

## **SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

MUNICIPAL COMPLEX  
DATE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 2005

PORTSMOUTH, NH  
TIME: 7:00PM

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Sirrell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Councilor Raynolds was absent from the meeting and Councilor Pantelakos arrived at 7:20 p.m.

Councilor Ferrini led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

### **II. RECESSED PUBLIC HEARING** (*Recessed from May 3, 2005*)

#### **A. PROPOSED FY JULY 1, 2005 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2006 BUDGET**

Mayor Sirrell announced that the public hearing was recessed at the May 3, 2005 City Council meeting until this evening.

### **III. PRESENTATIONS**

- Budget Summary – City Manager Bohenko

City Manager Bohenko discussed the change in the budget process this year whereby the public hearing was held prior to the budget work sessions. He said the first public hearing was held on May 3, 2005 and recessed until this evening. He said that the City Council has conducted five budget work session and evaluated information received by the departments and by consensus supported Option A which provides a 5.2% increase for Municipal, 5.5% increase for Police and Fire and a 5.9% increase for the School. City Manager Bohenko also discussed the decrease in the Capital Outlay and the decrease in the Overlay account as well as the use of Reserve for Debt. He advised the City Council that Option A would account for a \$.50 increase in the tax rate which equals \$17.67 for a 2.91% increase. He reported that the tax rate is still below the FY04 tax rate. He said that after the public hearing the City Council would conduct another work session to formalize the budget. He reported that the budget would be adopted at the June 20, 2005 City Council meeting.

### **IV. PUBLIC COMMENT/INPUT**

Mayor Sirrell opened the public hearing and called for speakers.

Donald Jaczuk, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the School Department budget and their request for additional funding. He said it is important that we supply the teachers with the proper tools to provide a quality education for our children. He said that a quality education would help our children to grow and prosper for the future. He also spoke in favor of the request for funding for the Police Department. He said that an increase in police officers would cause a reduction in overtime. He said that if the Council does not fund the Police Department properly it would cost the City more in the long run. He also spoke in support of the Fire Department and their request for funding.

Steve Durgin, Portsmouth resident, said that the Council needs to take a hard line at times on the budget. He said that the 4% is above the CPI for the private industry. He discussed the various improvements taking place and that it is not unreasonable to ask the departments to stay at the 4%. He said that the City Council needs to consider the taxpayers and their ability to pay taxes.

Neil Novell, Acting President of the Association of Portsmouth Taxpayers, spoke in favor of the 4% increase, which is 60% above the inflation rate. He said that the City Council needs to set spending limits. He said that the Police and Fire Departments can work with less overtime. He said since 1996 the budget is up 56%. He said that he is displeased with the City Council not sticking to the 4% limit.

Harold Ecker, Portsmouth resident, said it appears that the City Council has their decision made on the budget but urged them to hold the budget to a 4% increase. He spoke to the benefits received by employees and against the use of City vehicles after hours by employees. He said that the departments can function with a 4% increase and urged the City Council to hold the line.

Paula Glynn, spoke in support of the budget request by the School Department. She said that it is important that the 17 teachers awaiting contracts receive them because the class sizes cannot be increased. She said that large class sizes effect the quality of education. She also spoke in support of the Police and Fire Department budgets as well.

Diane McGee, Portsmouth resident, said that the Association of Portsmouth Taxpayers does not represent all Portsmouth taxpayers. She said that each department in the City has its own unique needs and it is important that the City Council look at each department individually. She spoke in support of the 5.9% increase for the School Department. She said that the School Department is still lacking positions that have been lost during the years due to budget cuts. She urged the City Council to support the School Department to ensure that the children receive a quality education.

Louise McGee, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the 4% budget limit. She said all of her costs are increasing and she does not have enough money to fill the gap with the increase in taxes. She urged the City Council to consider the impact that the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard closing will have on this area. She urged the City Council to consider the impact of a tax rate increase on those individuals on fixed incomes.

