

Town of Plymouth
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Plymouth Town Council
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Minutes

May 18, 2017

Call to Order: Mayor David Merchant called the scheduled May 18, 2017, Plymouth Town Council/Board of Finance/ Plymouth Board of Education, Joint meeting to order at 10:00 p.m., in the Community Room, Town Hall.

Roll Call: Present were Town Councilman Dan Gentile Town Councilwoman Ana LeGassey, Mayor David V. Merchant, Town Councilwoman Sue Murawski, Town Councilman John Pajeski and Town Councilman Tom Zagurski. Also present from the Town of Plymouth was Director of Finance Ann Marie Rheault. Present from the Board of Finance were Vice-Chairman Vicky Carey, Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff, Board of Finance Member Jay Dorso, Board of Finance Member Jim Kilduff, Board of Finance Member Jim Zalot and Board of Finance Chairman Ralph Zovich. Present from the Board of Education were Plymouth Board of Education Member Gerry Bourbonniere, Plymouth Board of Education Chairman Melissa Johnson, Plymouth Board of Education Member Karen Kulesa, Plymouth Board of Education Member Michelle Lucian, Plymouth Board of Education Roxanne McCann and Plymouth Board of Education Member Anthony Orsini. Also present from the Plymouth Board of Education was Plymouth Superintendent Dr. Martin Semmel.

Fire Exits Notification-CT General Statutes, Public Act 03-231, Sec. 29-381

Mayor Merchant noted the Fire Exits for the record.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Merchant led the Plymouth Town Council, the Board of Finance, the Plymouth Board of Education and the Public Audience, in the Pledge of Allegiance

To allow the Board of Finance members to present the recommended Budget and by a majority vote of its members* make, if necessary, changes to the Budget to be recommended at the Town Referendum (*a quorum of the Board of Finance members must be present)

Board of Finance Chairman Ralph Zovich stated the Board of Finance had a quorum for the record.

Board of Education Chairman Melissa Johnson stated the Board of Education had a quorum for the record.

Mayor David Merchant stated he was currently working diligently with other towns on regionalization, noting it was a major initiative and briefly elaborated.

Mayor David Merchant stated he would like the Board of Finance to consider adding \$8,000 into the budget for the Zoning Enforcement Officer position, noting it would give him an additional five hours per week and briefly elaborated.

Town Councilwoman Sue Murawski stated the majority of the people who came out voted no because they felt the budget was too high. She further stated Council members were representatives for the people so she did not want to make the budget any higher.

Town Councilman Dan Gentile stated thanked everyone from the public for their comments and good information. Town Councilman Dan Gentile stated he wanted a true budget amount from the Board of Finance and briefly elaborated. Town Councilman Dan Gentile stated he's been asking and talking about shared services for years and briefly elaborated. Town Councilman Dan Gentile stated contracts could be opened. Town Councilman Dan Gentile stated the School Resource Officer was a good thing and there could a Memo of Understanding, which would give the Chief some help and briefly elaborated.

Town Councilwoman Ana LeGassey stated she agreed with Town Councilman Dan Gentile, noting we should work on the contracts and briefly elaborated. Town Councilwoman Ana LeGassey stated she felt education should be supported. Town Councilwoman LeGassey stated the Town needs to take care of its infrastructure and still balance the budget and briefly elaborated. Town Councilwoman LeGassey briefly discussed the mill rate and stated if anyone needed help figuring out what they would be paying to come and see her.

Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey stated education was what you put into it, noting we needed good teachers and administrators and briefly elaborated.

Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey made a motion to increase the salary of the Zoning Enforcement Officer 024 by \$8,000; to take out \$100,000 from the new line item reserve allocation/fund balance, and to increase the Board of Education by \$300,000.

Board of Finance Chairman Ralph Zovich stated these three motions would net increase the budget by \$208,000.

Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff stated she wanted the motion separated.

Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey withdrew her motion.

Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey made a motion, seconded by Board of Finance Member Jim Zalot, to increase the salary of the Zoning Enforcement Officer 024 by \$8,000.

Discussion:

When questioned by Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff, Mayor David Merchant stated he would keep the Zoning Enforcement Officer's hours low so he would remain as a part time employee.

Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff stated she was opposed to this motion, noting the Board of Finance needed to cut from the previous proposed budget.

