

TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP

APRIL 18, 1996

6:30 P.M.

The budget workshop on the F.Y. 1996-97 Budget of the Town of Wallingford was held by the Town Council on Thursday, April 18, 1996 in the Robert Earley Auditorium of the Wallingford Town Hall and called to Order by Chairman Robert F. Parisi at 6:30 P.M. All Councilors answered present to the Roll called by Town Clerk Rosemary A. Rascati. Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr. and Comptroller Thomas A. Myers were also present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was given to the Flag.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Mr. Doherty asked George Yasensky, Sanitarian, what is the status of the Health Director position?

Mr. Yasensky reported that Mayor, Advisory Board and other individuals are currently working on drafting the criteria for a job description. The process is moving forward.

Mr. Yasensky was surprised to see that the XRF Spectrum Analyzers remained in the capital equipment portion of his budget. He had left the Mayor's budget review meeting with the understanding that the item would be removed from his budget and an additional \$1,000 would be placed in his Office Expenses line item to pay for the securing of such equipment if his department needed it. The equipment is used to detect amounts of lead in homes. Upon attending several classes on the procedure Mr. Yasensky felt that the Town would be better off with the State Laboratory's atomic absorption method which they offer to the Town.

Motion was made by Mr. Doherty to Decrease Account #9903, XRF Spectrum Analyzers by \$10,000., seconded by Mr. Farrell.

VOTE: All ayes; motion duly carried.

Motion was made by Mr. Doherty to Increase Account #4000, Office Expenses and Supplies by \$1,000 from \$1,000 to \$2,000., seconded by Mr. Centner.

VOTE: All ayes; motion duly carried.

Mayor Dickinson noted that the Fax Machine line item should have also been deleted from the capital equipment portion of the Health Department's budget.

Motion was made by Mr. Doherty to Decrease Account #9904, Fax Machine, by \$854., seconded by Mr. Knight.

Mr. Farrell asked if the nature of the fax transmissions to the Health Department were highly confidential?

Mr. Yasensky responded, confidential information is forwarded through the mail under registered letters.

VOTE: All ayes; motion duly carried.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. Knight asked if the new electric rates were reflected in this year's budget?

John Quinn, Business Manager responded, a decrease of \$.00.5 kwh was experienced in electric utility expenses; no rate change occurred for water expenses and a 7.3% rate increase was budgeted for in the sewer expense. These figures were directly obtained from the utilities, themselves.

Joseph Cirasuolo, Superintendent of Schools added, we are also factoring into that account what ever funds are needed for Yalesville and middle school additions.

Mayor Dickinson noted for the record that there is no rate increase in the sewer division. There is an increase due to Yalesville School but there is no rate increase in the sewer or water utilities.

Mr. Quinn stated, the water account had a 0% increase and the sewer had 7.3% therefore he averaged 3.5% based on a conversation he had with the Water/Sewer Department.

Dr. Cirasuolo commented, if we are now being told that there is no increase in sewer rates then we can partially accommodate the Mayor's cut to the budget by adjusting that account, respectively.

David Gessert, Public Utilities Commissioner noted for the record that the Board was told previously that there was a rate increase planned and obviously budgeted accordingly for it. At the time the information was correct, however, this week the P.U.C. acted and eliminated that rate increase. The Board could not have known or prepared for that.

Mr. Parisi asked that figures be re-worked and the Board inform the Council as to the new totals.

Mr. Renda questioned the allocation of expenses to the Field Trip line item. He noted that a large portion of the funds have been expended within the past few months and asked why?

Dr. Cirusuolo explained that more field trips occur in the Fall and Spring than in Winter and the expenses associated with the trips come in after the trips have taken place. Part of the expenses are contributed to sending our athletic teams to a number of events. If any of the teams are particularly successful that means additional transportation costs because of tournaments, etc. The account experienced a 1.6% or \$1,443 increase.

Mr. Centner noted that the Pupil Services line item experienced a 25-26% increase and asked why?

Mr. Quinn responded, in 1995-96 the Board ended with a deficit of \$57,000 in that line item. The increase that is actually taking place this year is budgeted for next year.

Mr. Doherty asked, how many new positions are in the Board's budget this year?

Dale Wilson, Assistant Superintendent of Personnel responded:

Certified

Elementary Principal	1	
* Elementary Teachers	3	
Special Area Teachers	1.5	(.5 Art; .5 Music; .5 P.E.)
* Music Teacher	1	(.5 at each middle school)
Eng. & Math Teacher	.75	
Inform. Tech. Resource Teachers	2	
Total	<u>10</u>	

Non-Certified

Nurse	1	(Yalesville)
Secretary	1	"
Part Time Clerk	1	"
Head Custodian	1	"
Custodians	2	(1 at each Middle School)
Security Guards	2	
Cafeteria Aides	2	(Yalesville)
Inform. Tech Resource Paraprofessionals	2	
Paraprofessionals in Contingency	5	
Total	<u>17</u>	

* Attributed to Enrollment Increase

Mr. Wilson went on to point out that a reduction in staff is also occurring due to the re-opening of Yalesville. Those positions are listed as follows:

Elementary Clerks	5
Custodian	1
* Classroom Aides	7
* Paraprofessionals	3
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Total	16

* Attributed to the re-opening of Yalesville School

Mr. Doherty then asked the Mayor, how many new positions have been created in the general government portion of the Town budget?

Mayor Dickinson responded, there is a part-time clerk in the Health Department, however, two part-time clerks have been eliminated. He believes that the electric utility is minus one or two positions while the Water/Sewer departments may be less one or two as well.

Mr. Doherty asked, what is the anticipated surplus of the Board this year?

