

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

MUNICIPAL COMPLEX
DATE: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2009

PORTSMOUTH, NH
TIME: 7:00PM [or thereafter]

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Ferrini, Assistant Mayor Blalock, Councilors Novelline Clayburgh, Dwyer, Kennedy, Spear and Hejtmanek

Absent: Councilors Smith and Pantelakos

III. PUBLIC HEARING

A. PROPOSED FY JULY 1, 2009 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2010 BUDGET

IV. PRESENTATIONS

- **Budget Summary – City Manager Bohenko**

City Manager Bohenko announced that there will be a 40 minute presentation by staff. In accordance with the Charter the budget was submitted to the City Council on April 10th. He spoke to the difficult financial situation we all currently face. City Manager Bohenko advised the City Council that there is a 4% increase in the Rockingham County budget and that City revenues have declined by \$250,000.00 for vehicle registrations. He announced that the Police Commission voted at their meeting last evening to further reduce their budget. He reported we are anticipating a \$.30 increase in the budget, but with further reductions by the Police Department we would see an additional two-cent reduction. City Manager Bohenko reviewed the financial policy and the City's bond rating and advised the City Council that the budget reflects a 2.8% increase for a total budget of \$84,746,159.00. The Non-Operating budget will increase 2.27% and personnel costs make up 83% of the budget. He addressed retirement costs and the continued increase in health care.

- **Police Department – Police Chief Magnant**

Police Chief Magnant reviewed the Police Department budget and discussed the services provided by the department. He outlined the policing goals as follows:

- Reduce criminal victimization
- Hold offenders accountable
- Reduce fear and enhance personal security
- Guarantee safety in public spaces
- Traffic safety
- Satisfy customer demands/achieve legitimacy with those policed
- Use force and authority fairly, efficiently and effectively
- Use financial resources fairly, efficiently and effectively

Police Chief Magnant reported on the various 2008 enforcement statistics and informed the City Council that the department had 38,509 calls for service. In addition, he spoke to the average daily vehicle counts for various locations in the City, one being Lafayette Road which has over 22,000 vehicles traveling that road on a daily basis. Chief Magnant informed the City Council that traffic enforcement calls are up 60%, property damage accidents down 4% and personal injury accidents are down 43%. He addressed the many challenges Portsmouth faces with the number of events.

FY10 Proposed Reductions

Reorganized IT Department – Eliminated IT Manager
Reduce F/T Animal Control Officer to P/T
Un-fund Church Traffic Assignments
Eliminate P/T Youth Advocate
Reduce Other Operating
Reduce Overtime

****Included Net Staffing Reduction of 2.0 FTE's****

FY10 Additional Proposed Reductions

Un-Fund National Night Out Program
Reduce Explorer Program
Reduce Car Seat Program
Reduce Off-Site Training
Un-Fund (3) Auxiliary Positions
Un-Fund Dispatcher (1.0 FTE)
Un-Fund Officer (Equivalent 1.0 FTE)

*****Includes Net Staffing Reduction of 4.0 FTE's & 3 Auxiliary Officers*****

In closing, Chief Magnant said that the department is committed to the services they provide to the community.

- **Fire Department – Fire Chief LeClaire**

Fire Chief LeClaire reviewed the services provided by the department as follows:

- Fire Prevention
 - Code Enforcement
 - Plans Review
 - Public Education
- Fire Suppression
 - Structural
 - Transportation
 - Marine
- Emergency Medical Services
 - Advanced Life Support
- Hazardous Materials
 - START team
 - Spills/Ruptures
 - Unknown substance/powder
- Marine Response – Fire Boat
 - Fire Suppression
 - Search & Rescue
 - Spills

Chief LeClaire reported that the Fire Department received 2,454 fire calls and 2,334 EMS calls in 2008. He informed the City Council that the department received \$560,346.00 in ambulance revenue for 2008.

