

TOWN OF MANSFIELD
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
MAY 9, 2006
MANSFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

The Annual Town Meeting for Budget Consideration was called to order by the Town Clerk, Mary Stanton, at 8:00 p.m. in the Mansfield Middle School Auditorium. The Town Clerk read the Notice and Warning of the meeting and explained who was eligible to vote. She then requested nominations for Moderator.

Mayor Elizabeth Paterson moved to nominate Stephen Bacon as Moderator. Hearing no additional nominations the Town Clerk declared Mr. Bacon the Moderator.

Mr. Bacon requested that the meeting be conducted according to Roberts Rules of Order. Motion so moved, seconded and passed. Mr. Bacon asked for a motion to amend the rules and limit each speaker to three minutes. The motion was moved and seconded. A standing vote determined that the motion passed and the three-minute limit was adopted.

The Moderator recognized Mayor Elizabeth Paterson who thanked the town staff, the Boards of Education and the Town Council for their efforts. The Mayor enumerated some of the highlights of the budget and the accomplishments of the town. Ms. Paterson recognized the Town Manager Martin Berliner, who will be retiring this year, and expressed the gratitude of the town for his 27 plus years of service.

Mr. Bacon recognized Mr. Schaefer, Finance Committee Chair, who presented the following resolutions:

Resolved: That the proposed General Fund Budget for the Town of Mansfield for fiscal year July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007 in the amount of \$30,152,810 which proposed budget was adopted by the Council on April 24, 2006, be adopted and that the sums estimated and set forth in said budget be appropriated for the purpose indicated.

Resolved: That in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-51, the proportionate share for the Town of Mansfield of the annual budget for Regional School District No. 19 shall be added to the General Fund Budget appropriation for the Town of Mansfield for fiscal year July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007 and said sums shall be paid by the Town to the Regional School District as they become available.

Resolved: That the proposed Capital Projects Budget for fiscal year July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007 in the amount of \$3,887,500 be adopted provided

that the portion proposed to be funded by bonds or notes shall, at the appropriate times, be introduced for action by the Town Council subject to a vote by referendum as requires by Section 407 of the Town Charter.

Resolved: That the proposed Capital and Non-Recurring Reserve Fund Budget for fiscal year July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007 in the amount of \$2,138,640 be adopted.

Seconded by Mr. Clouette. Mr. Schaefer spoke to the motion noting a 3.2% increase in the budget. The General Government budget is down one tenth of one percent, the Education budget is up 3.4% and the town's share of the already passed Region 19 budget is up 7.1%. Mr. Schaefer itemized some of the increases in the budget and stated that if the budget were approved as presented the increase in taxes would be about 3.96%.

Mr. Bacon recognized William Simpson, Chair of the Board of Education. Mr. Simpson thanked the citizens for their support for the schools and stated that the 3.4% increase is a historic low. The Board has used this pause in the student population growth to reduce some classroom positions and to fill some much needed math and reading consultant positions.

Richard Pellegrine, 269 Clover Mill Road, moved that the Department of Public Works budget be reduced by \$100,000. The motion was seconded. Mr. Pellegrine stated his belief that the newly approved Housing Code should be able to be administered by current staff.

Carol Pellegrine, 269 Clover Mill Road, expressed support for the Housing Code but cautioned against too many layers of administration.

Mr. Hawkins, Town Council member, expressed concern that the process will collapse if not correctly funded. He noted that this is a big undertaking with over 930 units slated for inspection.

Betty Gardner, 98 Foster Drive, noted that the fees and penalties should defray some of the cost of the program.

Agatha Hoover, 88 Cemetery Road, questioned whether it is the condition of the units or the behavior of the occupants that is the problem.

Curt Beck, 11 September Road, noted that as a member of the Board of Assessment Appeals, he has heard many complaints from residents in the neighborhoods where there are student rentals.

Ina Ruth Sarin Beck moved to call the question. The motion was seconded and passed.

The question on the adoption of the amendment to cut \$100,000 from the budget of Public Works failed.

Gene Nesbitt, 268 Wormwood Hill Road, requested a breakdown of expenses for the Community Center and a listing of previously purchased open space.

Bruce Clouette, Town Council member, explained that the process is twofold. First the budget includes the money in the Capital Fund and at a later date the voters must approve the bonding for the projects.

Quentin Kessel, 97 Codfish Falls Road, commented that \$1,000,000 has been spent on open space in the last ten years and that it is important to have the authorization to bond in case an important piece of property becomes available.

Charles Eaton, 89 Lorraine Drive, expressed concern regarding the future finances of the town. He asked the Council to look at the tax base and explore ways to mitigate the impact of the University on the town. Mr. Eaton also questioned whether or not the new consultant positions in the schools were permanent.

A motion to call the question was made, seconded and passed by a standing vote.

The motion to approve the budget as presented by Mr. Schaefer passed. The budget was adopted.

A motion to adjourn was made seconded and passed.

The Annual Town Meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Stephen Bacon, Moderator

Mary Stanton, Town Clerk