Dr. Cirasuolo responded, the Mayor reduced the Board's budget request by \$1,453,530. The bid costs for all items the Board will go out to bid on, as opposed to the estimates that were put in the budget, are \$49,518 less than what was budgeted for. Due to the decisions made by the Board with respect to redistricting, we need an additional \$55,854 in transportation costs over and above what was budgeted for. That is largely for "grandfathering" the tenth, eleventh and twelfth-graders and eighth-graders in the schools where they are now. We are anticipating a reduction in federal grants, a 17% cut across the board, conservatively speaking. We are hearing, however, that the federal government's continue resolutions will call for a 25% reduction in education funds as opposed to 17% as we approach election time. We will need to make up locally approximately \$51,726., unbudgeted. We were able to reduce the cafeteria subsidy by \$20,000 and leave in the Board budget \$2,000. We have another unbudgeted expense of \$28,000 this year due to the Board adding an a pre-school half-time teacher that is a special education program that is mandated. We did not have a need for that position when the budget was being prepared. Considering all the pluses and minuses, for the Board to be able to do everything it wanted to do when it put its budget together, it would have to somehow or another come up with \$1,519,592. We have in our latest projected balance for this year \$1,100,000. That results in a \$419,592 shortfall to the Board. If we cannot

either through additional savings this or next year come up with \$419,592., the Board will have to reduce what it expected to do when it put its budget together.

Mr. Doherty stated, if the technology plan for which \$647,000. was budgeted was eliminated from the budget it would help to cover the shortfall.

Dr. Cirusuolo commented, the problem would be, if you look at any of our strategic school profiles and compare Wallingford with districts from around the State; we are far behind other districts in introducing instructional technology; it would be a major problem for us if we had to cut in that area.

Mr. Doherty agreed.

Mr. Quinn added, when the budget was drawn up the Board did not realize the final impact of the Blue Cross/Blue Shield rates on it so there will be an additional decrease from the impact. The insurance costs are figured out individual by individual so that the amount is accurate.

Dr. Cirusuolo assured the Council that they would be provided any information which may be unavailable this evening to them as soon as the figures for the Board's budget is updated.

Mr. Doherty next visited the Equalized Cost Sharing revenue account. Upon speaking with Rep. Mary Fritz recently he found that the State plans to increase the amount it contributes to the Town by approximately \$74,000. That increase coupled with a desire to decrease \$26,000 from the Instructional Supplies account led Mr. Doherty to make a motion to Decrease the Board of Education's budget by \$100,000., thereby increasing account #5025, Equalized Cost Sharing Account by \$74,000. and decreasing the Instructional Supplies Account by \$26,000.

Mayor Dickinson asked if the action has been passed by the State Legislature?

Mr. Doherty stated that the budget has not yet been adopted in its entirety.

Mayor Dickinson warned that the Council would be at risk to the extent that it approve the increase in revenues for there is no assurance that the additional \$74,000 will be approved.

Mr. Parisi reminded Mr. Doherty that the Council has no control over one particular line item of the Board's budget.

Mr. Doherty made a motion to Decrease the Board of Education's Budget by \$26,000 with a recommendation that the decrease Occur in the Instructional Supplies Account, seconded by Mr. Zappala.

VOTE: Doherty, Papale, Renda and Zappala, aye; all others, no; motion failed.

LAW DEPARTMENT

Mr. Knight noted that there was nearly a 50% increase in the Office Expense and Supplies account.

Janis Small, Town Attorney responded that the increases in the department's budget reflect a program that is commencing in the foreclosure area for tax, water and sewer liens. The expenses exhibiting the increases will be sheriff's costs, court entry fees, title searches, appraisals, etc. and most will be recoverable. It could take one year; she is uncertain as to when they will come back to the Town.

No changes were made to this department's budget.

ENGINEERING

Mr. Doherty questioned the need for the Auto Cad Workstation w/Accessories, capital account #9908.

John Costello, Town Engineer explained the equipment simplifies the preparation and correction process to drawings. It is the state-of-the-art drafting method using computer equipment and software that is widely used by many professionals in the field.

Mayor Dickinson stated that he approved the request upon learning of the cumbersome tasks that are involved in updating drawings. Currently if a change is made on one drawing all other related drawings must be revised to follow the change through. Manually, this is very labor intensive and time consuming. The Auto Cad program automatically updates all related drawings upon the first revision made. The speed with which the Town can put together designs and implement construction is important.

Mr. Knight noted that an Electronic Traffic Counter, capital account #9909, was being requested. Mr. Knight pointed out that the Police Department purchased a similar system last year at a cost of \$4,675. and asked if the Town is duplicating equipment?

Mr. Costello responded, there is some duplication. The Engineering Department keeps their counter out all summer long. The Police Department utilized their equipment for specific purposes. The

Engineering Department's present equipment has not been working properly for the past few years, therefore they have not been taking traffic counts.

Douglas Dortenzio, Chief of Police stated that although the best person to address this issue would be Traffic Maintenance Officer Richard Doll it is his (the Chief's) belief that besides using the equipment to track development traffic it is also used in response to citizen petitions for change of traffic direction on certain streets. If speeding complaints are received on a particular roadway rather than tie up labor resources for an entire day waiting for the problem to occur a counter can be placed in the area. It will not only provide the department with a traffic count but with the speed of the cars; graph it out so an educated decision can be made as to when to apply the labor resources to correct the problem. It logs the date and time of traffic patterns. Officer Doll is the person who would best know how often the equipment is put to use.

Mr. Costello offered to obtain additional information for the Council on the matter.

Mr. Knight accepted Mr. Costello's offer.

Mayor Dickinson stated that the equipment is requested fairly frequently from conversations he had held with Officer Doll on this matter. He believes that it is also used frequently at school sites to determine traffic levels regarding busing and transportation issues.

