

Town of Plymouth
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Plymouth Town Council
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Minutes

June 9, 2015

Call to Order: Mayor Merchant called the scheduled June 9, 2015, Plymouth Town Council Special Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., in the Community Room, Town Hall.

Roll Call: Present were Town Councilman William Heering, Mayor David V. Merchant, Town Councilwoman Sue Murawski, Town Councilman John Pajeski, Town Councilman Gary Wyszynski, and Town Councilman Tom Zagurski. Also in attendance were Chairman Board of Finance Peter Cook, Town Attorney William Hamzy, Interim Director of Finance Ann Marie Rheault and Interim Public Works Director Charles Wiegert.

Fire Exits Notification

Mayor Merchant noted the Fire Exits for the record.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Merchant led the Plymouth Town Council and the Public Audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation

Mayor Merchant stated, "God Bless the Town of Plymouth and God Bless the United States of America" for the record.

Council Rules and Procedures

Mayor Merchant briefly explained the Council Rules and Procedures for the Public audience, noting that the three-minute ruling for Public Comment would be adhered to this evening.

Public Comment

Charles Wiegert, Town of Plymouth Interim Public Works Director, stated he was not in favor of the preliminary budget, which he had received from Ann Marie Rheault. He further stated he understood this was a working document from Town Councilman Heering and Town Councilman Zagurski, and not necessarily the opinion of the entire Council. Charles Wiegert stated the proposed cut from the Public Works Department in this document was \$105,600.00 and briefly gave his reasoning for being against this Budget reduction.

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Public Comment Cont'd.

Cathy Kosak, 201 Harwinton Avenue, Terryville, stated she was speaking as a past member of a Charter Revision Commission and briefly explained the Commission's intent regarding process of establishing a Budget after the failure of a Referendum.

Gerry Bourbonnaire, 6 Fairmont Avenue, Terryville, stated building upon what Charlie Wiegert had previously stated, this was a pay men now or pay me lately mentally in the Town, noting the zero percent Budget increases would be paid for three or five years down the road and would greatly impact services and briefly explained his reasoning.

Amy Radke, 29 Hickory Road, Terryville, thanked the Board of Finance and the Town Council members for all the meetings they had attended to work on the Budget, as well as everyone who came out this evening. Amy Radke stated the Town would never prosper if quality education were not provided; noting the BOE Budget could not survive any more cuts and briefly gave her reasoning.

Amy Radke read a notarized letter from Christopher Perkins, 68 Allen Street, Terryville, out loud for the Public audience, noting Christopher Perkins was in favor of not cutting the Board of Education's Budget and provided his reasoning.

Brooke Matusczak, Todd Hollow Road, Plymouth, requested the Town Council leave the Board of Education's Budget intact.

Michelle Zanauskas, 310 Todd Hollow Road, Plymouth, requested the Town Council leave the Board of Education's Budget intact.

Pat Borda, 87 North Street, Plymouth, requested the Town Council leave the Board of Education's Budget intact, noting it she knew it wasn't an easy decision.

Lorraine Laser, 170 Old Waterbury Road, Terryville, requested the Town Council support the Board of Education's Budget and requested the Town Council not make any additional reductions to it.

Paula Allaben, 101 Shroback Road, Plymouth, requested the Town Council leave the Board of Education's Budget intact, noting her children had received a wonderful education and so her current students could also receive the same education as her children's.

Erica Nodine Cabiya, 121 Bemis Street, Terryville, asked the Town Council to please leave the Board of Education's Budget intact so students could receive the same education she received and go off to a good college like she did.

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Public Comment Cont'd.

Raynell Covello, 43 North Street, Plymouth, stated her daughter was a sophomore and would continue to be affected by any more cuts in the Board of Education's Budget and briefly gave her reasoning. She briefly outlined the successes of the teachers in Town and requested the Council consider the Education's Budget and to put the Town's children first.

