

**BRUNSWICK BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING**  
**JUNE 6, 2002**  
**MUNICIPAL MEETING FACILITY**

**7:00 P.M.** Chairman Priest called the meeting to Order and asked for the Pledge to the Flag.

**Councilors Present:** W. David Watson, Jacqueline A. Sartoris, Robert A. Galloupe, Douglas A. Rice, Charles R. Priest, Nancy E. Randolph, Thomas E. Crimmins and Stephen H. McCausland.

**School Board Members Present:** P. Dennis Lucas, Jr., Eileen Murphy, Corinne Perreault, Janet Connors (arrived late), Alan Yuodsnukis, Rebecca Shepherd, Allen Springer

**School Board Members Absent:** Dugan Slovenski, William Dana

**Others Present:** Donald H. Gerrish, Town Manager; Patricia Harrington, Assistant Town Manager; Mary Tilas Cronk, Executive Administrative Assistant; James L. Ashe, Superintendent of Schools; various Town Department Heads; numerous citizens; members of the press and the Cable 7 video crew.

Chairman Priest called the meeting to order and reviewed the procedures that would be used to conduct the Public Hearing. He called on Town Manager Don Gerrish to give an overview of the proposed Town Budget as well as the adjustments made to reduce the tax increase to 2.93%. Mr. Gerrish went over his list of budget reductions, a copy of which is attached for the permanent record.

Chairman Priest called on School Board Chair Dennis Lucas, Jr. to speak about the School Budget. Mr. Lucas praised the Superintendent of Schools and the School Administrators for their efforts during the budget process. He called on Superintendent James Ashe to review the proposed School Budget as well as the adjustments made for reductions. Mr. Ashe went over his list of budget reductions, which are also attached to these minutes for the permanent record. Mr. Ashe stated that the increase in the local allocation (amount raised from property taxes) this year is a 2.6% increase over monies raised last year.

Chairman Priest opened the floor to the public for discussion of the proposed 2002/2003 Budget.

Robert Morrison  
20 McKeen St. Stated he is appalled by the cuts in the Town budget and especially in the School budget. He is very upset that the Town ranks 85<sup>th</sup> in the State in per pupil expenditures and stated that it is extremely short sighted to cut the Reading Recovery program.

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- Mary O'Brien  
7Bowdoin St. Urged the Council to reconsider their position on the budget. She wants the Town to maintain its services and quality of education. She is very upset by the cuts to the Reading Recovery Program.
- Pem Schaeffer  
Crestview Lane Wanted to know when the Council will enact effective long-term controls in spending. Stated that he is interested in the Capital Spending Plan and is distressed that it is not available. Raised his concern that the number of dollars spent on education is not equivalent to educational results and academic achievement. Mr. Schaeffer is also concerned with what the tax rate will be in ten years if the Town continues with tax increases year after year.
- Jerry Favreau  
21 Riverview Dr. Stated that he was in full agreement with Mr. Schaeffer. Taxes keep increasing and the baseline of the budget keeps moving up.
- Lisa Klop  
91 Peterson Ln. She is opposed to any increase in taxes. Feels that the issue is spending and a lack of accountability. Ms. Klop said that the Council's lack of control and restraint regarding spending does nothing to attract good jobs or businesses to Brunswick.
- Roger Thibeault  
411 Mere Point Rd Stated that the Council is listening, but is not hearing what the citizens of the Town are saying. He used as an example the recent issue of the hot dog vendors on the Mall. He is concerned that if the tax rate continues rising beyond the rate of the CPI that the Town's retirees will be forced out of their homes.
- Henry Laurence  
6 Longfellow Ave. Stated that education is an investment in the future – countries that succeed are the ones that educate children well. He strongly urged the Council for more support for the schools.
- Adele Miller  
356 Highland Rd. Council must pay attention to the economy. When the economy is slow, reductions in the budget are necessary. Thinks schools should focus on academics, not sports and extra bus runs.
- Lisa Martin  
185 Hacker Rd Stated that the School budget should be funded as originally proposed. The budget has been cut too deep and the subsequent effects on the children will last a lifetime. The class sizes in Brunswick are large, which make remedial programs even more important.
- Kelly Staples  
TOPSHAM Ms. Staples is a non-resident who asked for and was given an opportunity to speak. Ms. Staples works for a non-profit agency in Town and wanted to express her support for the Community Policing Officer. She urged the Council to make sure that hours for this position were not reduced – she has seen the positive effects of the program in the community.