Mr. Centner asked if the software is included as part of the accessories for the CAD (computer-aided drafting) system?

Mr. Costello responded, yes.

Mr. Centner asked if Mr. Costello anticipated future upgrading of the software for the equipment?

Mr. Costello responded, it is too soon to tell, it depends on what programs are released on the market. The system being requested by Mr. Costello will have a Pentium 133 mhz memory; one 3.5" floppy disk drive; four speed CD rom drive; Windows '95 and three button mouse; a tape back-up system and a 1.2 gb hard disk. It will also include an autocad CD rom release 13 or latest version, this is a software program needed to convert survey data into a workable format that will enable the department to produce a completed drawing. It includes a 24" X 36" digitizer drawing board with cordless pressure pen which allows for the electronic tracing of existing simple drawings into the computer; a 36" inkjet printer and a CAD overlay software which is required to convert scan drawings from a picture format to a coordinate geometry format.

Additional equipment is included as well. Many of the department's existing files will be transferred into computer format for storage and/or re-use on different projects thus saving considerable drafting time. Three days of training is also included.

SIX YEAR CAPITAL

Mr. Zappala asked if a decision has been made yet regarding West Dayton Hill Road work?

Mr. Costello responded, no.

BUILDING INSPECTIONS

Mr. Doherty asked, why is the department requesting microfilming equipment?

Carmen Spiteri, Building Inspector explained that the department ran out of space to store plans approximately six months ago and is about to run out of space for storage of building permits. Mayor Dickinson stated that it is costly to send information to a private firm for microfilming and it does not make sense to absorb space in the Town Hall for the storage of maps and permits.

No changes were made to this department's budget.

Mr. Parisi took a moment at this time to commend all the departments involved in carrying out their storm management duties with a tremendous show of teamwork for those residents who were adversely affected by the recent severe rain storm (April 16th). He witnessed a very calm, confident and professional attitude by all toward the problems that existed and was very impressed by it.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Doherty questioned the need for a \$120,000 request for Training Tower Renovations, Account #9933.

Chief Peter Struble explained that the existing training tower is the oldest in the State; twenty-two years; and is in dire need of repair/replacement.

Bids were being solicited to renovate the tower and as information began coming in it was clear that the investment into the building was beginning to give the department diminishing returns. Some of the problems that existed were larger than what was originally perceived. The building requires more work than the department originally thought. Rather than "piece meal" it the Chief stopped any more work from being performed on the tower until it could be done correctly. It is now believed that it may be cheaper and more cost-effective to place a different style of construction there, actually a different building. The roof needs repairs, the bricks need re-pointing, the rooms inside where live fires occur need protective covering to protect the bricks and cement; staircases need to be repaired. The building held up extremely well considering the type of activity that occurs there.

Mr. Doherty asked, what will it cost to construct a new building?

Chief Struble responded, the department is currently considering the option of a steel structure with a steel shell on the outside with burn rooms inside. There are a couple in the State that they plan to visit. There is a possibility that one can be constructed on the same site for the \$120,000. as opposed to fixing the current one for the same amount of money. What ever the resulting structure, the department would like to get twenty years' worth of use from it.

Mr. Doherty made a motion to decrease the Training Tower Renovations Account by \$120,000 to \$0.00, seconded by Mr. Zappala.

Chief Struble, at the request of the Mayor, once again explained the use of the building to the Council.

Mr. Doherty whole-heartedly agreed with the department's training program and explained that the reason behind his motion is that perhaps the current structure can be utilized for one more year while the department reviews the option of the steel structure.

Chief Struble stated, if the department has to wait one more year it will do so, however, they would very much like to do this project in this upcoming budget year if possible. The building is in very bad shape. The training sessions have been restricted.

The department's objective is to review both options, renovations or new construction to see which will give the Town the most "bang for its buck" but one or the other has to occur this upcoming budget year due to the poor condition of the building.

Mr. Doherty pointed out that the line item reads specifically, "Training Tower Renovations". If they will build a new building the line item does not reflect that intent.

Mayor Dickinson stated, if it will be new construction then the account will be brought before the Council to change the name on the line item to reflect the correct use of the funds.

Upon hearing further explanation on the subject Mr. Zappala withdrew his second to the motion.

No second was offered to Mr. Doherty's motion therefore no action was taken.

Mr. Centner referred to capital account #9962, Copier, in the amount of \$8,200 and asked why the Mayor approved the funds when the department did not request the item?

Chief Struble explained that Fire Headquarters will have a building addition constructed this year which will house new offices and classroom space as well as the relocated offices of the Fire Marshal's department. The two staffs will be merged together. The present copier at Fire Headquarters will not accommodate the consolidation of both offices. The Fire Marshal's office will not be bringing a copier to the new location since they currently share Planning & Zoning's and the Building Department's equipment.

Mayor Dickinson explained that the Fire Marshal's budget request included the copier. It was felt that it would be more appropriate to place that capital item in the Fire Department's budget. The copier currently used by the Fire Department will be given to the Assessor's Office.

Mr. Doherty next reviewed capital account #9917 - Limited Confined Entry Kit, and asked if the department has requested this item in a previous budget?

Chief Struble responded that \$2,900 was spent in the F.Y. 1995 budget on the item. O.S.H.A. requires that this equipment be available to provide rescue to general industry should someone become trapped in small spaces such as boilers, manholes, etc.

Mr. Doherty then questioned the increase to the Breathing Apparatus Upgrade Program account.

Chief Struble explained that the current packs are aging and the present masks used by the personnel, when exposed to extremely high temperatures, have been found to fall off of the firefighter's faces. All of that equipment needed to be replaced immediately when the department became aware of the situation. This budget plans for upgrading the equipment.

