

February 4, 2010

The special meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Newton was held on the above date at 6:00 p.m. Present were Mrs. Unhoch, Mrs. Becker, Mrs. Le Frois, Mr. Ricciardo, Mayor Elvidge and Town Manager, Tom Russo, Jr.

Mayor Elvidge made the following declaration that “in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this special meeting was given to the two newspapers of record and posted on the official bulletin board on January 27, 2010.”

Mayor Elvidge led everyone present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag and the Clerk called the roll.

WATER AND SEWER BUDGET REVIEW AND CAPITAL PROJECTS

Mr. Paul Baldwin, Water and Sewer Supervisor, John Madden, Sewer Operator, Mrs. Millikin, Deputy Town Manager, as well as Mr. Russo reviewed and outlined the Water and Sewer Budget with the Town Council.

Upon review Council had various questions which were addressed by the Town Manager, Deputy Town Manager and Water and Sewer staff.

Mrs. Millikin outlined and explained several of the items listed on the 2010 Capital Projects for the Water and Sewer Department. Council followed along with the memo created by Mrs. Millikin which outlined the Capital expenditures.

Mr. Russo read a memorandum, dated February 4, 2010, regarding the Budget Updates.

“Here are updates based on comments/questions from our January 30th budget meeting:

1. Modifications have been made to the Water/Sewer Capital Budget. You will be given a new copy of same at our next budget hearing.
2. There are 2,556 tax line items. Approximately 45% are paid by banking institutions.
3. MCIA – lease vs. bond – payments can be listed as bond payments.
4. Spring Street Cameras – Chief Tomasula has provided me with an example of one of the quotes for this project which I will disseminate to you.
5. Building Fees Report – in progress.
6. Accumulated Absences – if the two retirements occurred in 2010, it would wipe out the entire \$95,000 reserve account for same. Therefore I would not recommend any cut in my proposed 2010 appropriation of \$6,500. This appropriation is necessary to begin the process of proper planning for other retirements in the future.
7. JCP&L lights – all lights that were asked to be removed by the Town have been removed and same has been reflected on our billing. If there are other lights that need to be addressed, please provide me with the specific light pole numbers.
8. Dam Repair – Dave Simmons has been in contact with the NJDEP to see if we can obtain a one-year reprieve on this mandated project. He has received a verbal approval on the extension of time for completion. Please note that this does not change my Capital Budget other than to authorize half of the estimated cost this year (\$250,000) and the remainder for next year with no guarantee of off-setting grant funding. Please advise if you wish to do otherwise.
9. Pay Freeze w/ One Year Contract Extension – letters were sent on 2/1/10 to all bargaining units. The meeting with same will be on February 17th – I will keep you posted. Note that the PBA and SOA have already responded with a letter of rejection.

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10. Elevator – I am working to obtain an updated quote on necessary upgrades from B&G Elevator. This will help Rob ascertain the level of permitting/ADA requirements from the State of New Jersey.”

RECREATION BUDGET REVIEW AND CAPITAL PROJECTS

Mr. Tom Trudgeon, Sr., Recreation Supervisor and Mr. Brock Kithcart, Park Caretaker, were present to review the Recreation Budget as well as the Capital Improvement Projects requests.

Upon review of the budget, questions were addressed by Mr. Trudgeon and Mr. Kithcart.

Mr. Russo then reviewed the Capital Improvements for Parks/Recreation. Mr. Trudgeon provided a review of the recreation activities throughout the past year.

Ms. Babcock provided Council with a breakdown of three of the recreation organizations who receive contributions from the Town. 1) Newton Junior Athletic League (NJAL) 2) Newton Soccer Club; and 3) Newton Hockey. It was noted that the recreation organizations who obtain funding from the Town are required to submit an income and expense statement each year.

Council discussed the funding allocation given to the various recreation organizations and asked that the formula be revisited at a future date for more consistency.

Mr. Russo continued his review of the other aspects of the Municipal Budget including the Debt Service; Deferred Charges; Statutory Expenditures; as well as the Reserve for Uncollected Taxes. Mr. Russo noted that the budget was initially a 9.5 cent increase and after making cuts, he was able to take two cents off, presenting the budget at a 7.5 cent increase. He noted that this current proposal is merely a “snapshot in time” of the budget, until we receive the state aid figures.

Mr. Russo reviewed and outlined several of the 2010 Manager Capital Improvement projects. Mr. Russo also reviewed the two (2) Planning and Zoning Capital Improvement projects. After a brief discussion, the consensus of the Council was to remove both the Town Hall Solar Project and Water and Sewer Solar Project from the Capital Improvement list for 2010.

FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGET REVIEW AND CAPITAL PROJECTS

Fire Chief Derek Wechtler and Assistant Chief Jason Miller were present to review the Fire Department Budget and the Capital Improvement Budget. Chief Wechtler first outlined the operating budget for the Fire Department then reviewed the Aid to Volunteer Fire Department.

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A brief discussion ensued regarding the request to increase the stipend for each fire call from \$1.00 to \$2.00 per firemen/per call. After a brief discussion, Mr. Russo suggested that the amount in the budget remain and the Council can decide at a later time whether the stipend can be increased to \$2.00. It was noted that if Council agrees to the increase than a Resolution has to be adopted.

Chief Wechtler than reviewed the Capital Improvement budget with the Town Council. Councilwoman Le Frois assisted with the discussion on the new ladder truck 804 and equipment capital expenditure.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mayor Elvidge opened the meeting to the public.

Mr. Luigi Baldini, 10 Barry Lane, stated that the seniors are looking for a new community center, but indicated that he does not agree. Mr. Baldini then expressed his displeasure with the Newton Water and Sewer rates and feels that all residents of the Town should pay for water and sewer cost, even if they only have water.

Mr. Neil Flaherty, 154 Sparta Avenue, questioned the Capital Expenditures for the Zoning Ordinances–Master Plan, and the dam repairs which was addressed by Mrs. Millikin. Mr. Flaherty agreed with the “punting” of the solar projects due to budget constraints and made an additional suggestion regarding the Town’s insurance expenditures.

COUNCIL & MANAGER COMMENTS

The Council commended Mr. Russo on a well-prepared and simplified budget. Mr. Russo noted that he will adjust the 2010 Capital Improvement Program as requested by Council.

There being no further business to be conducted, upon motion of Mr. Ricciardo, seconded by Mrs. Le Frois and carried, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorraine A. Read, RMC
Municipal Clerk