

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

PORTSMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
DATE: MONDAY, MAY 10, 2010

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

I. CALL TO ORDER [7:00PM or thereafter]

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

Mayor Ferrini announced that this meeting is being taped and will be rebroadcast at a later date. He thanked the Police, Fire and Municipal Departments that were involved in the recent bus standoff. He said all agencies did a wonderful job during a difficult time.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Ferrini, Assistant Mayor Novelline Clayburgh, Councilors Lister, Hejzmanek, Spear, Dwyer, Coviello, Smith and Kennedy

Assistant Mayor Novelline Clayburgh led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

III. RECONVENED PUBLIC HEARING (*Recessed from April 14, 2010*)

Mayor Ferrini announced that individuals with health issues, those that are young children or older adults will be provided the opportunity to speak first during this hearing. He also informed the public that he will be placing a 3 minute time limit to all comments due to the number of individuals in attendance this evening.

In addition, he reminded those in attendance that the City Council will be conducting a FY11 Budget Review Work Session tomorrow evening at City Hall in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers at 6:30 p.m.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT/INPUT

Mayor Ferrini reopened the public hearing and called for speakers to come forward to address the City Council.

Abi Wool, Portsmouth resident, spoke to the need for crossing guards at schools. She submitted a petition with over 150 signatures in favor of not cutting the crossing guards from the Police Department budget.

Grace Knowles, Portsmouth resident, spoke in favor of keeping the indoor pool open. She said that she is a member of the swim team and it is important for her that the pool remains open.

Gail Knowles, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the indoor pool remaining open. She said that the pool has a ramp that allows easy accessibility for those individuals that have difficulties entering pools.

Judy Ringer, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the indoor pool. She said in these economic times it does cost too much to currently operate the facility. She informed the City Council that the SIPP Committee has created a new budget for the operations of the pool and asked that the City Council allow SIPP an additional 18 months to implement their plan.

Emma (Inaudible), Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the indoor pool remaining open.

Bill St. Laurent, Portsmouth resident and President of the Association of Portsmouth Taxpayers, expressed his opposition to the City Council setting a 3 minute time limit for speakers. He spoke to the need of tighter control over spending in order to reduce the tax rate from further increases. He stated that there are too many City employees and also stated his opposition to the employees benefit package. He addressed the proposed budget projections and their impacts to the residents.

Ms. Thoren, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the indoor pool remaining open. She stated that there are other programs that could be implemented to add to the revenues the pool receives and asked that the City Council consider granting an 18 month extension to SIPP to execute their plan.

Stephanie Simpson Lazenby, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of school funding as presented by the School Department. She said there is a growing feeling in the community that the City Council does not support education for the future of our children. She stated that other communities are surpassing us in education. In addition, she expressed her concerns regarding larger class sizes and the importance of smaller classes to enable children's learning.

Paula Rais, Portsmouth resident, expressed her support for the School Department budget. She stated her concerns are relative to increased class sizes and their impact upon children's ability to learn. She said that the school system is already in need of improvements based on test scores and urged the City Council to consider the future of our children when voting on the budget.

Maria Sillari, Portsmouth resident, presented a petition from the WAVE Committee with over 200 signatures in support of the 2.8% proposed School Department budget.

Sam Ellis, Portsmouth student, spoke in support of school funding and retaining the computer courses in the schools.

Scott McKee, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of school funding and urged the City Council to focus on the educational needs of our children. He indicated the commitment that the WAVE Committee has in making sure that the City focuses on the education of our children for the future. He said the Council cannot turn its back on the children of our community.

Bob Packard, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of school funding and his frustration with the budget and lack of funding for the School Department. He stated that other communities are providing a better education for their children and we are falling behind in the elementary levels.

Rick Horowitz, Portsmouth resident, said he is concerned with educating our children but feels that the School Department's budget request is too high. He said that Portsmouth pays \$16,700.00 per pupil and feels that cost is excessive. He stated the average salary for teachers is \$82,000.00 plus benefits. He urged the teachers to reopen their contracts and negotiate their salaries and benefits down to help the taxpayers of the City.

Michael Fransoso, Portsmouth resident, said that there is strong support for the indoor pool to remain open. He stated that members of the SIPP Committee are willing to work with the City on saving money and increasing the revenues for the operation of the indoor pool. He urged the City Council to allow SIPP the 18 months requested to implement their plan.

Isabelle Ardito, Portsmouth student, spoke in support of the 2.8% increase to the School Department budget.

Laurie Lampert, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of school funding and asked that the City Council support the proposed 2.8% increase for the School Department. She spoke to the important programs and services provided at the schools and their value to the children of the community. She outlined the various items that have been listed as cuts by the School Department if the 2.8% increase is not granted.