Mr. Doherty next reviewed account #9958 entitled, "5" Supply Hose" for \$30,000.

Chief Struble explained that the hose currently used is a double lined cotton-jacketed hose. Most of the supply hose presently used is 3.5" in diameter and most of it is approaching between fifteen and twenty years of age. What you will begin to see with this type of hose is some rate of failure, basically through deterioration of the cotton jacket from rubbing and abrasion on the street. The department is at the point where it either needs to buy more of that type of hose or replace the system. This proposed 5" hose is larger and moves more water with less people and equipment and is easier to clean as well. With the cotton jacketed hose, for every one hundred feet of wet hose we must store one hundred feet of dry hose to replace on the truck to allow for the drying of the wet hose. This new hose is synthetic or rubber and if it is placed on the street and filled, it merely needs to be drained, wiped off and placed right back on the truck. This purchase will supply three apparatus trucks with hose. The newly purchased vehicles have arrived equipped with this new type of hose.

Mr. Rys stated that some material was distributed to the Council prior to the meeting tonight requesting \$30,000 in additional funds for the East Wallingford Volunteer Fire Department for the installation of doors at the location.

Motion was made by Mr. Rys to Increase the Capital Equipment Portion of the Fire Department by \$30,000 to Provide for the Purchase, Site Work Preparation and Installation of Overhead Doors for the East Wallingford Fire Department Building and to Adjust the Council Contingency Reserve for Emergency Account Accordingly, seconded by Ms. Papale.

Mr. Rys explained that if this work can be performed for this price and signed off on by an architect he would be happy to have the doors installed at the rear of the building. The road is heavily travelled in his opinion and to have fire trucks backing into the fire house is not a good idea, especially if the building has a rear entrance parking lot.

VOTE: All ayes; motion duly carried.

Mr. Centner pointed out that modular classrooms will be available once the school building expansion project is complete. Perhaps the Fire Department could utilize the portables for training classroom.

Chief Struble appreciated the suggestion but pointed out that there is no room on the property to house the portables, personnel would have to leave the main building to access the portables and utilities would have to be brought out to the structures.

RISK MANAGER

Mr. Doherty reviewed account #9031, Purchase Professional Services - Safety, noting that this is a new capital item request in the amount of \$4,000.

Mark Wilson, Risk Manager explained that the funds will be used to hire a safety professional just as the Water/Sewer Departments and Board of Education have done. The professional will visit the worksite to determine where the Town stands with regards to Federal, State and O.S.H.A. compliance requirements and to help the Town implement the policies, procedures and training programs that are required to bring the Town into compliance with the necessary regulations.

Mayor Dickinson added, it is serious exposure to the Town if we do not have the types of policies drafted and information presented to the workforce with the appropriate training to be able to point to a regular program bringing attention to these matters. The Sewer Division has led the parade on the safety issue and has drafted what was recognized by O.S.H.A. as excellent documentation in this area. We need expertise from professionals to address office space needs/requirements, etc.

No revisions were made to this department's budget.

LIBRARY

Mr. Doherty noted a \$40,000. increase in the Library's budget and asked what was the contributing factor(s)?

Leslie Scheerer, Library Director responded, salaries comprised approximately 2.8% of the increase; materials increased slightly due to inflation and the tremendous increase in use of children's materials.

Mr. Doherty asked, is the library still holding Sunday hours?

Ms. Scheerer responded, with the new budget the library should be able to stay open an additional two Sundays, until the end of April of next year, and a few extra Saturdays until the end of school. Sunday attendance is dictated by whether or not the weather is good or bad or if an athletic event is scheduled. The people who utilize the facility on this day love the idea that it is open but she could not honestly say that it is packed every Sunday.

No revisions were made to this department's budget.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Doherty questioned the request to purchase personal computers at a cost of \$18,300. He remembered that it was not too long ago that the department requested and received funding in the amount of \$450,000 to purchase computer equipment.

Chief Douglas Dortenzio responded, the funds are not affecting the mid-range computer system which comprised the majority of the expense to which Mr. Doherty referred to. The department is looking to replace some of the personal computers that were bought when the project was originally funded. The department has outgrown them as well as the industry, itself. The staff is looking at taking on on-line services, on-line intelligence with a number of other law enforcement agencies and the present equipment is simply not capable of meeting the rigors of the service the department provides today. Six machines will be purchased with the funds. The equipment that is being replaced will be handed down to other departments which have automation needs.

Mayor Dickinson stated that one computer will be given to the Welfare Department, another to the Health Department, one to the Law Department, Parks & Recreation is receiving two and the Mayor's Office is receiving one. The new equipment is the latest in technology and will have the capability necessary to access finger print information, mug shots, arrest data from other police departments, etc.

Mr. Doherty questioned the expenditure of overtime funds noting that for the first seven months of the current year the department had expended on \$159,000. yet during the past two months nearly half as much has been spent on overtime. He asked for an explanation for the recent "run" on the account.

Chief Dortenzio responded, overtime is not used in a consistent manner, it is not used if it is not needed. We have busier times of the year than others, seasonal fluctuations occur. We will soon be entering our busiest season when special events, parades, bazaars, carnivals, etc. are held. Frequently the department is asked to fund programs that they cannot foresee as arising next year just because some organization or group in town has thought to conduct an event. The department is responsive to its customers but it is very difficult to budget for.

Motion was made by Mr. Doherty to Eliminate \$12,000 from Account #1400, Overtime. There was no second to Mr. Doherty's motion.

Mr. Doherty questioned Account #9905, Controller at Silver Ponds, for which \$53,000 is being allocated.

