

-- APPROVED --
2001-02 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING
MINUTES
JUNE 7, 2001
MUNICIPAL MEETING FACILITY

7:00 p.m. Chair McCausland opened the meeting and called for the Pledge to the Flag.

Councilors Present: Chair McCausland, Michael Feldman, Jacqueline Sartoris, Timothy Dotts, Robert Galloupe, Charles Priest, Faith Moll, Forrest Lowe, and David Gleason.

School Board Members: Dennis Lucas, Jr., Dugan Slovenski, Eileen Murphy, Corinne Perreault, William Dana, Janet Connors, Barbara Swisher, Rebecca Shepherd, and Allen Springer.

Others Present: Don Gerrish, Town Manager; Fran Smith, Town Clerk; Jim Ashe, Superintendent of Schools; Several Department heads; many citizens, members of the press, and the TV video crew.

Mr. Gerrish, Town Manager, gave an overview of the municipal budget. The original budget was proposed at an increase of twelve and seven tenths percent (12.7%). Since then, he and Mr. Ashe have worked to reduce that number to nine percent (9%). He discussed the municipal budget. Revenues are expected to be flat and the major expenditure increases are in health insurance, salary adjustments, and risk management. The only new service being proposed is an after school program. The total valuation for the town is four million dollars (\$4,000,000) less than last year.

(A copy of a summary of the budget will be attached to the official minutes.)

Mr. Ashe, Superintendent of Schools, gave an overview of the school budget. The major increases are in energy costs, health insurance, and salaries, which make-up almost one million one hundred thousand dollars (\$1,100,000) of the one million two hundred thousand dollar (\$1,200,000) total requested increase. The remaining one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) would be used for a new math program in grades one to three, an additional instructional day, and an increase in the school share of the Vocational Region 10 School.

(A copy of his comments will be attached to the official minutes.)

Chair McCausland described the process to be used for the public hearing. He opened the public hearing.

Bradford Johanson, E. Marginal Road, supports the nine percent (9%) increase.

Prentiss Weiss, Mere Pt. Rd., opposes the budget increase. She discussed how she has to pay her increasing health insurance costs.

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Roger Thibeault, Mere Point Road, was concerned about proposed increases. The tax increase should not be above the rate of inflation or three and a half percent (3.5%).

Roland Laferriere, Leslie St., spoke against the increase. He only received a forty-dollar (\$40) increase in his retirement. Employees should come up with half of their health insurance cost.

Patricia Sheldon, Toad's Landing, supported the school budget. The town will not be able to attract new industry without a good educational system.

Robert Morrison, McKeen St., said he is retired and supports the nine percent (9%) increase. He asked the Council to make education the number one priority in the budget, to realize that a good education costs money, to pay the schoolteacher enough, and to make a strong commitment to the Brunswick students by increasing spending in the future.

Maria Padian, Juniper Rd., said the town needs to invest in schools and she will support the full nine percent (9%). She would pay thirteen percent (13%).

Richard Dowling, Woodside Rd., said there has to be a better way to provide services. His property taxes are four hundred fifty dollars (\$450) more than his state and federal ones combined. He discussed how his taxes have doubled and how he has to cut back in his personal budget to pay them.

Janet Crowe, Blue Heron Dr., supported schools. The cuts hurt education.

Sherryl Clark Nadell, Blue Heron Dr., said she is committed to children getting the best education. She asked that the public hearing be held prior to a decision to cut the budget. She supported the school and municipal budget and asked the Council to support what was originally submitted.

Ken Brief, Kennebec Ln., asked the Council to support the original proposed school budget. Good schools attract businesses. Classroom sizes must be reduced.

Tom Kelly, Whittier St., urged the Council to pass the school budget as originally proposed. He discussed education and the new needs it must meet.

Charlotte Agell, Columbia Ave., supported the nine percent (9%) for the schools and could even support the thirteen percent (13%).

Alan Yuodsnukis, Peary Dr., said public education has never been more important than it is today. The high paying blue-collar jobs are not growing. The average college graduate will earn one million dollars (\$1,000,000) more in a lifetime than a high school graduate. He asked who is going to provide future health care and run the military

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without a strong education system. Without the skills and education, all will lose. He asked the Council not to let Brunswick's students fall behind.

Brian O'Connor, Kimberley Cir., said each municipal department runs responsibly. If the Council funded all the increase, it would be a bargain. He asked the Council to support the original proposed school budget. High quality schools bring in high quality people. He discussed safety issues in the schools in this state and country.

Peter Simmons, Columbia Ave., said his cost to be a Brunswick citizen is about fifty dollars (\$50) a week in property taxes. With the services provided, he feels this amount is cheap. He discussed fund raising to buy things for the Brunswick schools that other communities provided in their budgets. He supported the twelve and seven tenths percent (12.7%) increase for the schools and nine percent (9%) for the town.

Claire Franco and **Cecilia Mauceri**, students at Longfellow School, asked the Council to pass the budget and presented a poster with parents' signatures supporting the budget.

Bill Bodwell, Ocean Dr., spoke against the increase. He referred to a chart discussing the increase in his property taxes. Brunswick needs to get more commercial development.

