

# **SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

## **TOLLAND TOWN COUNCIL HICKS MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER 6<sup>th</sup> FLOOR COUNCIL ROOM**

**APRIL 1, 2014 – 7:30 P.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jack Scavone, Chairman; George Baker, Vice-Chair; William Eccles; Richard Field; Paul Krasusky; Jan Rubino and Ben Stanford

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Steven Werbner, Town Manager; Lisa Hancock, Director of Finance and Records; Clem Langlois, Public Works; John Littell, Public Safety/Fire Chief

- 1. Call to Order:** Jack Scavone called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance:** Recited.
- 3. Moment of Silence:** Observed.
- 4. Public Participation (2 minute limit)**

**Dale Kasai of 32 Marbella Lane** – He thanked the Council, the BOE members and our Town Manager for all their involvement with this year’s budget. You allowed the public in the process. He thanked them for allowing participation, so that people like himself could speak and voice his opinion. He supports this budget.

**Patrick Doyle of 8 Lakeview Drive Ex.** – (Vice Chair of the BOE) – He echoed the appreciation for the partnership that they have been able to have between the Council, BOE, Town Manager and the Superintendent. It has been great having this level of partnership as the budget gets put together. He believes they can count on the same level of partnership as they move forward with implementing what is in the budget. He is looking forward to what is ahead. He stands behind this budget.

### **5. Consideration of the Town Council’s Proposed FY 2014-2015 Budget**

In order for the Council to begin their discussion on the suggested budget, Mr. Baker read the proposed resolution.

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council has reviewed the Town Manager’s proposed budget and has made certain modifications to estimated revenues and expenditures, the details of which will be properly incorporated into the total budgetary document by the Town Manager and Director of Finance and Records;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby adopts a FY 2014-15 Town Operating and Capital Budget in the amount of \$53,175,832 to be appropriated as follows:

CATEGORY	AMOUNT
Town Government	\$11,357,619
Board of Education	\$37,189,581
Debt Service	\$ 4,542,176
Capital	\$ 86,456
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$53,175,832</b>

Said appropriations shall require a .86 increase in the mill levy for a 2.849% increase in the current tax rate, or 31.05 mills.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Town Manager, pursuant to the requirements of the Town Charter, is authorized to advertise this budgetary outlay as part of the April 23, 2014, Annual Budget Presentation Meeting at the Tolland High School Auditorium at 7:30 p.m.

The Council had discussion on this item starting with Mr. Krasusky. He is pleased with how they have arrived at the information and how everyone, the public in particular, worked together. He thinks the results will fill in the needs that need to be addressed.

Ms. Rubino supports this budget. She realizes there are concerns about the Resource Officer position coming back to the town. She does support this, and is hopeful that as the BOE is given the opportunity to work with members of the town and administrators to make sure that everyone is comfortable with the way it is implemented. She believes the process is important.

Mr. Field supports the budget. He likes the way it was arrived at, with cooperation between the majority, minority and all residents in town. This is the way it should be done. He supports it 100%.

Mr. Eccles said the issue of the School Resource Officer had him concerned, but once he heard the benefits that the SRO offers to the town and the BOE, he believes this is an investment that we need to make for this town and this is the proper way to do it. He commended all participates, and he stands behind this budget as being the best thing we can offer to Tolland.

Mr. Stanford has struggled with some minor things. The BOE has done a great job in going through their process. They met their goal of a level service budget. However, he is surprised that there is now the potential for another \$350,000 of additional savings or revenue for next year. He is not sure if that could have been found before they voted on their budget or not. He is concerned with the priorities that they have. He doesn't believe all-day kindergarten should be the number one priority. He believes facilities are an issue. There was a \$40,000+ operational cost to replace a fire panel, and he is concerned there are more items like this that are not being addressed. These things could be addressed by setting aside some of the money that is found between now and the end of the year. He suggests these monies be put in the reserve account to address those items. He also believes technology and curriculum are priorities. He can't tell the BOE how to spend their money though. He also raises concern for the time it will take to implement all-day kindergarten. If the budget passes in May, will they have the time to develop the curriculum and implement it for September? He doesn't believe there is enough time to hire teachers, train them and get them the classrooms needed. He suggests moving it a year out. He also mentioned that the one year pilot program for residential homes should be expended to cover all buildings, or narrowly focusing it towards commercial and industrial. Also, there are proposals from the town manager to increase the hours of the Animal Control Officer, as well as the Building Inspector. He would like to see those funded. There are some other minor things too. Even with his minor concerns, he stated that he was behind this budget 95-98%.