Chief Dortenzio responded, that is a traffic light that is defunct. The light cannot be repaired and pending funding and replacement by the Council, the department is currently renting a signal light on a monthly basis.

Mr. Parisi asked, how long has the signal been inoperable?

Chief Dortenzio responded, he believes that it occurred during the course of this current fiscal year.

Mr. Parisi responded, that location is extremely important due to the fact that the majority of residents living in the area are senior citizens; it is the entrance to Silver Pond. This problem should have come to the Council's attention once discovered and should not have waited for budget workshops to be addressed.

Mr. Rys asked if the State will reimburse any portion of the cost of the light since it is State Route 150?

Chief Dortenzio responded, it would not be much, if any at all. The State normally bases the rate of reimbursement on the "legs" of the light; how much of it is State and how much of it is not. Officer Doll was not hopeful of receiving any money from the State in this case therefore the department budgeted accordingly.

Mr. Doherty noted Account #9903, Police Cruisers, which exhibited an increase of \$21,775 this year.

Chief Dortenzio explained, for the last several years the department has had insufficient funding to pay for new vehicles so they have traded the cars that they have been operating in towards the cost of the new vehicles rather than pass them back into the other Town departments for continued use. This has created a "log jam" for those departments. To alleviate the problem the department has budgeted to pay for what they anticipate to be the total expense of the new vehicles.

Mr. Doherty asked why the department is requesting \$55,000 for a Gasoline System Replacement, Account #9909?

Chief Dortenzio explained that the department has an underground tank from which it pumps its fuel around the clock, seven days a week. It has been in the ground for an extraordinarily long period of time and the Environmental Protection Agency requires that the tanks be removed and replaced by 1998. The bid will have to be put out soon in order to meet the deadline.

Mr. Renda stated that he has noticed several traffic signs that need attention in Town.

Chief Dortenzio responded, about this time of year we "take an order" for all signs and during the course of the summer when the department has temporary help that individual is put to work with one of the department's maintenance employees to begin replacing the signs.

Ms. Papale stated that she witnessed several youths in Simpson Court and Center Street skateboarding in the path of traffic.

Chief Dortenzio is aware of this problem and has been working with the Deputy Chief on it for the past several days. Two patrolmen have been stationed in the area this evening once the department was informed of the situation. Federal monies were received last year to hire two new police officers to institute a Community Policing program which commenced at the beginning of April. One sergeant and two veteran officers are assigned to both the problem that Ms. Papale pointed out as well as a "punch list" of other locations in Town that need some attention to restore the quality of life to the people who are using particular neighborhoods. This afternoon the sergeant and two patrolmen have film footage of the youngsters referred to and are in the process of contacting some parents tonight with an invitation to bring their child to the station to view the videotape. Prior to arriving at this budget workshop the Chief engaged in conversation with one of the State's judges and if the parents cannot control that problem he has made arrangements with the judge to, rather than fining the parents/youths, send them back to the Town to sand the public benches, re-stain them, sweep up the street and generally "spruce up" the area in lieu of the fine.

The Council was pleased with the Chief's arrangement.

Mr. Doherty asked, has the department budgeted an entire year's salary for any new patrolmen who, in essence, will not be on board and fully trained until January or February of 1997?

Chief Dortenzio responded, we have a position that we are currently trying to fill and have the new hire into the academy by the third week in May. If we do then we will have to begin paying in this fiscal year and, of course, at the beginning of the new fiscal year. There is one position budgeted for that is in question because it is tied up in a labor dispute. As soon as a final decision is received from the judge of the appellate court the department will "unfreeze" the position and seek to fill it with the people the department is currently interviewing.

SOCIAL SERVICE CONTRIBUTIONS

Mr. Farrell referred to Line #6740, Veterans Memorial Hospital, stating that most hospitals today act like businesses and he wondered about the justification of making a donation to a business.

Mayor Dickinson stated, this has been an historic contribution since the 1960s which serves as a goodwill gesture.

Mr. Farrell asked, do we know how these funds are going to be used?

Mayor Dickinson did not have that information at hand.

Mr. Knight stated that he serves on the Board of Governors of the hospital and has had an opportunity to meet with several of their committees. If the Councilors are offered an opportunity to do so they should take the time to visit the hospital to see what is hopefully going to be built on Lewis Avenue in Meriden for they will gain an understanding of the need for the funding. Yes, the hospital is run like a business, thank God, for they are making every effort to minimize their expenses. The new facility will be considerably smaller, state-of-the-art, which it should be, and yet they will still have tremendous need for equipment in order to remain current with the ever-changing healthcare system in this country. He would be very disappointed to see the Council, especially at this junction, when the hospital is about to embark on this \$68 million facility, it would be an unfortunate gesture to eliminate the funding at this time. He has no doubt that the hospital, if they had known that there were questions, would have been more than happy to send any number of representatives to this meeting to explain the expenditure of every dollar.

Mr. Parisi felt that Mr. Knight was a very able representative of the hospital and perhaps he could arrange an invitation from the hospital to the Council to view the proposed facility.

Mr. Knight responded, he would very much like to have the hospital representatives visit the Council as part of our meeting for a brief presentation.

Mr. Parisi stated, perhaps they could invite us up as a Council and as representative contributors and give us a presentation.

Mr. Knight was sure that the hospital would be more than happy to do so and he will follow through in contacting them with the information.

Mr. Doherty made a motion to Reduce Line #6740, Veterans Memorial Medical Center by \$5,000., seconded by Mr. Zappala.

Mr. Rys stated that he remembered distinctly when the members of the hospital administration appeared before the Council not too long ago that one of the things they did bring up is that a lot of times people default on their bills and this is a good will gesture by our community to help them out with people who may default from the Town of Wallingford. Meriden does the same thing.