Andrea Ardito, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the school funding and said that the proposed programs that would be cut if the 2.8% increase is not granted is very concerning to parents of the community. She said children are starting to feel like they don't matter when programs are cut. She stated that this is becoming the City of the "closed door" rather than the City of the "open door".

Dave Lampert, Portsmouth resident, spoke opposed to cutting the School Department funding. He spoke to the impacts of cutting the after school programs for our children.

Emily Thompson, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the School Department request for a 2.8% budget increase.

Deborah Stokel, Social Service Agency, spoke opposed to eliminating the funding for social service programs. She said that the City receives a valuable return on their investment in social service programs. She urged the City Council to support the proposed funding of the various programs.

Norm Olsen, Portsmouth resident, spoke opposed to the benefit programs provided to employees. He said he feels that the City Council needs to look to the future on ways to change the employee contracts and lower the cost to the taxpayer. He stated that the Fire Department should look into a volunteer or part-time department going forward.

Margaret O'Rourke, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of keeping the indoor pool open. She spoke to the importance of the facility to the community and a broad range of individuals depend upon the pool for exercise and their quality of life. She urged everyone to work together on this budget crisis. She urged the City Council to allow an 18 month extension for SIPP to implement their plan.

Harold Whitehouse, Portsmouth resident, spoke his concern with the proposed tax rate. He said that the indoor pool is very important and should remain open. He stated that a non-profit organization should take over the facility and urged the City Council to grant the 18 months to the SIPP Committee as requested. He addressed various areas that the City Council should consider with this budget to lower costs such as, no longer installing brick sidewalks; putting a hold on the CSO for the Water and Sewer Department; closing City Hall two Friday's per month (1st and 3rd Friday's); delaying the construction of a parking garage at the Worth Lot and closing the Library on Sunday.

Charles Griffin, Portsmouth resident, spoke opposed to closing the indoor pool. He spoke in support of opening the membership to Spinnaker Point to increase our revenues. He expressed concern if the indoor pool was closed and the possible vandalism of the building because of it being vacant. He stated that the indoor pool is a quality of life issue for individuals and urged the City Council to grant SIPP the additional 18 months as they have requested.

Josh Green, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of keeping the indoor pool open. He spoke to the importance of the pool to its users and urged the City Council to not close the pool.

Ted Gilchrist, Portsmouth resident, spoke opposed to the reduction of the School Department budget and his support for the indoor pool to remain open. He said it is important that we continue to provide a valuable education to the children of the community now and in the future.

Tom Conneen, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of keeping the indoor pool open. He said that he and other members of SIPP have spent a great deal of time working on the proposal with creating a budget and additional programs. He urged the City Council to consider the impacts to the community if the indoor pool was closed.

Steve Miller, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the indoor pool remaining open. He stated that he is willing to pay more to keep the pool open. He urged the City Council to consider the request of SIPP to grant an 18 month extension for implementation of their plan.

Melissa Provost, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the School Department's proposed budget increase of 2.8%. She stated the importance of core subjects in the School Department and the need to ensure that they and other programs and services are maintained for the children. In addition, she addressed technology standards and the need to stay competitive with other districts in this and other educational needs.

Michelle Flynn, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of school funding and the requested 2.8% budget increase. She said if the City Council cuts programs in the school, it is a digression in learning. She stated that there are 285 children that utilize the children center and the potential impact to them and the social service agency that provides this care.

(Name Inaudible), Portsmouth resident, spoke to the high costs of benefits for City employees and its affect on the taxpayer. She urged the City Council to reopen employee contracts to address the continued escalation in costs. In addition, she stated that the School Department pays more per pupil than other communities and feels that issue needs to be addressed.

(Name Inaudible), Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the music programs at the School Department. She stated that music is important for social and emotional development of children and urged the City Council to support the proposed 2.8% increase in the School Department to protect the valuable programs and services provided to the children for the future.

Robert Yeaton, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the School Department budget and stated that nothing is more important than educating our youth. He urged the City Council to keep school funding at the top of the list of importance.

Cory (Last name not stated), Portsmouth student at Little Harbour School, spoke in support of school funding. She asked the City Council to honor and support the schools and teachers.

Mike Schwartz, SAU 50, spoke in support of the School Department's request for a 2.8% increase. He stated the budget submitted by the School Department is fiscally sound and requires the support of the City Council. He addressed the programs and services provided and the importance of maintaining them for the children in the school system. In addition, Mr. Schwartz indicated if the School Department budget is not supported, it will negatively affect the learning of the students.

Christine Bastianelli, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the School Department budget and said anything lower than a 2.8% increase would affect the learning of future students. She addressed the importance of the various programs and services provided by the School Department and the need to ensure that they are maintained for the future. In addition, she stated that class sizes must remain reasonable for the students to learn appropriately.