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- Lisa Dube  
22 Amos Way  
Very distressed to hear that the Community Policing Officer is affected by budget reductions. Fully supports the police department and the schools.
- Hal Fowler  
WEST BATH  
Mr. Fowler is a non-resident who asked for an opportunity to speak. Chairman Priest stated that he would be willing to hear comments from out-of-town people after all Brunswick residents had been heard. Mr. Fowler stepped down from the podium.
- Karen Hastings  
25 Beech Drive  
Ms. Hastings supports the reductions to the budget. She has many concerns about the elderly residents of the Town. She applauds the School Board's work with discipline and transitioning at the Middle School. Ms. Hastings would like to have public hearings before labor contracts are signed by the governing boards (Council/School Board).
- John Gerard  
7 Jordan Ave  
Although he is a resident, Mr. Gerard stated he was at the Public Hearing as a representative of the Brunswick Intown Group [BIG]. The business community was very concerned this year about the tax increase. BIG encourages the Council to focus on Economic Development, and is very pleased that the Council has funded an Economic Development position. BIG feels that \$60,000 proposed in the original budget is more appropriate to provide for this position and encourages full funding.
- Story Graves  
10 Colonial Dr  
Stated that schools are the heart of the community. She would rather see other services cut instead of schools.
- Tammy Springer  
35 Shobe Ave.  
Stated her support for the school budget. Class sizes in Brunswick are too large. Explained that she understood cuts would have to be made, but no cuts should be made in teaching positions.
- Ken Buzzell  
17 Nancy Dr.  
Appreciates the work of the School Board and the Town Council. Feels that facilities definitely need attention, especially the Fire Station, the Municipal Building and the Police Department. He is also concerned about the Town's retirees and how they can continue keeping up with tax increases. Mr. Buzzell stated that Economic Development is the key to reducing the burdens placed on residential properties. He supports the school budget.
- Byron Watson  
488 Old Bath Rd.  
He commended the Council for their efforts to reduce the budget.
- Victor Skorapa  
FREEPORT  
Mr. Skorapa is a non-resident who asked for an opportunity to speak. Chairman Priest stated that he would be willing to hear comments from out-of-town people after all Brunswick residents had been heard. Mr. Skorapa stepped down from the podium.

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- Carole Graves  
11 Pleasant Hill Rd. Ms. Graves reminded everyone present that June 6 was the 48<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day. She stated that she is not sure the Council listens to the citizens, and cited the recent action regarding mall vendors as an example. She asked questions about compensation, union contracts and particularly the Human Services department. She expressed her concerns for the retirees and the young families in Town who cannot afford tax increases year after year.
- Ervin Snyder  
1 Colonial Dr. Ms. Snyder stated that it is not helpful to direct the Council to cut the budget without giving them direction on where cuts should be made. He urged the Council to reconsider the process of the budget development and the tax consequences of new programs. He felt the Council should clearly understand the tax impact of the Town's open space program. He stated that the Recreation Director is doing a fine job, but the programs that are proposed for the Old High School are not necessary – the capital costs are too high and the programs would compete with programs that are available in the private sector. He suggests selling some of the Town property to reduce costs and to add taxable value back to the Town. He encouraged the Council to look at regional solutions for reducing costs, especially in the area of public safety. The Town needs an Impact Fee Ordinance – he encouraged the Council to address this.
- George Glover  
19 High Street Mr. Glover is a resident of the Town, but wished to address the Council as a representative of the North West Brunswick Neighborhood Association. He was very concerned that the Community Policing Officer was going to be taken off his position, even if it was only for an interim period.
- George Gilmore  
207 Middle Bay Rd Suggests that the budget process is backwards – the Council should start by determining what monies are available, not with a list of desired expenditures. He felt there should be two Public Hearings, one for the school side of the budget and another for the Town side. Mr. Gilmore suggested that the Council should aggressively pursue other forms of revenue to offset property taxes, and gave the following examples of areas that could be looked at: Town-owned land, both vacant land and vacant buildings should be used to generate revenue or disposed of; there should be a fee for placing banners over Maine Street, parking meters should be brought back, advertising space on the Town's lamp posts could be sold; mall vendors should be charged a percent of sales in addition to their permit fee. The Town should be doing cost/benefit analyses on all functions – some might be less expensive if they were contracted out. With interest rates at an all-time low, this would also be a good time for the Town to consider refinancing its debt.

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- Janet Brand  
318 Bunganuc Rd
- Ms. Brand suggested to the Council that the Reading Recovery Program has not lived up to its promise, and that by the fourth grade there is no difference between the children that participated in the program and those that did not. Stated her impression that Home Schooling is becoming more and more popular because it meets the needs of students even though the costs are minimal. She also stated that the Council should have been more responsive to the 1700 signatures on the petition that was circulated regarding the mall vendors.
- Tom Hastings  
25 Beech Drive
- He is stated that he is very concerned about the Council's lack of foresight. Council needs to become more creative in finding ways to keep costs at a minimum. The school budget needs to be discussed before labor contracts are signed.
- Charles Wallace  
501 Mere Point Rd.
- Very concerned about the Council's credibility and the openness of the process. The Council must define what are the Town's absolute needs, and also needs to work on a process to avoid locking in long-term costs over which the citizens have no control.
- Victor Skarapa  
FREEPORT
- Mr. Skarapa stated that he was at the public hearing to represent the Brunswick Kiwanis Club. The function of the club is to service children, and Mr. Skarapa wanted to speak in support of the Community Policing Officer and his efforts for the Kiwanis Club with their Family Safety Day.
- Hal Fowler  
WEST BATH
- Mr. Fowler is a teacher at the Vocational School. He wanted to give support for full funding of the Community Policing Officer position.
- Bruce Webb  
BATH
- Mr. Webb works in Brunswick. He stated that the Community Policing Officer is an important asset for the Town of Brunswick.
- Charles Crosby  
SAGADAHOC  
COUNTY
- Mr. Crosby is a Commissioner for Sagadahoc County. He wanted to explain that county budgets are extremely difficult to control. He stated that Sagadahoc County would be happy to participate in a regional effort on communications.

Chairman Priest thanked all who had come out to participate in the Budget Public Hearing.

The Budget Public Hearing was closed at 9:35 p.m.

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

*Mary Tilas Cronk*  
*Executive Administrative Assistant*  
*June 11, 2002*

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*Date of Approval*

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*Council Chair*