

Town Council Public Hearing  
General Government Budget  
April 30, 2009, 6:00 PM

Chairperson Buebendorf opened the Public Hearing at 6:02 PM in Council Chambers at the Montville Town Hall, and called for any members of the public who wished to speak on the General Government Budget.

Mr. Joe Cabral, 48 Fielding Terrace, stated that he was very disappointed in the public turnout at tonight's public hearing. Mr. Cabral stated that he is retired and is very tired of the taxes going up each year, and he is more concerned this year than in past years because of fact that so many people are struggling financially in the Town of Montville. He is happy, however, that the proposed mil increase is as low as it is, but he would still like to see no increase at all. He stated that he feels as though the Board of Education is requesting too much money. Mr. Cabral then asked the Mayor when the taxpayers would be seeing some kind of tax relief based on all of the new construction and businesses opening on Rte. 32.

Mayor Jaskiewicz stated that although there is development going on, the Town has experienced a very high loss of revenue this year. He also pointed out that there was no mil increase last year.

Chairperson Buebendorf suggested to Mr. Cabral that he attend the upcoming Finance Committee meetings in order to be involved in the budget process. She explained to him that these meetings are open to the public, and they are a good opportunity for the public to attend and understand the process that the Finance Committee goes through in finalizing the budget.

Ms. Ellen Desjardins, 513 Old Colchester Road, stated that she is a member of the Parks & Recreation Commission and asked if the Mayor could explain how salaries of Town employees are determined. Mayor Jaskiewicz explained that salaries are negotiated through Union contracts. Ms. Desjardins feels as though some salaries are much too high and should be cut back as a way of reducing expenses in the budget. The Mayor explained that because the salaries are bound by Union contract, that is not an option.

Ms. Eileen Cicchese, 3 Michaels Way, stated that she is a member of the Parks & Recreation Commission and commended the Mayor for putting together the budget as is in light of the current financial strains. Ms. Cicchese asked that the Finance Committee members look closely at each line item to find ways to cut back, while keeping the Board of Education budget as it has been proposed and not make any cuts there. Ms. Cicchese asked that the Committee please consider what is most important to the taxpayers in making their final decisions on the budget.

Mr. David Erwin, Superintendent of Schools, offered the use of the school system's call system to get meeting information on future meetings out to the public. Mr. Erwin stated that this system would only notify residents within the school system community, and not everyone in town.

Councilor Geary stated that he looks forward to the upcoming Finance Committee meetings, and will wait to receive the dates of such meetings.

Councilor Jones stated that she too is looking forward to attending the upcoming Finance Committee meetings as she feels she would like a better understanding of the budget line item by line item.

Councilor Beetham stated that many option should be explored during this process, including reducing salaries, Town employees giving up some benefits, or maybe combining departments as some of the possible options. Councilor Beetham expressed his appreciation to the Mayor for doing a good job in keeping the mil increase to a minimum, and noted that this financial situation will probably get worse before it gets better.

Councilor Murphy stated that he would be willing to give up half of what he makes yearly as a Town Councilor if all Town employees would be willing to give up \$1,000.00 per year in their pay. This would certainly help the budget situation, and the other Councilors agreed that this was a good idea and a possible option to be explored. Councilor Geary noted that give-backs had been discussed previously, and that the Town Attorney has advised that this is not a legal option. Councilor Murphy and other Councilors stated that it does not have to be a give-back, but that the employees might agree to donate a pre-determined sum of money to a specific agency within the Town.

Councilor Caron stated that as the Finance Committee Chairperson, he thanked the Finance Director and the Mayor for a good job in putting together the proposed budget. He requested that the Council members review the budget and put in writing their ideas for the Finance Committee to consider. Councilor Caron stated that he feels there are tougher years ahead, and that he encourages the public to attend the upcoming meetings to be a part of the budget process.

Mayor Jaskiewicz thanked the Councilors and Finance Director. He reported that he has spoken with Union leaders and informed them that he may be back to negotiate during the budget process. Right now he does not have any numbers or viable options to present to the Unions, so he is looking forward to the Finance Committee meetings in order to put together something to bring to Union representatives for discussion.

Councilor Jones inquired as to the use of the Fund Balance, stating that this money is put aside for a rainy day and right now there are rainy days. Because of the financial situations of many residents, she hopes that we can consider options such as regionalization or maybe consolidation of functions within departments in order to make the budget work.

Chairperson Buebendorf thanked everyone for attending this evening and she looks forward to the public attending the upcoming Finance Committee meetings. The public hearing was called to an end at 6:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Sandra Anderson CPS  
Montville Town Council Clerk