Chris Simo-Kinzer, 52 Old Farms Road, Terryville, stated he did not believe and department or position should receive a raise this year and briefly gave his reasoning.

Lori LaVallee, 14 Virginia Road, Terryville, requested the Town Council noted she had a little boy in the education system and asked the Board of Education's Budget intact for our kids.

Jenny Fowler, 268 Town Hill Road, Terryville, requested the Town Council please leave the Board of Education's Budget intact for her two children and everyone else in Town.

Wayne Waldron, 42 Makara Street, Terryville, stated he and his siblings had all graduated from Terryville High School and had received a great education and briefly provided his reasoning. He further requested the Town Council give a 3% increase to the Board of Education's Budget.

Dr. Martin Semmel, Superintendent of Plymouth Schools, stated he supported the Board of Education's Budget, noting position cuts had already been made and briefly gave his reasoning for leaving the Board of Education's Budget intact.

Melanie Church, 328 Main Street, Terryville, recommended cutting one-day a week from all employees on the Town side and briefly gave her reasoning. Melanie Church stated she wanted the Assessor and the Assessor's Clerk restored. Melanie Church stated the Public Works Department had 15 employees and briefly gave her reasoning for cutting positions. Melanie Church stated she wanted a forensic audit and briefly gave her reasoning.

Jeannette Broder, Bemis Street, Terryville, stated she had three special needs children in the school district and urged the Town Council leave the Board of Education's Budget as it is.

Melissa Kremel, 28 School Street, Terryville, with two children in the education system and requested the Town Council leave the Board of Education's Budget intact.

Denise Przystawski, teacher at Eli Terry Middle School, requested the Town Council leave the Board of Education's Budget intact.

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Public Comment Cont'd.

Donna Thomas, 30 Seymour Road, Plymouth, noted she was a Special Education Para at Terryville High School requested the Town Council leave the Board of Education's Budget intact noting if they touched it they would negatively impact more students lives than they realized.

Laura Gagnon, Science Department Coordinator at Terryville High School, requested the Town Council leave the Board of Education's Budget intact.

Chet Scoville, 24 North Street, Plymouth, stated he was a businessman and resident in the Town of Plymouth and stated he couldn't imagine running the Town with any cuts in the Budget and briefly explained his reasoning. He further stated his son and daughter attended Plymouth Schools and both had excellent jobs as result of their education and requested the Town Council not move the Town backwards by continually cutting the Budget.

Mark Fowler, 7 Coral Drive, Terryville, stated he was a parent and a teacher in the District and noted he looked forward to his children receiving the best education opportunities possible and noted students would suffer with any more cuts and briefly gave his reasoning.

Briana Brumaghim, 92 Town Line Road, Plymouth, stated she had voted twice in favor of the Budget, noting it wasn't a perfect Budget, however the Board of Finance had done their due diligence and briefly gave her reasoning.

To discuss and take action to refund the following Property Taxes: United Bank \$3,291.24; Richard Dill \$6.95; Michael or Kathryn Ciavarella \$154.60; Michael Labbe \$34.33; Honda Lease Trust \$36.38

Town Councilwoman Murawski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Zagurski, to refund the following Property Taxes: United Bank \$3,291.24; Richard Dill \$6.95; Michael or Kathryn Ciavarella \$154.60; Michael Labbe \$34.33; Honda Lease Trust \$36.38. This motion was approved unanimously.

Discuss and take action to adopt a Budget

Town Councilwoman Murawski stated she wanted the Council to use the Budget that Town Councilman Heering and Town Councilman Zagurski had worked on as a starting point. She further stated that she would like the Public to have an additional one-minute comment prior to the Council adopting the Budget this evening.

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Discuss and take action to adopt a Budget Cont'd.

Town Councilwoman Murawski stated the Council could set the line items, noting the Charter wasn't clear on it, and the Board of Finance could take those percentages and then take care of how the percentages would work out for the Departments. She further stated the Council was aiming for an honest and accurate Budget.