He reviewed Fire Prevention and Inspection Activity for 2008 as follows:

- ❖ 185 Place of Assembly Inspections
- ❖ 360 Other Inspections
- ❖ 65 Public Education Events
- ❖ 187 Plan Reviews
- ❖ 1461 Public Contacts
- ❖ 48 Investigations
- ❖ 360 Prevention Related Activities

Chief LeClaire said his FY10 goals are to maintain minimum shift staffing of 13, to construct new station in District 2, to continue infrastructure improvements and maintain a lead role in regional responses to special hazards and maritime operations. In closing, he informed the City Council that the Fire Department budget represents a 2.03% reduction in the operating budget.

- **School Department – Superintendent Dr. Lister**

Dr. Lister reviewed the School Department budget and outlined the guiding principles as follows:

- Deliver Personalized Education
- Maintain Reasonable Class Size
- Focus on Core Subjects
- Respond to State and Federal Mandates
 - NCLB, IDEA, GLE's/GSE's, Minimum Standards, Course Competencies, Follow the Child
- Implement 21st Century Technology
- Drive towards 0% budget goal







He spoke to the various accomplishments and performance measures for the department. He reported that Portsmouth is above the State average for grades 3-8 and 11 NECAP Testing in reading, math and writing. The dropout rate is down to 1.6% which represents 17 students and SAT scores are above the State and National averages. Challenges the department faces are to maintain quality programming and absorb fixed increases (e.g. health insurance, wages) with attention to 0% budget increase goal. The department continues to deal with the issue of rising classroom sizes. In addition, there are 354 coded students which represent 14% of the total students.

In closing, Dr. Lister informed the City Council that the budget request with allowance for teacher contracts (1.6%), net increase equals 0.64%

- **Conclusion – City Manager Bohenko**

City Manager Bohenko reported on the FY10 estimated revenues and said that \$64,478,808.00 is from property taxes. He said the proposed tax rate represents a \$.30 increase. He also advised the City Council that for every \$.1 reduction in the tax rate is equal to an approximately \$37,900.00 reduction in expenditures, an increase in revenues or a combination of both.

City Manager Bohenko spoke to external factors which may affect the FY10 tax rate as follows:

 Revenue Sharing	\$657,157.00
 Meals & Room Tax	\$921,495.00
 Motor Vehicle	\$250,000.00
 Investment Income	\$250,000.00
 High School Building Aid	\$1,016,222.00
 County Tax	<u>\$197,383.00</u>
Total	\$3,292,257.00

He reviewed the FY10 Budget Schedule of meetings.

April 15th Budget Public Hearing
April 22nd School Department Budget Work Session
April 23rd Municipal Department Budget Work Session
April 29th Police and Fire Departments Budget Work Session
May 11th Reconvened Budget Public Hearing

V. PUBLIC COMMENT/INPUT

Mayor Ferrini read the legal notice, declared the public hearing open and called for speakers.

John O'Leary, Portsmouth resident, member of the Library Board of Trustees, spoke in support of the Library budget as presented. He spoke to the savings in the department which are a result of efficiencies with utilities and the work of Library Director List and her staff. He reported the Library visitors are 2.9% above the State average. He also spoke to the increase in hours at the Library and how people view the Library as a more cost effective entertainment resource in these difficult financial times. He urged the City Council to support the Library budget as presented.

Nancy Winthrop, Portsmouth resident, said every time the School Department brings forth a level funded budget it is actually a reduction. She urged the City Council to accept the budget with the recommended increase.

Scott McKee, Portsmouth resident, spoke to the importance of education for our children. He said that the schools are at a tipping point and urged the City Council to review the funding formula and not continue to reduce the School Department budget. A reduction in the school budget could lead to people not locating in the City. Mr. McKee said we need vision and leadership to deal with the economic issues facing the community.

Martin Cameron, Portsmouth resident, Association of Portsmouth Taxpayers, thanked individuals for engaging in the budget process. He spoke to the difficult economy and issues we all face as a community.

Andrea Ardito, Portsmouth resident, spoke to the value of the school system. She quoted Jesse Jackson "We need to look at the world not through a keyhole but through a doorway." She said that Portsmouth is a community that looks in on each other and we need to think where our hearts lie, and it should be with our children.

Lisa Lisbon, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the school budget. She said that Portsmouth has an excellent school system and we need to continue to support the departments' efforts.

