

TOWN OF MANSFIELD  
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING  
MAY 12, 2009  
MANSFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

Town Clerk Mary Stanton called the Annual Town Meeting for Budget Consideration to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Mansfield Middle School Auditorium. The Town Clerk read the Notice and Warning of the Meeting and explained who would be eligible to vote. She then requested nominations for Moderator.

Mayor Elizabeth Paterson nominated Carol Pellegrine to serve as Moderator. A motion to close nominations was made, seconded and approved. Motion to approve Mrs. Pellegrine as Moderator passed unanimously.

Mrs. Pellegrine outlined the rules of debate for the meeting. Without objection Town Clerk Mary Stanton was appointed secretary to the meeting and Town Attorney Dennis O'Brien as parliamentarian. A motion to follow Roberts Rules of Order was approved without objection. Mrs. Pellegrine requested that citizens limit their comments to five minutes.

Mrs. Pellegrine recognized Mayor Elizabeth Paterson who described the challenges faced this year by staff and Council members in an effort to craft a conservative budget that protects the essential services and core values of the Town. The Mayor spoke to the collaborative efforts between the Town Council and the Boards of Education and thanked the members for their efforts. Mayor Paterson also thanked the Town Manager and his staff for their proactive efforts to curb spending this year and develop a budget that supports the future of the town and that reduces the town's dependency on state revenues.

Mrs. Pellegrine recognized Mr. Clouette, Finance Committee Chair, who presented an overview of the budget noting a decrease to the town's budget of 1.26%, and a decrease to the Board of Education's budget of 1.6%. Mansfield's share of the Regional 19 budget has decreased by 1.9%. Combined, the overall budget presents a \$688,008 or 1.6% reduction from the current year. Mr. Clouette explained the funding and purpose of the General Fund, the Capital Fund and the Capital and Nonrecurring Fund. As proposed the projected increase to the mill rate would be 1.8% or .47 mills, which would establish a tax rate for Fiscal Year 2009-2010 of 25.71mills.

Mrs. Pellegrine recognized Mary Feathers, Chair of the Board of Education. Ms. Feathers expressed thanks to Superintendent Fred Baruzzi and his staff for presenting a conservative budget that preserves the depth and breath of the programs offered to the Town's children. Ms. Feathers commented that Special Education programs would not be reduced in the budget.

Mr. Clouette offered the following resolutions for consideration:

RESOLVED: That the proposed General Fund Budget for the Town of Mansfield for fiscal year July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010 in the amount of \$33,085,320 which proposed budget was adopted by the Council on April 20, 2009, 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, 2009 to June 30, 2010 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, 2009 to June 30, 2010 in the amount of \$1,317,255 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 as required by Section 407 of the Town Charter.

RESOLVED: That the proposed Capital and Non-Recurring Reserve Fund Budget for fiscal year July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010 in the amount of \$900,000 be adopted.

Moderator Carol Pellegrine requested comments.

David Freudmann, Eastwood Road, moved to reduce funding in the General Fund for the Mansfield Downtown Partnership by the amount of \$125,000, Program 92000, and to reduce the Capital Fund by the amount of \$50,000, Program General Government. The motion was seconded.

Mr. Freudmann stated this is the last opportunity to stop the Storrs Center Project. He expressed a fear that if it is not stopped the Town will be liable for two parking garages for the next 40-50 years.

Dee Goodrich, Westwood Road, spoke in opposition to the motion stating her support of the Downtown Partnership and the need for the Mansfield to support the project. Ms. Goodrich noted that the University also contributes \$125,000 to the Partnership.

Steve Bacon, Wormwood Hill Road, spoke in opposition to the motion. Mr. Bacon stated he is concerned that the Town is too dependent on state revenues and views the Storrs Green Project as an opportunity to reduce that dependency. He estimated the cost of support for the Partnership based on a \$5000 tax bill is about \$20 per year. Mr. Bacon stated that net revenues are expected to be about \$2.6 million a year, at full build out.

Ric Hossack, Middle Turnpike, spoke in support of the motion stating that he supports the Storrs Green Project but is not in favor of using Town money for the project.

A.J. Pappanikou, Birchwood Heights, moved the previous question. Seconded, the motion to close debate passed by the requisite 2/3 of those present.

The motion on the amendment failed.

William Jordan, South Eagleville Road, questioned whether or not the \$30,000 reduction to the Fire and Emergency Budget was restored. Mr. Clouette answered that it was not and asked the Town Manager for further clarification. Town Manager Matt Hart stated that while the reduction remains in place all parties involved are committed to working to maintain current staffing. Mr. Jordan applauded the Council for the continuation of current levels of coverage.

Ric Hossack, Middle Turnpike, moved to reduce the Board of Education budget by \$150,000. The motion was seconded.

Mr. Hossack stated that since the Town employees have taken cuts in their salary he would like the Board of Education employees to do the same. He also would like Region 19 to follow suit.

Martin Sommer, Warrentown Road, spoke in opposition to the motion stating that the education system sets Mansfield apart from other towns in the area and he would not be in favor of reducing the education budget.

Helen Koehn, Separatist Road, stated that although she is not in support of the motion she does understand Mr. Hossack's concern. Ms. Koehn expressed appreciation to Town employees who were willing to sacrifice in order to keep Town services that all residents depend upon.

David Garvey, 104 Jonathan Lane, commented that even if the motion were approved the Board of Education would not necessarily have to use it for reductions in wages. He added if the unions were not willing to reopen negotiations the Board would need to make the cuts elsewhere in the budget.

William Jordan, South Eagleville Road, spoke in opposition to the motion noting that the education system in Mansfield is a credit to the tax payers.

Ric Hossack, Middle Turnpike, stated the reason he made the motion was that he believes that all employees including the Board of Education should share the burden.

Cynara Stites, Hanks Hill Road, speaking against the motion commented that the Board of Education couldn't force the teacher's union to reopen negotiations.

Ernerst Herrick, Ravine Road, spoke in opposition to the motion suggesting the education budget be left alone.

Corine Norgaard, Wormwood Hill Road, moved to call the question. Seconded the motion passed with the requisite 2/3 majority.

The vote on the motion to decrease the Board of Education budget by \$150,000 failed.

Richard Hiskes, Summit Road, moved to call the question on the budget. Seconded the motion passed with the requisite 2/3 majority.

Moderator Carol Pellegrine explained the procedure for the vote on the budget. She explained that since no amendments had been agreed to the vote would be on the budget as proposed by the Town Council.

The vote on the budget was as follows:

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| YES | 463 |
| NO  | 89  |

The motion to approve the budget, as presented, passed.

Without objection a motion to adjourn at 9:00 p.m. passed.

Mary Stanton, Town Clerk