Vote:

Board of Finance Member Jay Dorso/yes; Board of Finance Member Jim Kilduff/yes; Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff/no; Board of Finance Member Jim Zalot/yes; Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey/yes; motion passed.

Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey made a motion, seconded by Board of Finance Member Jay Dorso, to take the new account (013) out of the fund balance restoration for \$100,000.

Discussion:

Board of Finance Chairman Ralph Zovich stated this amount was all the cushion we have and briefly elaborated.

Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey stated discussion had also taken place concerning having additional taxation once the State was done with the budget and briefly elaborated.

Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff stated she was opposed to this motion, noting we need to increase this line item in the likely event the Town doesn't receive as much money from the State as we had anticipated. She further stated she was willing to consider a 3% (\$3,000) cut from the line item proposal.

Board of Finance Chairman Ralph Zovich stated that was not the motion, but could be considered later.

Vote:

Board of Finance Member Jim Kilduff/no; Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff/no; Board of Finance Member Jim Zalot/no; Board of Finance Member Jay Dorso/yes; Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey/yes; motion fails.

Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey made a motion, seconded by Board of Finance Member Jay Dorso to increase the Board of Education's budget by a net \$200,000 above the current budget.

Discussion:

When questioned by Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff, Board of Finance Chairman Ralph Zovich and Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey both stated that would bring the total increase to \$300,000 for the Board of Education.

Board of Finance Chairman Ralph Zovich stated the current Board of Education budget is \$23,912,790, and we are proposing \$24,012,790 and Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey is proposing to add another \$200,000 on top of that, which would bring it to \$24,212,790 so the net increase this year would be \$300,000.

Board of Finance Member Jim Kilduff stated he didn't think there was anything for a lot of the families to come out and vote for at the last referendum whereas this one, if we change it, and they have the vote it might have a shot at passing and briefly elaborated.

Board of Education Member Karen Kulesa stated she agreed with Ralph Zovich 100%, noting they have the same issues on the Board of Education side to meet their contractual needs. She further stated every year they give money back and have never gone over budget.

Board of Finance Chairman Ralph Zovich stated the Board of Finance has the statutory authority to make internal transfers and should the State cut our funding rather than deplete the fund balance we can sequester money in the Board of Finance contingency, however we cannot legally retract money from the Board of Education; a brief discussion followed.

Town Councilwoman Ana LeGassey stated everyone should speak to and email your State Representatives and encourage everyone to please contact them because they represent us.

Board of Education Member Gerry Bourbonnaire stated we need to bring in the education part when speaking about shared services and briefly elaborated.

Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey stated in the original Board of Education budget they had \$360,000 for an SRO Officer and the Board of Finance/Town decided to pay for it instead and that was how she came up with the amount.

Director of Finance Ann Marie Rheault stated with the increase of \$8,000 and with the motion on the table now we are over by 3% percent or almost \$8,000.00

Board of Finance Member Jim Zalot stated he would be in favor of restoring the \$100,000 that was taken out last week, and briefly explained his reasoning.

At the request of Board of Finance Member Jim Kilduff, Director of Finance Ann Marie Rheault briefly explained the significance of the 3% percent.

Vote:

Board of Finance Member Jim Kilduff/yes; Pattie DeHuff/no; Jim Zalot/yes, Jay Dorso/yes, Vicky Carey/yes; motion passed.

Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey made a motion, seconded by Board of Finance Member Jim Kilduff, to take (cut) \$8,000 from Town Aid to Roads under the General Fund.

Discussion:

Board of Finance Chairman Ralph Zovich stated this would be Capital Projects to \$458,749.

Pattie DeHuff stated the 3% Rule doesn't apply to the Board of Finance.

Board of Finance Member Jim Kilduff stated a lot of the comments on social media came from people who did vote; noting 600 of them did not have children in the school system and this would be an opportunity for them to get their vote out.

Vote:

Board of Finance Member Jay Dorso/yes; Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey/yes; Board of Finance Member Jim Zalot/yes; Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff/yes; Board of Finance Member Jim Kilduff/yes; motion passed.

Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff made a motion, seconded by Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey, to reduce the Assessor Salary by \$36,000 and making the position part time.

Discussion:

Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff stated the workload should be less because the Town just finished its reval.