Lena (Last name not stated), Portsmouth student, spoke in support of the indoor pool and stated that she utilizes the pool for competitive swimming. She urged the City Council to keep the pool open for her and the others that depend upon it.

Mark Brighton, Portsmouth resident, said that residents are losing their homes due to the high taxes in the City. He urged the City Council to cut the budget and to consider the taxpayers and their ability to pay.

William Lyons, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the continued investment of the City in keeping the indoor pool open. He stated that SIPP has introduced ways to increase revenues and expand programs which need to be considered by the City Council. He said that the indoor pool can become a regional asset and encouraged the City Council to consider that when making their decision on the budget.

Erik Anderson, Portsmouth resident, spoke to the escalating costs in the budget. He stated that the City Council has done well to express their goals. He expressed concern with the pending employee contracts and their effect on the tax rate and said that every fiscal aspect of the contracts should start at zero. He said a reduction in staff is needed and stated that the 2.8% increase in the School Department reflects salaries and benefits.

Rose (Last name not stated), Portsmouth student, spoke in support of the indoor pool remaining open.

Chris Madden, Portsmouth resident, said the money is available to run the pool and schools but is being sucked up by employee salaries and benefits. He stated the Council needs to review the employee contracts and look at the benefits package provided. In addition, he suggested that volunteers be considered to handle some of the employee positions.

Mike Churbich, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the request by SIPP for an 18 month extension to implement their plan for the indoor pool. He said he will work on the fundraising efforts and stated the City Council will be pleasantly surprised by the amount of money raised to support SIPP in order to keep the pool open.

Scott Collins, Portsmouth student, spoke in support of the music programs provided by the School Department. He said he is a member of the Portsmouth Percussion Ensemble and expressed the importance and value of this program to the students.

Jordan Lampert, Portsmouth student, spoke in support of the music programs provided by the School Department. He is also a member of the Portsmouth Percussion Ensemble and spoke to the feeling of family among its members and the value it has to the students. He urged the City Council to support the School Department proposed budget increase of 2.8%.

Theresa Beck, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the music program provided by the School Department. She stated that the music and educational opportunities are important and valuable to the students. In addition, she indicated that music affects the quality of the schools.

Allison Reardon, Portsmouth student, spoke in support of the Portsmouth Percussion Ensemble. She said it is important for the City Council to support the School Department and their funding request. She requested that the Council support quality education for the students of the school system.

At 8:45 p.m., Mayor Ferrini called a brief recess. At 8:55p.m., Mayor Ferrini called the meeting back to order.

Ms. Scola, Portsmouth student, spoke in support of the Portsmouth Percussion Ensemble and the need to approve the 2.8% funding increase as requested by the School Department. She urged the City Council to support music in our schools.

(Name Inaudible), Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the music programs in the School Department. She urged the City Council to support the 2.8% increase requested by the School Department and addressed the importance of music in our schools.

Chris Vinciguerra, Portsmouth student, spoke in support of music in our schools. He stated that his major in college will be music and spoke to its value to him and other students. He also addressed the importance music has in educating.

Neil (Last name inaudible), Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the indoor pool remaining open. He said he uses the pool twice a week and it is important to his quality of life. He urged the Council to grant SIPP the 18 month extension as requested to implement their plan.

Patrick Ellis, Portsmouth resident, said he is willing to pay more taxes to ensure that the programs and services he has come to rely on remain. He stated he supports the 2.8% budget increase asked for by the School Department. He also spoke to an increase in school revenues. He suggested the City Council consider furloughs for City employees and to consider a pay as you throw program.

Mary Lucas, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the 2.8% budget increase for the School Department.

Liz Wright, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the indoor pool and the 2.8% increase as requested by the School Department. She urged the City Council to listen to SIPP and their ideas for increasing programs and raising rates to make the indoor pool operate without a loss.

Kathleen Slover, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the 2.8% increase for the School Department. She also expressed her support of small classroom sizes to ensure that children are learning at the level they should be. She urged the City Council to make education #1 in the City.

John Ragonese, Portsmouth resident, said he is proud to be a Portsmouth resident and expressed his support for the School Department and their 2.8% increase. He urged the City Council to not cut short the future education of our children.

Dan Marchibroda, Portsmouth resident, spoke to the City reducing the debt service going forward. He said the City unions are putting pressure on the budget and requested the City Council consider taking some type of action in that matter. He expressed his support of the 2.8% increase for the School Department.

Marge Wachtel, Portsmouth resident, spoke opposed to cutting the Social Services budget. She said many people are served by the social service agencies and urged the City Council to adopt the budget request for the agencies.

