

BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
City Council of the City of Bath, Maine
Wednesday, May 15, 2002 6:00 PM
Fisher Mitchell School

Present: Chairman Wyman; Councilors Hart; Tibbetts; Rogers; Reed; Hall; Banks; James; Blake

Chairman Wyman called the Hearing to order at 6:00 PM.

I. PUBLIC HEARING - City of Bath 2002-2003 Combined Budget

John Bubier, City Manager, presented a detailed overview of the City Budget. He stated that the Council is looking at a possible \$3.00 raise in the tax rate, but that will occur only after another \$380,000 is cut from the budget. There are four issues that have to be addressed by this budget:

- Delivery City Services
- Spending Cap
- Property Tax Rate
- Responsibilities of Being a Service Center

Mr. Bubier explained the strategies the City side used to come in with a decrease in the City side of the budget of \$27,000.

William Torrey III, Chairman of the Board of Education gave an overview of the School Budget. Mr. Torrey stated that the school budget would be up 8% which would be about 1.1 million dollars. He listed the following reasons for this increase:

- Increase in health care costs for personnel by 15%.
- Interest and principal repayment on the Middle School debt which is about \$330,000.
- Technology upgrade and filling of positions left by grants that are going to expire.

Michael LaFortune, Superintendent of Schools, spoke next regarding some of the programs that have been introduced in the past couple of years. These have resulted in the hiring of extra personnel. Some of these are:

- Foreign Language Teachers at the Elementary and Middle School
- Technology Coordinator
- Gifted and Talented Coordinator
- Increased the Summer Enrichment Program
- Debate Team
- Academic Decathlon Team
- After school Tech Lab Program

Mr. LaFortune stated that the following reasons have also lead to the increase in the School's Budget this year:

- Bath Middle School Addition
- Loss of State and Federal Aid
- Personnel salaries are up

Candy Hernandez of 33 Harward Street and a teacher asked if there was anyway to get around the spending cap for this year's budget?

Paula Price of 62 Green Street asked where the skateboard park money would be coming from and if it would be possible to look into make the landfill operation more efficient.

Debbie Blum of 52 Corliss Street asked the Council to please find a way to fund the School's Budget.

Susan Hummer of 20 Varney Mill Road gave her support to the funding of the Library's request.

Cal Hawks of 482 Middle Street spoke in support of the Library's and School's request for funding.

T. L. Lewis of North Street made some suggestions for cutting the budget:

- City Manager use a police vehicle instead of his personal vehicle on City Business
- Landfill being more diligent in not letting non-residents use the landfill
- Use the water from the old YMCA's pool for fighting fires
- Not let the new hotel drive water and sewer rates up
- Tax dorms at the Hyde School
- Fix potholes to save on liability
- New brick sidewalks on Centre Street not durable

John Collins of 1400 Washington Street suggested that it was time to do away with the Spending Cap.

Andy Winglass of 362 Middle Street spoke in favor of the Library and School funding requests and had the following suggestions to bring the budget in:

- One time payment by residents
- Voluntary payment by citizens
- City employees take a 5% pay cut

S. Perkins of 1068 Washington Street spoke in support of the Library funding. She asked how the City could fund a skateboard park and not fund the Library?

Bruce Goodwin of 71 Russell Street suggested that a 1.5% cut across the board be done.

Bob Mansfield of 129 High Street stated that the school could save money by not replacing the present computers in the classrooms as the ones that are there now are still very useful.

Chairman Wyman closed the Public Hearing at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Mary J. White, City Clerk

Please note: These minutes are not recorded verbatim. A tape recording of the meeting is available for review in the City Clerk's Office during regular business hours.