Jennifer Bell, Portsmouth resident, urged the City Council to vote for the increase to the School Budget. She said that the community wants Portsmouth to have the finest school system in the State. She said that the City needs to nurture and guide the school system like parents do their children.

Erica Taylor, Portsmouth resident, said funding education is a priority and investment. She urged the City Council to support the School Department budget.

Carol Chellman, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the School Budget and their proposed recommended increase. She agreed that we were at a tipping point and we are lagging behind in technology and the books used by the teachers are out of date. Ms. Chellman said that the Council needs to focus on long term decisions and invest in our children's education.

Rick Condon, Portsmouth resident and President of Firefighters Local 1313, requested the City Council support the Fire Department budget as submitted. He expressed concern with the level of firefighters to remain at 13/13 and said it is the important for the safety of the community and firefighters.

Valerie Fagin, Portsmouth resident, spoke to the importance of education in the community. She spoke to the out of date books in the High School and urged the City Council to support of the budget.

Emmy Adams, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the School Department budget. She said she is concerned with the reductions in the school budget. Ms. Adams expressed concern regarding the large class sizes and the affect it has on the teachers. She said that teachers are relying on donations from parents for school supplies and urged the Council to support the increase in the School Department budget.

Jennifer Gaudreau, Portsmouth resident, asked for the School Department to be funded adequately and expressed concern regarding class sizes. She spoke opposed to any further cuts to the School Department budget.

Elizabeth Brown, Rye resident, urged the City Council to support the proposed increase in the School budget. She said we will continue to attract great teachers if we continue to value education.

Suzie Green, Portsmouth resident, said the driving force to move to a community is the school system. The schools must maintain its resources, and parents and volunteers continue to do their part in assisting the schools. The City must continue to fund the needs presented by the School Department.

Jennie Moran, Portsmouth resident, expressed concern with the class sizes continuing to increase. She said we should not have to choose what school needs teacher more than other. She spoke to the reductions the School Department has seen over the years and the need for funding the education of our children.

Sally Zwick, Portsmouth resident, expressed concern with the large class sizes and its affect on the education of children. She spoke to the volunteerism of parents to assist teachers in the classrooms. She urged the City Council to support the School Department budget.

Jeff Suttie, Portsmouth resident, thanked the Public Works, Police and Fire Departments for their service during this winters ice storm. He said the current state of education is a concern to him. He spoke to the advancement of other schools excelling in foreign language and technology and said this issue needs to be confronted head on. Mr. Suttie said in order for our children to receive adequate education, we must fund for the needs for the School Department.

John Bouchard, Portsmouth resident, said he has two children in the School Department and spoke to the importance of funding the budget to ensure our children's needs are being met. He spoke to the need to invest in technology and teaching materials. In closing, he spoke to large class sizes and its affect on children and their educational needs.

Barbara Amergin, Eliot, ME resident, said she teaches in the City of Portsmouth and spoke to the importance of supporting our School Department and their request for funding.

Monica Turner, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the School Department budget and urged the City Council to approve the requests as submitted.

Mike Schwartz, Rye resident, said he has a child in the School system and urged the City Council to support the School Department budget. He spoke to the affect in reducing the budget and the value of education.

Sara Wolfer, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the School Department budget. She said the recommended amount from the Superintendent of Schools must be approved for the continued education of our children.

Bob Pollard, Portsmouth resident, encouraged the City Council to make budget changes that will have a long-term affect and not use a bandage approach. He said the City needs to make sure they are getting their monies worth with these budgets. Mr. Pollard expressed concern with the continuing increase in retirement costs and health insurance.

Julia Buck spoke in support of the School Department budget and said quality education is important to the community.

VI RECESS PUBLIC HEARING UNTIL MAY 11, 2009 AT 7:00PM

After three calls and no further speakers, Mayor Ferrini recessed the public hearing until May 11, 2009 at 7:00 pm.

VII. ADJOURMENT

At 8:50 p.m., Assistant Mayor Blalock moved to adjourn. Seconded and voted.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelli L. Barnaby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelli L. Barnaby, CMC/CNHMC
City Clerk