Kent LaPage, Portsmouth resident, said he is willing to pay more to keep our services and programs in the City. He stated that the indoor pool is an important part of the community and requested that the City Council accept the assistance as offered by the SIPP Committee to keep the indoor pool open. He also spoke in support of the School Department's request for a 2.8% increase.

Corinne Norris, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the School Department and their budget request. She said that the City Council needs to think creatively and consider what is important when adopting this budget. She urged the City Council to consider what it is each person can do in the budget process.

Bill (Last name inaudible), Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the 2.8% increase in the School Department budget. He said to cut extracurricular activities will damage the students and our future. He asked the City Council to support the 2.8% increase requested by the School Department.

Courtney Randall, Portsmouth teacher, spoke in support of the music programs at the School Department. She addressed the importance of music programs and how much the students benefit from these and other programs. She stated it is the children of today that will support tomorrow and the quality of our schools.

William Hurd, Portsmouth resident, said he has no children but supports the 2.8% increase in the School Department budget. He said children are our future and the City Council needs to consider that when making their decision on the budget.

Lee-Anne Kady, Portsmouth resident, said she wants her children to have the same experiences she did in school. She stated her support of the 2.8% increase in the School Department budget.

Name Inaudible), Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the School Department budget and is willing to pay more to do what is right. She urged the City Council to support the 2.8% increase as requested by the School Department.

Anna Nutall, Portsmouth resident, said she is a teacher in the City and supports the many programs and services provided by the School Department. She urged the City Council to support the 2.8% increase in the School Department budget. She indicated that a 2.8% increase would increase an individuals tax bill by \$80.00 per year and that is more than some people pay for coffee each year. She stated that a healthy education equals a healthy community. Ms. Nutall said that she agrees that the teachers need to reopen their contracts and feels it should be done.

Catherine Anderson, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the 2.8% budget increase for the School Department. She stated her support of all day kindergarten for students.

David Kish, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of a 10% reduction to the budget. He stated that 84% of the budget is based on salaries and benefits and urged the Council to open up the contracts to renegotiate benefit packages. He said there are 989 employees in the City and the City has the highest ratio of employees. Mr. Kish indicated that the taxpayer cannot continue to pay increases in their taxes.

Mary Maurer, Portsmouth resident, said she is an active member of the community and expressed her support for the 2.8% increase in the School Department. She addressed the importance of the arts and music programs in the School Department and urged the City Council to support the School budget as presented.

Deb McManus, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the schools and keeping the indoor pool open. She asked the City Council to look at more creative ways in budgeting and the expenses to the City.

Sean Rafferty, Portsmouth resident, said the City Council must decide how much more residents can afford to spend. He stated that the City must meet the needs of all residents.

Valerie Fagin, Portsmouth resident, asked that the City Council work with the SIPP proposal and also support the 2.8% increase requested by the School Department.

Judy Davis, Portsmouth resident, spoke in support of the indoor pool remaining open. She said the users of the pool are like a family and closing it would affect individuals' quality of life.

Mike and Juliann Edwards, Portsmouth residents, said that the 2.8% increase in the school budget is in reality, a cut. Juliann spoke to the importance of the music and art programs in the School Department. In addition, she urged the City Council to support the School Department budget and not cut any teachers.

Representative of Seacoast Mental Health, requested that the City Council support the requests of the social service agencies for funding. She stated that 20% of the individuals seen at Seacoast Mental Health are residents of the City and providing this funding does provide a service to the City.

Jean Robinson, North Hampton resident, spoke in support of the indoor pool remaining open. She spoke to the benefits of the pool and how it is a non weight bearing exercise which is important to many individuals that utilize the pool.

Laurie Gagnon, Seacoast Sexual Assault Support Services, spoke in support of the City Council funding the social service agencies requests. She said in this state of economy peoples' need for social services goes up and it is important for the City Council to provide this financial support.

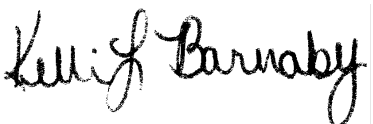
Olivia Brew, Rockingham Meals on Wheels, read a letter from Maureen Barrows in support of the social service agencies request for funding. It stated the importance of these many social service programs and urged the Council to continue their funding.

Debbie Barkley, Info. Link, spoke in support of the social service agencies budget requests. She spoke to the number of residents that they assist and the importance for the Council to grant their funding request.

Susan Whitney, Portsmouth resident, spoke in favor of the indoor pool remaining open. She stated the importance of the City Council restructuring the fees for the indoor pool to bring in revenues and having the pool become self-sustaining. She suggested that the Council close the outdoor pool, sell the property and put it back on the tax rolls.

V. ADJOURNMENT

At 10:00 p.m., Mayor Ferrini declared the public hearing closed and adjourned the meeting.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelli L. Barnaby". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Kelli L. Barnaby, CMC/CNHMC
City Clerk