Rich Duddy, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the 5.5% increase in the budget. He said that this is a budget everyone can live with. He said it is important for the City Council to realize that a hard line will need to be taken next year. He said any increase in taxes continues to compound each year and it needs to stop at some point.

Charles Daniels, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the School Department budget and the services he receives in the City. He said it is important that the departments receive adequate funding to continue to provide the services that residents have come to expect.

Steve Scott, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the School Department budget and their request for funding. He addressed the need for music and foreign language programs in the School Department. He spoke to the importance of quality education for all children. He also spoke in support of the Police and Fire Department budgets.

James Horrigan, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the budget before the City Council this evening. He said you get what you pay for and the quality of life in the City depends on the quality of services received in the City and by the various departments. He said he supports the process used by the City Council this year in the preparation of the budget. He urged the City Council to think ahead about revenue streams. He spoke specifically to the small amount being paid through the Pease Municipal Services Agreement and the need to renegotiate that agreement.

Linda Kendall, Portsmouth resident, spoke to the future of the community and the quality education for our children. She urged the City Council to support the School Department budget and their request for funding.

Anne Sears, Portsmouth resident, advised the City Council that her taxes have doubled in the last three years and it creates a very difficult situation for her. She urged the City Council to stay at a 4% limit for the budget.

Hank Sanders, Portsmouth residents, said that this is a great place to live and urged the City Council to support the departments and the City's growth. He said that leadership is a key part of this community and the Council needs to set goals and look at all areas of the budget.

Ian Butler, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the School Department budget. He said he strongly supports Option A and urged the City Council to do the same.

Mary Maloney, Portsmouth resident, spoke to the importance of all residents to be able to stay in the City even if they are on fixed incomes. She spoke to the importance of the School Department and the need for the City Council to support their budget. She said that the School Department does a tremendous job teaching the children of our future.

Lisa Sweet, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of our community leaders for building their budgets and putting an end to the Statewide property tax. She said she has spent many hours on this budget and a 4% cap would cause a layoff of employees and cuts in service. She advised the City Council that the Association of Portsmouth Taxpayers does not represent all the taxpayers of this City. She spoke to the need to continue to provide a quality education for our children. She said that the School Department cannot continue to make cuts because they are at bare bones now.

Becky Harvey, Portsmouth resident, spoke opposed to the 4% cap for the budget. She spoke in support of all the department requests for funding. She said it is important that the community continues to maintain their quality of life and services they have become accustomed to.

Amy Brnger, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of Option A but would like the School Department to receive their original request of 7.43%. She addressed the need for the 17 teachers to receive their contracts for next year and the need to maintain small classroom sizes for a quality of education.

Leslie Stevens, Portsmouth resident, provided the City Council with a statement of support for the School Department with 134 signatures of parents from the New Franklin, Little Harbour and Dondero Schools. She thanked the City Council for their hard work on this budget process and for listening to the residents and their concerns.

Martin Cameron, Portsmouth resident, thanked the City Council for this additional public hearing on the budget. He said the City would be facing big problems in the future if the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard closes. He urged the City Council to start restraining their spending.

Donald Jaczuk, Portsmouth resident, said he empathizes with the senior residents of the City and their concern with the increase in taxes but it is important that the children receive a quality education. He said all residents are facing difficulties with the increase in costs. He said that we are facing an uncertain economic future.

Lucy Salyer, Portsmouth residents, spoke in support of the School Department budget and their request for funding. She asked the City Council to consider supporting the 7.43% increase as requested by the School Department.

After three calls and no further speakers, Mayor Sirrell declared the public hearing closed.

#### **V. REQUEST TO ESTABLISH WORK SESSION FOR FINAL BUDGET REVIEW**

Mayor Sirrell advised the City Council that a date needs to be set for a final budget review work session. The City Council agreed to hold a final budget review work session on Tuesday, June 14, 2005 at 6:30 p.m. in Conference Room A.

#### **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:30 p.m., Councilor Pantelakos moved to adjourn. Seconded and voted.



Kelli L. Barnaby, City Clerk