engineering CAD Upgrades \$21,000
- d. Guiderails \$20,000
- e. Transportation Enhancements/Walkways \$25,000
- f. Trees \$4,000
- g. Road Resurfacing \$25,000

Items (c) through (g) would be funded with a transfer of remaining funds in the Stone Mill Bridge account through a Capital Improvement Adjustment at yearend FY 2014/15.

If the Council wishes to move forward with these adjustments, the following motion is in order:

5 *Move, effective June 22, 2015 to adjust the FY 15/16 General Fund (Town operations) budget for the changes in the Resident State Trooper program per the above.*

6 *Move, effective June 22, 2015 to adjust the FY 15/16 Capital Improvement Program and Capital Nonrecurring Fund budgets for the changes noted above.*

Adopting the FY 2015/16 Budget:

RESOLVED: That the General Fund Budget for the Town of Mansfield, appended totaling ~~\$38,393,420~~ \$38,494,120 is hereby adopted as the proposed operating budget for the Town of Mansfield for the fiscal year July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016. 38,444,120

RESOLVED: That the Capital Fund Budget for the Town of Mansfield, appended totaling \$2,323,900 is hereby adopted as the capital improvements to be undertaken during fiscal year 2015/16 or later years.

RESOLVED: That the proposed Capital and Non-Recurring Reserve Fund Budget for fiscal year July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 in the amount of \$2,085,470 be adopted.

Appropriations Act:

RESOLVED: That the General Fund Budget for the Town of Mansfield for fiscal year July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 in the amount of ~~\$38,393,420~~ \$38,494,120 which was adopted by the Council on June 22, 2015, be appropriated and that the sums estimated and set forth in said budget be appropriated for the purpose indicated.

38,444,120

RESOLVED: That in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-51, the proportionate share for the Town of Mansfield of the annual budget for Regional School District No. 19 shall be added to the General Fund Budget appropriation for the Town of Mansfield for fiscal year July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 and said sums shall be paid by the Town to the Regional School District as they become available.

RESOLVED: That the proposed Capital Fund Budget for fiscal year July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 in the amount of \$2,323,900 which was adopted by the Council on June 22, 2015, be appropriated provided that the portion proposed to be funded by bonds or notes shall, at the appropriate times, be introduced for action by the Town Council subject to a vote by referendum as required by Section 407 of the Town Charter.

RESOLVED: That the Capital and Non-Recurring Reserve Fund Budget for fiscal year July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 in the amount of \$2,085,470 which was adopted by the Council on June 22, 2015, be appropriated and that the sums estimated and set forth in said budget be appropriated for the purpose indicated.

Setting the Mill Rate: To set the mill rate for Fiscal Year 2015/16 the following motion would be in order:

29.87

BE IT RESOLVED: That the Tax Rate for the Town of Mansfield for Fiscal Year 2015/2016 be set at ~~29.82~~ 29.92 mills, and the Collector of Revenue be authorized and directed to prepare and mail to each taxpayer tax bills in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes, as amended, and that such taxes shall be due and payable July 1, 2015 and January 1, 2016.

Attachments

- 1) FY 2015/16 Budget Summary Including Proposed Reductions
- 2) Estimated Tax Warrant and Levy
- 3) Memorandum dated June 19, 2015 from Dr. Kisiel, Interim Superintendent to Town Manager Hart
- 4) Proposed Adjustments - FY 2015/16 Budget – Town General Fund
- 5) Revenue and Expenditure Projections – FY 2014/15
- 6) Proposed FY 2015/16 General Fund Budget Adjustments – Increase in Resident State Trooper Program



Town of Mansfield

Proclamation Designating July 2015 as Parks and Recreation Month

Whereas, parks and recreation programs are an integral part of communities throughout this country, including the Town of Mansfield, Connecticut; and

Whereas, our parks and recreation are vitally important to establishing and maintaining the quality of life in our communities, ensuring the health of all citizens, and contributing to the economic and environmental well-being of a community and region; and

Whereas, parks and recreation programs build healthy, active communities that aid in the prevention of chronic disease, provide therapeutic recreation services for those who are mentally or physically disabled, and also improve the mental and emotional health of all citizens; and

Whereas, parks and recreation programs increase a community's economic prosperity through increased property values, expansion of the local tax base, increased tourism, the attraction and retention of businesses, and crime reduction; and

Whereas, parks and recreation areas are fundamental to the environmental well-being of our community; and

Whereas, parks and natural recreation areas improve water quality, protect groundwater, prevent flooding, improve the quality of the air we breathe, provide vegetative buffers to development, and produce habitat for wildlife; and

Whereas, our parks and natural recreation areas ensure the ecological beauty of our community and provide a place for children and adults to connect with nature and recreate outdoors; and

Whereas, the U.S. House of Representatives has designated July as Parks and Recreation Month; and

Whereas, the Town of Mansfield, Connecticut recognizes the benefits derived from parks and recreation resources:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that I, Elizabeth C. Paterson, Mayor of Mansfield, Connecticut, proclaim July as Parks and Recreation Month in the Town of Mansfield, Connecticut.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand and caused the seal of the Town of Mansfield to be affixed on this 22nd day of June in the year 2015.

Elizabeth C. Paterson, Mayor
Town of Mansfield