Mr. Farrell stated, if that is what the contribution is for then he was even more opposed to it. In his experience as an attorney he has found that many hospitals are misleading people on the funds that are available to indigent people. They basically do not advise people when they come to the hospital that these funds are available. If you don't ask, they won't tell you. Subsequent to that they then go after that person's assets. He has had a number of cases where hospitals have basically wiped out a person's savings based on the fact that they are not advising people of the fact that these funds are available.

Mr. Parisi stated, as a healthcare worker, he did not want to enter into a debate on this issue but he did want to continue this conversation with Mr. Farrell after the meeting for he feels that he has an opposing view to Mr. Farrell's statement or picture of the healthcare industry.

VOTE: Doherty, Farrell and Zappala, aye; all others, no; motion failed.

Mr. Doherty next questioned the \$25,000 increase to Line #6750, Committee on Aging.

Mayor Dickinson responded, approximately \$12,000 of the increase represents what their annual cost would be to produce a newsletter which is mailed monthly. This newsletter varies from nine to twelve pages in length and is mailed to 3,000+ subscribers. The Town will provide the paper and the \$12,000 should cover the mailing and printing cost for the newsletter. The Town has been providing the service through the Purchasing Department but our equipment is getting old and we are having trouble keeping up with demand.

No changes were made to the Social Service Contribution budget.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

Mr. Doherty asked, how much of a profit is expected to exist at the end of the new fiscal year?

Raymond F. Smith, Director of Public Utilities responded, the projected Net Income is \$1,835,027. for the Electric Division; \$869,867. for the Water Division and the Sewer Division will

exhibit a Net Loss of \$341,211.

Mr. Doherty asked, how much does each of the utilities have as a "roll over" sum of money to be used as a surplus?

Mr. Smith responded, in the Electric Division the funds that have not been earmarked or are above the suggested reserve at the end of 1995 or the last audited fiscal year, is \$2,586,382. In the Water Division, again this would be above commitments for the current fiscal year and the minimum cash balance, the figure is \$764,722. With regards to the Sewer Division the amount is \$2,537,265.

Mr. Doherty stated, at one time many years ago there was a balance of nearly \$18 million in the Electric Division as a surplus. What is that particular fund down to now?

Mr. Smith answered, the total cash and equivalent as of June 30th was \$6,909,000.

No changes were made to any of the utility budgets.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Mr. Doherty noted an increase of \$13,000 to Account #5210, Maintenance of Pool and asked for the explanation behind the increase.

Tom Dooley, Director of Parks and Recreation responded, the \$13,000 increase is attributed to the charge that the department will be receiving from the Water Division to fill and maintain the level of water in the pool all summer. The Water Division never charged for the service before.

Mayor Dickinson explained that a water meter did not exist at the pool previously and since there was no way of determining the amount of water used to fill the pool the division was reluctant to estimate on a bill. A meter has since been installed.

Mr. Doherty noted an increase of \$1,200 in seven of the ten contribution accounts to various leagues and asked, why?

Mr. Dooley responded, the department has contributed \$1,800 or less to each league since 1988. The \$3,000 covers the league's minimum insurance. By supporting the leagues financially the Town is showing its support to them and, at the same time, gaining a bit more control over them.

Mr. Doherty asked what Account #9920, Chemical House, is being requested for?

Mr. Dooley responded, the department felt that it was time that the Town limit its exposure to liability by contracting a service to oversee the chemicals going into the pool and maintaining the proper chemical levels. A professional will run the chemical program at Community Pool. In the past the Town has hired high school and college students with little or no experience to perform the task.

Mr. Zappala was under the impression that several employees attended training sessions last year for experience in this field.

Mr. Dooley responded, a certified pool operator's license does not indicate that the individual possessing one has the expertise to handle chemicals or to run a chemical house. It only allows for the running or management of a pool, handling lifeguards, taking chemical tests, but not the handling of chemicals in a chemical plant/house.

Mayor Dickinson stated that the Risk Manager advised him that the Town needs the protection of someone who is a professional in this field.

Mr. Doherty referred to the department's capital equipment portion of the budget and asked, what items are specifically being requested for the recreation center at Fairfield Boulevard?

Mr. Dooley responded, Acct. # 9903, Phone System (to relocate the department's phones) Acct. #9904, Wall Padding; Acct. #9909, Steel Chairs; Acct. #9910, Round Folding Tables; Acct. #9911, Tables; Acct. #9912, Table Trucks; Acct. #9913, Round Table Trucks; Acct. #9914, File Cabinet; Acct. #9921, Uneven Cable Bars with Plates and Acct. #9925, Ink Jet Fax Machine which totals \$30,682.

Mr. Doherty asked, why would a Collegiate Volley Ball System cost \$5,230 (Acct. #9926)?

Mr. Dooley responded, it is two systems that the department bought particularly for the new gymnasium that will be over there (Fairfield Blvd.). It has special sleeves, it is very light and state-of-the-art. With the number of volley ball players we have using it and with the increased number of female players that are moving standards, we felt it was the best model to purchase.

Mr. Doherty noted that the Youth Service Department's budget includes \$2,900 for relocation expenses and asked, why are there no funds set aside in the Recreation Department budget for relocation since both Recreation and Youth Service are moving to the same place from the same building?

Mayor Dickinson responded, the relocation expense is for the telephone system.

No changes were made to this department's budget.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Mr. Doherty questioned the need to paint the Town Hall exterior (Acct. #9986, \$20,000.) and to repair the Steps - Town Hall - Exterior (Acct. #9996, \$75,000.) and Rebuild Town Hall Interior Steps (Acct. #9969, \$10,000.). He noted that four new vehicles were being requested by the department as well.