(A copy of Mr. Bodwell's chart will be attached to the minutes.)

Kathy Murphy, Hemlock Rd., said the town gets a lot for its money when it comes to education. The town's children are well prepared to go to college. There have been more honor students without additional honors classes. She supported the twelve percent (12%) increase. The recreation department and town provide wonderful services.

Philip Dionne, Merrymeeting Rd., said he was pleased with municipal services and supports the school budget. He discussed learning results and how the President plans on allocating federal dollars based on performance.

Laura Brann, River Rd., supported the original proposed school budget. Her children did well as adults because of the grounding they received from Brunswick schools.

Colin Fay, Thompson St., supported education and the original proposed school budget. The town is getting good value for its education.

Pem Schaeffer, Crestview Ln., said that violence in schools (in response to a comment made by an earlier speaker) is a result of what happens out of school. High property taxes can prevent people from moving somewhere. If students come to school willing to learn, the last thing that will hold them back is whether the budget goes up four or ten percent (4% or 10%).

Jamie Kaplan, Larrabee Farm Rd., supports the original proposed school budget. No teaching or other positions should be eliminated. He talked about the need for these

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positions. The original proposed budget represents a compelling investment in the town's children and guarantees increased value.

Richard Sheldon, Toad's Landing, supported the original proposed school budget. The school is the core of the town and it has to be the priority even though citizens do not want their taxes to go up.

Larry Berberich, Palmer St. and Brunswick School Teacher, said his children left Maine because of the low wages and high taxes. He suggested the town take a closer look at how money is spent in the schools. If it does not go for direct classroom support, it should be a lower priority. He did not support a nine or five percent (9% or 5%) increase, although two percent (2%) is too low.

Leslie Randolph-Brancart, Juniper Rd., supported the original proposed school budget.

Glen Goodnough, Mere Pt. Rd., supported the original proposed school budget. That budget is bare bones.

Belinda Washington, MacMillan Dr., said if the town does not cut the school budget, it would have to cut the smaller municipal budget more to meet the nine percent (9%) increase. She does not want to do that, but she would give up services like having one less trash and recycle pick-up a month in order to provide a better education. She asked the Council to decrease the town budget to support the school budget.

Joanne Rosenthal, Bunganuc Rd., supported the original proposed school budget.

Jean Shaw, Thompson St., supported the original proposed budget. She recommended saving money by turning the heat down.

Paul Putnam, Cluf Bay Rd., supported education and wanted to see money spent on education so students will be prepared for the global economy.

Allen Cherkis, Brackett Rd., said he was against higher taxes and the budget increase should be three and a half percent (3.5%).

Pat Ridgel, Middle Bay Rd., said the Brunswick school system is the best his children have been in, but the thirteen percent (13%) budget increase is ridiculous. The town could get the needed money by not pushing out businesses like Wal-Mart and Fox Run. Any land purchased by the Land Trust is taken off the tax rolls, although he does enjoy using this land.

Ken Buzzell, Nancy Dr., said he signed the two percent (2%) petition so the minority position could be heard. The high taxes are driving retired folks out of Brunswick, yet he is in favor of the school's budget. If taxes continue to go up, his will double in a few years.

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Richard Dowling, Woodside Rd., (2nd time speaking) said the town needs to find other ways to raise taxes and he is not against the schools.

Jose Corcolino, River Rd., said he did not want to pay more taxes, but he will support the schools. He will not support a thirteen or nine percent (13% or 9%) increase.

Bill Bodwell, Ocean Dr., (2nd time speaking) discussed his taxes doubling and how businesses cannot charge that percentage increase to their customers.

Janet Connors, School Board member, said the School Board worked hard to come up with the budget numbers, and she wanted to reassure everyone that their children will still get a quality education.

Chair McCausland closed the public hearing.

Chair Lucas thanked all those speaking in support of the quality of education and the staff Brunswick has.

Chair McCausland asked the Council to provide direction as to the percentage increase for the budget the Council supports.

Councilor Moll supported the nine percent (9%) plus the amount for the late high school bus (seventeen thousand dollars) and the extra nurse (fifteen thousand dollars). She would also like to see the Sunday hours at the library.

Councilor Feldman supported the nine percent (9%) and discussed the outside forces causing the increase, like increases in health insurance, energy costs, and reductions in state revenues.

Councilor Sartoris supported the nine percent (9%) with an additional one percent (1%) for the schools.

Both Councilor Moll and Lowe said they would support the additional one percent (1%) for the schools.

Councilor Priest said he was concerned with the Council modifying the agreement between the Town Manager and Superintendent. If there is going to be increase, have an increase and let Town Manager and Superintendent decide how to make any changes.

Councilor Sartoris said she did not mean to undermine any agreement and would support a ten percent (10%) total increase.

Councilor Dotts and Feldman still supported the nine percent (9%) increase.

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The nine percent (9%) increase will be taken to the adoption meeting on June 11 for a Council vote.

The meeting adjourned at 10:08 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.

*Frances M. Smith
Town Clerk
June 11, 2001*

June 18, 2001

Date of Approval

Stephen McCausland

Council Chair