

**-- APPROVED--**  
**BRUNSWICK TOWN COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES**  
**May 31, 2007**  
**Public Hearing on Proposed Budget**

**Councilors Present:** Chair Joanne T. King, W. David Watson, Jacqueline A. Sartoris, Hallie Daughtry, Jeffrey A. Schneider, Gerald E. Favreau, Ryan E. Ewing, Newell A. Augur, and David C. Webb

**Councilors Absent:** None

**School Board Present:** Becky J. Martin, Eileen B. Murphy, Janet C. Connors, Robert Morrison, and Kathryn Thorson

**Town Staff Present:** Donald H. Gerrish, Town Manager; Fran Smith, Town Clerk; Gary Brown, Assistant Town Manager; James Ashe, Superintendent of Schools; Greg Bartlett, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; James Oikle, Business Manager for School Department; John Eldridge, Finance Director; Mat Eddy, Director of Economic Development; John Foster, Public Works Director; Tom Farrell, Director of Parks and Recreation; Steve Carey, Technology Systems Supervisor; Clark Labbe, Fire Chief; Cathy Donovan, Assessor; Mary Reindl, Director of Human Services; Jerry Hinton, Police Chief; Kevin Schofield, Police Commander; Rick Desjardins, Police Commander; Scott McKernan, School Department Facilities Manager; Craig Worth, Deputy Public Works Director; several other School Department Administrators, and the TV video crew.

**Brief Presentation on School and Municipal 2007/08 Budgets**

Manager Gerrish reviewed his additional budget cuts. When he looked to make reductions, he used information he had gathered for TABOR and the Palesky Tax Cap since he wanted to select items that were not necessary services the town is required to provide, like running Coffin Pond.

*(A copy of information from the Manager will be attached to the official minutes.)*

Jim Ashe, Superintendent of Schools, read a prepared statement, which explained his proposed cuts.

*(A copy of Mr. Ashe's statement will be attached to the official minutes.)*

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Chair King opened the public hearing.

**Laura Brann** read a prepared statement. She thanked those around the table who worked on the budget. She supported the 2% tax hike to fulfill the needs of the town and schools. To the average home valued at \$150,000, this would mean an increase to the tax bill of 18 cents per day. She also suggested the following items: give the Fire and Police departments a person; and use half of the money from the pay-per-bag to reduce taxes.

**Pem Schaeffer**, Crestview Lane, read a prepared statement about the budget increase over last year. He suggested that every department reduce its budget by 1/2 %.

*(A copy of Mr. Schaeffer's statement will be attached to the official minutes.)*

**Deborah Schall**, President of the Board of Directors of Curtis Memorial Library, said their budget was decreased first by \$50,000 then by \$35,000 more. It is now at a 2.5% increase, or \$24,000. She wanted to remind the Council the library is a customer driven entity and they are responding to increased need. This cut will mean reduction of library services.

**Lester Hodgdon**, Woodside Road and Treasurer of Curtis Memorial Library, spoke about the library budget. The newest reductions will affect services and he hopes the Council would consider the public's comments and give the funds back.

**Steve Perkinson**, 6 Page Street, said a lot of energy has gone into the budgets, and he is deeply concerned about services that may be cut. With uncertain economic times, this is the time to concentrate on continuing a high quality school system to attract people to the community. He urged the Council not to cut the school budget.

**Charlotte Agell**, 39 Columbia Ave, asked for minimum cuts in the schools and library. She would even support more of an increase.

**Kathy Murphy**, 11 Hemlock Road, urged the Council to keep the 2%. She moved here because of the library and schools. This town has given students wings to soar. The library is a place for all people to go. People will move elsewhere. Life is hard, but if the Council does not fund education to give students the necessary tools, the town is in trouble.

**Catherine Ferdinand**, 40 Longfellow Avenue and President of the Friends of Curtis Memorial Library, said their group has provided funds to make the library programs better. The Friends have put forth \$7,000 for staff training but have no money for equipment. The library is the town's focal point; she hopes the Council puts money back into their budget.