Henry McCully explained that the Town offices have now occupied this building for eight years and it is time the exterior was painted. The work is three years overdue and is very tedious. With regards to the exterior steps of the Town Hall, water is leaking into the Town Clerk's Office and vault area due to a serious erosion problem in the concrete of the vault that supports the front steps. Four landings of interior steps were improperly installed when the building was renovated. The steps were never properly leveled so the treads wear over time causing the edges of the steps to crack and break off. Last year the process of repairing the steps commenced. We need to have an additional sixty steps repaired at a cost of approximately \$150 per step.

Mr. Doherty asked, are there any other anticipated major repairs that will need addressing soon?

Mr. McCully responded, the roof is a constant problem. We have been able to patch it up, performing maintenance on it every summer. The roof has leaked since the day we have moved in.

Mr. Doherty asked, when do you anticipate replacing the roof?

Mr. McCully answered, the roof is a four-ply built up roof that is supposed to last fifteen years. We will get fifteen years but during that time we will experience minor leaks that we will continue to maintain.

With regards to the air conditioning units installed last summer on the south side of the Town Hall, they will be sided to match the existing side of the building to make them less noticeable.

Mr. Farrell pointed out that if the Town Clerk's vault was to experience a major leak it would cost several times the \$75,000 that is being requested to repair the minor leak to repair the damage that will occur to the many historical records and books that are stored in the vault.

VOTE: Zappala and Doherty, aye; all others, no; motion failed.

Mr. Zappala referred to Account #9024, Professional Services Clean Catch Basins, \$30,000. and asked what the funds were being requested for?

Mr. McCully responded, we have one Scavenger catch basin cleaner. In a good year it can be operated eight months. We have identified over 6,200 catch basins in the Town. The present machine cannot possibly keep up with that many catch basins. On a good day, if we don't run into pipes that are clogged, we can probably clean between ten and fifteen catch basins per day. In speaking to the contractor, this service will take care of about 1,700 catch basins. We will map out and identify sections; institute a three year plan to clean all the catch basins in town. It is a good deal since the cost to purchase a new Scavenger could cost upwards of \$140,000. It could help protect the Town in the way of liability. We have had a few claims against the Town based on the fact that we don't have a plan to clean catch basins and maintain them.

Mr. Zappala thought that it is odd to contract out what should be done on a regular basis by the Public Works Department. Does that mean that we are not going to be doing it anymore?

Mr. McCully responded, no, we will always have our Scavenger. This service will help us keep up. After three years he hopes to be able to drop this contract for one or two years and then start up again. This is just to get us caught up...at the rate we are going now we will never catch up with the amount of new subdivisions that are being put in. During the summer our own Scavenger is sent with our road construction crews when we are doing drainage. We require their services to accompany the crew to flush out pipes, etc. This contract will be strictly for cleaning catch basins, for cleaning the accumulated sand out of them. The contractor will provide us with a Scavenger and two men. We have to supply them with the water.

Mr. Parisi recalled when the service was performed by high school students hired for summer help. He asked if the contractor has anything different or will do anything different than what our crews currently do?

Mr. McCully responded, no. We need to have two machines running at the same time, full-time.

Mayor Dickinson commented, it is a temporary fix that will bring us up to date. His office receives many calls from residents regarding their catch basins.

Mr. Parisi understood the issue, he was trying to make a comparison with regards to productivity between the contractor and our own crews. If they have the same equipment and number of personnel are they simply more productive than our employees? It is an ideal time to make a comparison.

The new additions of equipment will bring the department's total of vehicles to twenty-two. The Chipper, Acct. #9911, will be replacing a 1976 model; the Compressor Truck, Acct. #9913, is replacing a 1979 model of the same equipment and the Fuel Truck w/Equipment, Acct. #9922, is replacing a 1973 International heavy duty service truck equipped with a hoist.

No revisions were made to this department's budget.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Doherty referred to Account #9902, Purchasing System Upgrade, \$5,000 and asked, why is the system being requested?

Thomas Myers, Comptroller responded, last year two personal computers and a national purchasing processing system was purchased. The Purchasing Office is not automated, all the work is performed by hand. This is a continuance of trying to convert to a personal computer system. The goal is to completely restructure the purchasing processing system. It will take approximately 3-5 years to complete the change entirely.

Mr. Doherty asked why the department is requesting a Microfilm Reader/Printer, Account #9912, in the amount of \$9,000.

Mr. Myers responded, a new microfilm camera was purchased in 1995 to replace the department's nineteen year old camera. The reader, which is twenty year's of age, was not replaced. This request will facilitate the replacement of the reader.

Mr. Farrell pointed out that the Building Inspector is sending his material out to a private company for microfilming and the Probate Court recently purchased a microfilm reader. Do we need two readers in the Town Hall?

Mr. Myers responded, the Building Department has many large documents that require special handling, if it was a matter of filming only building permits or licenses, it would not be a problem to film their material. The Probate Court's information is extremely confidential and they forward their data out for filming; they only require a reader. The Finance Department uses their reader every day.

Mr. Farrell stated, his concern is that the Town Hall is lacking a record management program causing inefficiency.

Mr. Myers responded, short of setting up a records retention office the current record management procedure is the most efficient way for the government to operate.

Mr. Farrell commented that the Town needs to review its records policies.

Mr. Knight asked if anyone has given thought to digital scanning? The retrieval of documents is instantaneous. Does the State have to approve the Town's record-keeping policy?

Mr. Myers responded, the State does not tell us on what medium to retain our records. The problem that we have is, if we pay a particular vendor, that payment package could be for one document to thirty documents, all different sizes, double-sided, single-sided, etc. and they support the disbursement of public funds. You get involved in removing staples, clips, etc., to get the documents prepared for microfilming. It is a very tedious task. He is not sure if the digital scanning would really benefit the Town.

