

-- APPROVED--
BRUNSWICK TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
June 1, 2005
Public Hearing on Proposed Budget

7:00 P.M. Chair Lowe opened the public hearing.

Councilors Present: Chair Forrest Lowe, W. David Watson, Jacqueline A. Sartoris, Robert A. Galloupe, Louise V. Ansari, Barbara A. Desmarais, Ralph V. Tucker, and Joanne T. King. Councilor Douglas A. Rice was absent.

School Board Present: Chair William Dana, Eileen Murphy, Malcolm Andrews and Allen Springer.

Town Staff Present: Donald H. Gerrish, Town Manager; Fran Smith, Town Clerk; Patricia Harrington, Assistant Town Manager; James Ashe, Superintendent of Schools; Greg Bartlett, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; James Oikle, Business Manager for School Department; Jerry Hinton, Police Chief; John Foster, Public Works Director; Mary Reindl, Human Services Director; Tom Farrell, Director of Parks and Recreation; John Eldridge, Finance Director; Clark Labbe, Fire Chief; Steve Carey, Technology Systems Supervisor; Scott McKernan, School Department Facilities Manager; Bruce Cook, Principal of Brunswick High School; John Paige, Principal of Brunswick Junior High School; Walter Wallace, Principal of Coffin School; Michael Galarneau, Principal of Hawthorne School; Scott Snedden, Principal of Jordan Acres School; Gregory Scott, Principal of Longfellow School; and TV video crew.

Brief Presentation on School and Municipal 2005/06 Budgets and 2006/10 Capital Improvement Plan

James Ashe, Superintendent of Schools, made a presentation on the School Department's budget. He made the following points:

- There is an increase of seven and four tenths percent (7.4%) over last year's budget, but with state assistance increased by two million five hundred thousand dollars (\$2,500,000), they are asking for about three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) less.
- The budget reflects the increased state requirements.
- Part of the money reflects dealing with class size.
- Even if the Navy base closes, there will still need to be a new elementary school since there are over three hundred (300) students in the portables, which is the same number as military students in elementary school.

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- One major concern is the People's Veto being circulated that could affect state subsidy by five percent (5%).

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

Manager Gerrish said on the municipal side, the budget is up eight percent (8%), based mostly on addressing the town's facilities needs. Additional points he made included the following:

- The budget is up one million three hundred thousand dollars (\$1,300,000), but there is a revenue increase of over eight hundred thousand dollars (\$800,000).
- With new valuation and revenues, the budget is below the state tax cap.
- The major facility project includes debt service on construction of the Cook's Corner substation and to start funding the operational cost of the facility. There is also money for debt service on the Times Record building.
- There will be a revaluation of the town, with a cost of approximately one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000). The new values will be in effective for the next fiscal year. Even with the possible base realignment, the town still needs to do it, with the town's values at seventy percent (70%) of market value, and some valuations ratios are as low as forty percent (40%) to fifty percent (50%).
- There are also increases in benefits and salaries, in anticipation of finalizing five (5) union contracts.
- Health insurance and worker's compensation have increases.
- In the Capital Improvement Plan some of the projects are being proposed to be funded by three million dollars (\$3,000,000) from the fund balance. Included are Jordan Avenue reconstruction, a new salt & sand shed and a new municipal computer system.
- There is an increase in fuel cost of forty thousand dollars (\$40,000) more than expected.
- The base decision will have an impact on the town depending on what happens, and the town will know by this September about the realignment.

Chair Lowe opened the public hearing.

Pem Schaeffer, Crestview Lane, commented on the education budget. The town's district size is optimum for efficiency, yet they are proposing to increase spending by six hundred twenty five dollars (\$625) per student. There has been an increase of three thousand dollars (\$3,000) per student over the last eight (8) years. He would like to see the new school removed from consideration.

Mr. Schaeffer continued to say that on the municipal side, the citizens voted down a public safety building due to cost and disruption to the downtown. Despite this, now the town has a public safety plan, which includes a Cook' Corner substation, central fire station, west substation, and a police station, totaling between fifteen million dollars

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(\$15,000,000) and twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000). This is more than what was rejected by the voters in November 2003.

Roy Peddle, 4 Lori Drive, said if the base realigns, Brunswick will lose people, and in order to attract retired people to come here, the town must have a good infrastructure. He supports the reconstruction of Jordan Avenue and the paving of Route 1 to Freeport.

Sheryl Nadell, 4 Blue Heron Drive, supported the full budget for the schools. She supported the salaries for the teachers and spoke of how great they are. There are voluntary taxes in the form of donations and volunteers provide many hours of free help. This allows the schools to do things they would not otherwise be able to do.

Carol O'Donnell, 305 Maine Street, said her group, that is trying to save the old high school, had a tour of it. After the tour, they met with an architect. She is optimistic that the building can be revitalized.

Catherine Ferdinand, Longfellow Avenue and representing the Friends of Curtis Memorial Library, thanked the Council for leaving in the money the library requested. She requested the Council continue this support, and she talked of the library's value.

David Dube, Minott Shore, agreed with many of Mr. Schaeffer's comments. He talked about the "hit" to the town of having the base realigned and how the base will only have a small staff. The town would have no permanent access to convert it to private use. There was no preparing for this major economic disaster. The town needs to begin preparation and this budget needs to be the beginning. The Council has to recognize the realignment could happen and should re-look at the budget. Any capital improvement items that are not under way should be removed from budget. The teachers and other municipal staff should have no salary increases. There should not be a property revaluation until the town finds out what is going to happen.

Mr. Dube continued to say that the police should utilize fifteen thousand square feet (15,000 sq. ft.) of the Times Record building. With some security added, it is in move in condition. The Welfare and Recreation Departments should also move there. It could be done for about five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000). The old high school should be recycled into a school and the C/D wing should be kept for the Council Chamber and storage. It should not be destroyed. He has been through the old high school building, and the A/B wing has many renovations, including a new gym floor and fixed classrooms, which are ready to be used. The building needs to be roofed immediately. The town needs to spend more money to promote the town. The town should get Bowdoin to give them the armory area. The operational budget is fine but the capital improvement plan needs to be adjusted.

Chair Lowe closed the public hearing.

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Chair Lowe explained the Council will discuss the budget further on June 6 after having time to reflect on the public comments, and they will adopt the budget on June 13.

The meeting adjourned at 8:49 pm.

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
June 12, 2005

June 20, 2005

Date of Approval

Council Chair