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**Michelle Small**, 34 Stanwood Street, supports the Council increasing the taxes by 2%. Education is very important to the town. She talked about taxes going down or not keeping pace with the cost of living. Therefore, services have not been keeping pace with inflation. Many costs are beyond the town's control like fuel and health insurance. The budget has no new programs; actually, there are cuts and the school children lose out.

**Colleen Congdon**, Boody Street, said she is concerned about the Police with only eight officers on a shift and three officers being available. Public safety has to be a top priority. There needs to be a balance of time-off and the ability to spend time with family. The officers need to be well rested to avoid burnout. If people do not feel safe, they will leave. She supports the 2% increase.

**Jonathan Wayne**, 2 Oakland Street, said he did not support the school budget cut. He moved to town because of its excellent school system.

**Dr. Marcus Deck**, 138 Penneville Road, said he has three children in the school system and wants to keep it that way. He wants to see budget increases in the schools. He is very proud of what the town has done with recycling programs.

**Peter Lowe**, 11 Thompson Street, said the schools have served them well. He urged the Council to do at least a 2% increase. The administrators do a great job and they have to tackle difficult issues. Citizens should stand up for safety in the community and schools. He supports the Police Department. The 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 9<sup>th</sup> grade sports teams being taken away will effect over three hundred students. The town will not be serving the children if it cuts the library and Coffin Pond. EPS is bare programs and is not a ceiling.

**Elizabeth Cravey**, 79 Columbia Avenue, said the cuts are not affecting those at the top incomes, but those who can take advantage of free services with the library and a safe environment. Brunswick has a safe town and good schools and library. Tax increases are painful, but holding the line reduces equity in this town.

**Dick Lancaster**, 68 Columbia Avenue, said he lived here for 49 years, and he remembers all of his coaches. Much of his free time goes to coaching and he is begging the Council not to cut the seventh grade or freshman teams. If they get cut, they will never come back.

**Thomas Jones**, Simpson Point Road, said he is a retired Navy Pilot who is on a fixed income. There will be a decrease in funds in town soon with the base closure. He is not against the Library and schools. Citizens are doing the best job they can, but many are on fixed incomes and fuel went up by 35%.

**John Cooney**, 12 Baxter Lane, thanked the Council for their work. He echoed the comments of Peter Lowe. He supports an increase of 2%. He wants to invest in

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children's education, support the library and public safety, and not cut seventh grade sports. The town has to invest now more than ever to attract business to come to Brunswick after the base closes.

**Tom Kelly**, 17 Whittier Street, asked the Council to support the school funding and avoid cuts in the art programs and sports. His children's activities and sports have helped them. The Arts program is very helpful.

**Andrea Tracy**, 47 Board Road, as a parent and physician, said she supports the school budget to not have any cuts beyond those that provide a 2% increase. She made the following points: 1) giving children a chance to be active is a good way to prevent childhood obesity, which is on the rise; 2) every child needs to feel good at something, whether sports, art, or band, and those things will prevent children from making unhealthy choices; and 3) to educate children well, one needs to teach both sides of the brain.

**Susan Dorn**, resident, said, as a teacher she see any cuts to the school budget as having an effect on the ability to make required educational standards.

**Roger Fenn**, resident, said there was a survey done that said people moved here for the culture and quality of life. He wanted to save the budget for the MidCoast Arts Alliance.

Chair King closed the public hearing.

Eileen Murphy, School Board Vice Chair, thanked those who came out tonight to support the schools and programs. This year's budget would have no new programs and the Governor has asked EPS to be all you need. With the proposed budget cuts, they will effect various locations and means the town's school system is moving backwards. EPS is a very complicated formula. In the final analysis she feels the school system is run well and student life is important for the community.

The meeting ended at 8:35 p.m.

**PLEASE NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE NOT VERBATIM. A VIDEO RECORDING OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE AT THE TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE DURING REGULAR BUSINESS HOURS.**

*Frances M. Smith*  
*Town Clerk*  
*July 11, 2007*

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*Date of Approval*

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*Council Chair*