Mr. Baker said he supports this budget. He was pleasantly surprised at the process. He appreciates all the work that has gone into this. He is happy with the cooperation with the BOE. He thinks that if you are going to have an increase in the budget, you need to show the people that they are getting something for the increases in their taxes. He believes this budget does this. He thinks the BOE's priorities need to be clear, and he hopes they set them right. He will support the budget and advocate its' passage.

Mr. Scavone said that the process the town went through this year was open and honest. He believes they came up with a budget that is fair, and it is what is necessary at this juncture for the Town of Tolland. Is it perfect? It's close. It's as close as they are going to get it with the hand that they've been dealt. There are opportunities to tweak little things, since we are only voting on the number. This is the best product that he has seen since he has been sitting on the Council, and he is proud to present this to the citizens.

Ms. Rubino said the due diligence that the BOE has put into this makes her confident. They have tried to make this as transparent to us as possible, which is really hard. This BOE has worked hard to make sure that we understand their needs and numbers.

## 6. Approval of Budget Resolution

George Baker read the following resolution:

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council has reviewed the Town Manager's proposed budget and has made certain modifications to estimated revenues and expenditures, the details of which will be properly incorporated into the total budgetary document by the Town Manager and Director of Finance and Records;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby adopts a FY 2014-15 Town Operating and Capital Budget in the amount of \$53,175,832 to be appropriated as follows:

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Said appropriations shall require a .86 increase in the mill levy for a 2.849% increase in the current tax rate, or 31.05 mills.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Town Manager, pursuant to the requirements of the Town Charter, is authorized to advertise this budgetary outlay as part of the April 23, 2014, Annual Budget Presentation Meeting at the Tolland High School Auditorium at 7:30 p.m.

Seconded by Rick Field. Jack Scavone; George Baker; William Eccles; Richard Field; Paul Krasusky and Jan Rubino are in favor. Ben Stanford was opposed.

## 7. Approval of a resolution authorizing the form of the ballot for the May 6, 2014 budget referendum and any subsequent budget referendum; the time and place for the budget referendum; authorizing the Town Manager or his designee to place the required legal notices in the local newspapers; and authorizing the preparation and printing of an explanatory text

**and the mailing of same to local residents in accordance with the provisions of CT General Statutes 9-369b explaining the budget referendum question.**

George Baker read following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Tolland Town Council has adopted a proposed FY 2014-2015 Town Operating and Capital Budget to be considered by the Tolland electorate at a May 6, 2014 budget referendum; and

WHEREAS, the Council must now establish the appropriate ballot language for this referendum and the date, time and place of said referendum;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Tolland Town Council the following:

1. The ballot question for the May 6<sup>th</sup> referendum shall be worded as follows:

“Shall the Town of Tolland’s proposed 2014-2015 budget of \$53,175,832, reflecting a spending increase of \$1,331,107 or 2.57% which is equal to a 2.849% tax increase of 0.86 mills compared to the current mill rate and requiring a tax rate of 31.05 mills, be adopted? Yes/No.”

2. The time and place for the referendum shall be between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on May 6, 2014 at the Hicks Memorial Municipal Center Gymnasium and the Tolland Senior Center. The vote shall be conducted using paper ballots.

3. The Town Manager or his designee is hereby authorized to place the required legal notices in the Journal Inquirer and other places as conditions permit, advertising the May 6, 2014 Referendum and the April 23, 2014 Annual Budget Presentation Meeting.

4. The Town Manager or his designee is authorized to prepare and print an explanatory text and mail same to local residents in accordance with the provisions of CT General Statutes 9-369b explaining the budget referendum question.

Seconded by Jan Rubino. All in favor. None opposed.

**8. Adjournment:** Rick Field moved to adjourn the meeting; Seconded by George Baker at 7:52 p.m. All were in favor.

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Jack Scavone, Council Chair

Michelle A. Finnegan  
Town Council Clerk