A brief discussion took place concerning a change in the Education Cost Sharing figure in the Revenue section of the Budget.

Ann Marie Rheault read and reviewed the Budget with the Town Council members by each Department at length.

Town Councilwoman Murawski made a motion to go back to the \$48,828.00 for the Assessor's salary and to remove the \$37,480.00 for Staff. Motion failed for lack of a second.

Town Councilwoman Murawski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Zagurski, to change the Clothing Allowance to \$28,450.00. This motion was approved unanimously.

Town Councilwoman Murawski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Zagurski, to recess at 9:02 p.m., for five minutes. This motion was approved unanimously.

Mayor Merchant called the Town Council Special Meeting back into to the Regular Session at 9:07 p.m.

Town Councilman Zagurski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Heering, to include the Safe Routes to School and the Streetscape Projects in the Grant Funded section of the Budget. This motion was approved unanimously.

At the request of Mayor Merchant, Ann Marie Rheault read the changes out loud as follows:

General Government, 2016 Revised Budget Amount \$4,986,248, Increase/(Decrease) \$109,248, Plus/Minus 3%, 2.24%

Public Safety, 2016 Revised Budget Amount \$2,681,324, Increase/(Decrease) \$73,549, Plus/Minus 3%, 2.82%

Public Works Inc. Utilities, 2016 Revised Budget Amount \$3,464,785, Increase/(Decrease) (\$105,600), Plus/Minus 3%, -2.96%

Health and Social Services, 2016 Revised Budget Amount \$197,730, Increase/(Decrease) \$5,620, Plus/Minus 3%, 2.93%

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Discuss and take action to adopt a Budget Cont'd.

Libraries, 2016 Revised Budget Amount \$490,076, Increase/(Decrease) \$10,771, Plus/Minus 3%, 2.25%

Parks & Recreation, 2016 Revised Budget Amount \$193,940, Increase/(Decrease) (\$5,365), Plus/Minus 3%, -2.69%

Land Use, 2016 Revised Budget Amount \$208,971, Increase/(Decrease) \$3,021, Plus/Minus 3%, 1.47%

Board of Education, 2016 Revised Budget Amount \$23,752,790, Increase/(Decrease) \$500,000, Plus/Minus 3%, 2.15%

Capital Projects, 2016 Revised Budget Amount \$582,000, Increase/(Decrease) (\$18,000), Plus/Minus 3%, -3.00%

Totals \$39,435,664, Increase \$401,044, 1.03%

Public Comment

John Murphy, 385 Greystone Road, stated the Town Council had done a wonderful job.

Amy Radke stated she had never in her wildest dreams did she believe the Town Council would do that to the Board of Education portion of the budget and briefly gave her reasoning and implored the Council to reallocate the \$200,000 back, noting it would decimate the Board of Education if the Council didn't.

Chet Scoville, noting he was Chairman of the Police Commission, questioned why the Police Chief, Karen Krasicky, was not brought up for a raise, noting the Assistant Chief received one and most if not all of the Department Heads. Chet Scoville requested an explanation, noting it wasn't about the money; it was the principle when everyone else got a raise across the board.

Chet Scoville stated if Amy Radke felt the reduction in the Board of Education's Budget would affect it that much then he wouldn't mind paying more taxes and briefly explained his reasoning, noting the Town was going backwards, not forward.

Wayne Waldron stated for the future students it would be devastating and the reduction of \$200,000 would be a major problem. He further asked the Town Council to please reconsider their decision.

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Public Comment Cont'd.

Melissa Kremmel stated the majority of Public speaking this evening had asked the Council to keep the Board of Education's Budget intact, and asked the Council to please put the \$200,000 back in the Budget.

Melanie Church stated she wanted to commend the Town Council for cutting the budget and this was what the taxpayers had asked for and it was a fair budget.

Cathy Kosak stated she would like to recommend taking \$100,000 from the Fund Balance and put it towards the Board of Education's budget.