Mr. Doherty made a motion to Reduce Account #3190, Contingency Reserve for Emergency, by \$100,000. from \$296,167 to \$196,167., seconded by Mr. Zappala.

Mayor Dickinson reminded the Council that it has changed the sum of the account by action taken earlier this evening for the Fire Department. He also reminded them that the account is down to a \$685.00 balance in this year's budget. Given that it is an \$85 million operation; to have \$160,000 in contingency to meet the potential emergencies that arise during the course of a year is not sufficient.

Mr. Doherty asked, when the contingency ran out this year, where did we go (for funds)? Didn't we use the unanticipated cash balance?

Mr. Myers responded, yes, we used \$160,000 from that account to cover snow management cost.

Mayor Dickinson informed Mr. Doherty that the Unanticipated fund balance is not available until December. In addition, we would not be budgeting properly.

Mr. Doherty asked, how much is budgeted for a surplus in the current fiscal year's budget?

Mayor Dickinson did not have an estimate on that.

Mr. Doherty then asked, how many years in a row now have we produced a surplus? A record twelve years now isn't it. Why be so concerned about not having a surplus this year?

Mayor Dickinson responded, you are already absorbing money in this proposed budget from what would be part of this audited cash balance. We are taking \$840,000 from this proposed budget assuming that it will be there at the end of this year. How much over and above that will be left is the question?

Mr. Doherty felt that the Town is guilty of over-taxation; over-taxing people with all the extra funds that exist in many accounts and each year producing some sort of a surplus and claiming that it is proper management that did it. The surplus is already built into next year's budget.

Mayor Dickinson answered, there are many communities in financial difficulties. You have to look at multi-year periods for budgeting.

Mr. Doherty asked Mr. Myers, how much is set aside to maintain the Town's Aa credit rating?

Mr. Myers responded, \$3,925,000.

Mr. Doherty asked, if we got into trouble could we go into that account?

Mr. Myers responded, yes, however, if we use it then we must have a plan for when and how we are going to put it back. We have never used the funds before. It is taxpayer's money pledged against the bonds.

Mr. Doherty was of the opinion that it was unnecessary to place as much money as has been set aside in the new budget contingency funds when so many other accounts exist with surplus funds in them.

Mayor Dickinson noted, holding a reserve provides protection for the Town and gives us a solid credit rating. You don't necessarily have to spend money to put it to use.

Mr. Doherty asked, what other surplus accounts exist?

Mr. Myers responded, \$2.6 million in the Electric Division; \$765,000 in the Water Division; \$2.5 million in the Sewer Division.

VOTE: Zappala and Doherty, aye; all others, no; motion failed.

Mr. Doherty next addressed Pension Funds, Account #8080, Consolidated Pension Plan. He distributed graphs to all the Councilors showing the rate of contribution by the Town, the actuarial determined figures and budgeted figures. It is his opinion that the fund is over-funded. The pension fund was started back in 1978 and was to run for thirty years. As of now, we have more than enough money to meet our current liabilities under this account. In some cases we contributed more than we actually budgeted in certain areas. The figure is close to \$93 million and from 1978 until 1996 the taxpayers have shouldered an extra burden because there was no funding prior to 1978. During the time the taxpayers were bearing the brunt of playing catch up for the pension fund the Town was also constructing a Water Treatment Plant and a Sewer Treatment Plant. The taxpayers are bearing the brunt of that as well. It is about time they deserve a break and this is one way of giving it to them. The pension fund still has fourteen years to run. Why should the taxpayers continue to pay such a huge amount into this fund? Why not spread the burden out down the road a bit? There is more than enough money to carry all the obligations associated with the fund right now.

Mr. Zappala seconded Mr. Doherty's motion.

Mr. Parisi asked Mr. Doherty if he realized that the rate of contribution decreased this year?

Mr. Doherty was aware of that. The contributions are based on 5.5% labor contracts when, in fact those contracts are being awarded at 2.75%. The actuaries are figuring this contribution based upon how much was in the account the last time it was audited in June of 1995 which is a lot less than the \$93 million that is in there now. The actuaries are not working with current figures.

Mayor Dickinson responded, we have followed the actuaries' advice to this point which was to fund at a 7.7% level. The goal of the Town in 1978 was to achieve 100% funding. That goal has been achieved through all the discipline over the years. It is now 102% funded. You will never maintain exactly 100% every year. It will vary between 95% and 105% due to salary increases, number of employees, ages etc. If we depart from our standard it will mean that we will have to raise the money at another time.

Mr. Doherty commented that the actuaries predicted this account to produce approximately 8% and, on average, it has produced 10% or better. If you took \$91,000,000 and put it in the bank at 2% it would cover what we need for those retiring now.

VOTE: Doherty and Zappala, aye; all others, no; motion failed.

Budget Workshop

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April 18, 1996

Mr. Myers noted that the changes made this evening will be netted against the contingency account. At the time the budget is passed by the Council the Town's Auditors are approved simultaneously. He asked if anyone wanted to change the auditing firm?

Mr. Doherty preferred to change auditors as did Mr. Farrell.

Mr. Parisi was of the opinion that the firm of Levitsky and Birney has served the Town well and has complete faith they are doing a fine job as did the remaining Councilors.

Motion was made by Mr. Rys to Adjourn the Meeting, seconded by Mr. Centner.

VOTE: All ayes; motion duly carried.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:00 P.M.

Meeting recorded and transcribed by:

Kathryn F. Milano
Kathryn F. Milano
Town Council Secretary
April 25, 1996