Cathy Kosak questioned if the Police Chief's raise wasn't in the Contract and also wasn't she part of the Department Heads and wasn't it required in the contract that she receive a 1.5 percent raise like everyone else.

Jeannette Broder stated she would gladly pay more in taxes if the Council would put more money into the Board of Education's Budget and hoped the Town Council would reconsider for the sake of the children and the Town's future.

Erica Nodine Cabiya stated she was very disappointed with the Council's decision to cut the Board of Education's Budget, noting she thought the Council had more open minds and hearts. She further stated that she thought it was time to look at the Charter again and decide if it should be an option to separate the Education Budget from the Town Budget.

Linda Kazmierski, 20 Joseph Street, Terryville, stated she had gone through the school system herself and worked for it and unless you worked in it you don't what's going on. She further stated if the Council didn't renew the Budget they would be hurting the Town and briefly elaborated on her feelings

Raynell Covello stated she was very disappointed and wished the Council had heard and listened to the Public this evening, noting it was very sad.

Mayor Merchant stated it was difficult to put a budget together and noted the Board of Finance members had been working two nights a week since February. He further stated that it was hard to make everyone happy. Mayor Merchant stated he didn't know what the 80 percent of the people who didn't vote actually wanted; noting only a small amount of people came out to vote. He further stated he wanted the Town to move forward and not take baby steps backwards. Mayor Merchant stated the Board of Finance members had a difficult time trying to balance the Budget and the Town Council had a difficult task to do, as well, noting they did what they thought was best for everyone.

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Public Comment Cont'd.

Mayor Merchant stated when the Council takes a vote this evening it would be to adopt the 1.03% increase Budget and questioned if everyone on the Council was sure of what they wanted to do. He further stated if the Council did not want to rush into a decision this evening he did not have a problem coming back another night to get the Budget as correct as possible. He further stated the Council could also go ahead and adopt the Budget this evening.

Dan Gentile, Mount Tobe Road, Plymouth, stated the Town has a “what have you done for me lately” attitude, noting that the Board of Education had worked hard for numerous years and had kept their portion of the Budget very minimal. Dan Gentile request the Council make motion to table adopting a Budget this evening and to think about it longer and briefly explained his reasoning. Dan Gentile stated that Town Councilman Heering had previously stated it would stay at 3 percent and now it has changed.

Town Councilman Pajeski questioned what would adding the \$200,000 back into the Board of Education’s Budget would do to the mill rate. Ann Marie Rheault stated if the \$200,000 were put back in the mill rate increase would go to .8

Town Councilwoman Murawski stated most of the Council had gone to the Board of Finance for months and listened to their discussions, noting that Tom, Bill and Ann Marie had put a lot of work into it. She further stated that it does what she thought the people wanted the Town to do, which was not as large an increase that had come to them the first time and this was the best the Council could do.

Town Councilman Wyszynski stated he had run on a platform to drop the mill rate and lower taxes. He further stated he wasn’t happy about paying a lot of taxes in Town, but that the kids should come first and if we need to pay more taxes for children he believed in that, he didn’t believe in cuts in or out of the Town Hall. Town Councilman Wyszynski stated that Plymouth was a nice quaint little Town and that’s the price we pay to live here.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated he did not have any comment at this time.

Town Councilman Pajeski stated he did not have any comment at this time.

Town Councilman Heering stated he did not have any comment at this time.

Town Councilwoman Murawski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Zagurski, to adopt a Budget of \$39,435,664, which is a 1.03% increase with the Departmental percentages as previously outlined by Ann Marie Rheault (Interim Director of Finance). Vote: Town Councilman Wyszynski/no; Town Councilwoman Murawski/yes; Town Councilman Zagurski/yes; Town Councilman Pajeski/yes, Town Councilman Heering/yes. Motion passed.

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Adjournment

There being no further business of the Plymouth Town Council, Town Councilman Zagurski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Heering, to adjourn at 9:42 p.m. This motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Recording Secretary