Mayor Merchant stated we needed someone in the office full time and briefly explained his reasoning. Mayor Merchant stated he would like the Clerk, Karen Chalmers, to have a couple of more hours and she would be paid the extra hours from the reduction in the Assessor's salary because the position was being taken internally and the pay would be less for the position and briefly elaborated.

When questioned by Board of Finance Member Jim Kilduff, Mayor Merchant stated there was a learning curve and that the employee would be enrolled at UCONN for the first phase and had been in training in the Assessor's Office for the past couple of weeks and briefly elaborated.

Vote:

Board of Finance Member Jay Dorso/no; Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey/yes; Board of Finance Member Jim Zalot/no; Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff/yes; Board of Finance Member Jim Kilduff/no; motion failed.

Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff made a motion to reduce the Mayor's Office/Department total by \$4,593.69; a 3% cut, reducing the increase made by the Board of Finance recommendation. Motion failed for lack of a second.

Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff made a motion to reduce the Town Council Department by 3%-\$167.25.

Town Councilman Dan Gentile stated his salary could be transferred to the Human Services Department, noting he had said the same thing last year.

Motion failed for lack of a second.

Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff made a motion to cut Human Resources by 3%-\$1,140.00.

Board of Finance Chairman Ralph Zovich stated that position is contracted out.

Motion failed for lack of a second.

Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff made a motion to cut the Comptroller's Office by 3%-\$8,088.69 from the proposed budget. Motion failed for lack of a second.

Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff made a motion to cut 3%-\$2,407.73 from Central Supply. Motion failed for lack of a second.

Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff made a motion to cut 3%-\$108.00 from Town Treasurer Department. Motion failed for lack of a second.

Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff made a motion to cut 3%-\$1,743.00 from the Registrars. Motion failed for lack of a second.

Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff made a motion to cut Clerical Staff by \$3,427.00. Motion failed for lack of a second.

Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff made a motion to cut \$6,897.00 from the Board of Finance line. Motion failed for lack of a second.

Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff made a motion, seconded by Board of Finance Member Jim Kilduff, to cut from the Assessor's Office \$20,000.

Discussion:

Board of Finance Member Jim Kilduff questioned if Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff was grandstanding to make a point, noting the Board had spent months going through the budget line by line, noting this was a lean budget and the Town offices were minimally staffed.

Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff stated she wasn't grandstanding, she heard the voice of the people say the budget was too high; a brief discussion followed.

Town Councilwoman Ana LeGassey stated another Assessor would not take the job for \$20,000 less.

Town Councilman Dan Gentile stated the salary was way too low and he believed that was why we didn't receive applicants.

Board of Finance Chairman Ralph Zovich noted should the Town Council decide not to approve this person or a certified Assessor comes forward, the money could come out of the Board of Finance contingency.

Vote:

Board of Finance Member Jay Dorso/no; Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey/no; Board of Finance Member Jim Zalot/no; Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff/yes; Board of Finance Member Jim Kilduff/no. Motion failed.

Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff questioned if the Board of Finance members thought she was grandstanding and if they did she wouldn't keep everyone and then questioned Jay Dorso if not getting a second on her motions was going to continue to happen.

Board of Finance Member Jay Dorso stated he wouldn't know until the question was asked.

Board of Finance Chairman Ralph Zovich stated every member had the right to put forward any motions.

Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey briefly reiterated her reasoning for her motions, noting the Board of Finance Members had been through this budget for months; two to three times per week, four hours minimum per week and she felt comfortable with it.

Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey stated she didn't like it either, noting her taxes were going to go up, but it was a fair budget and she was responsible to and for the Town, noting she was a lifelong member of the Town; a brief discussion followed.

Board of Finance Chairman Ralph Zovich stated we should have the advisory question put back on the ballot again.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated he agreed about putting the advisory question back on the ballot, but wanted the question to ask if the Board of Education budget was too high or too low and the same with the Town's budget; too high or too low.

Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey made a motion, seconded by Board of Finance Member Jay Dorso, to present the Town Council an adjusted budget in the amount of \$41,025,552, with an additional \$200,000 for the Board of Education.

Vote: Board of Finance Member Vicky Carey/yes; Board of Finance Member Pattie DeHuff/no; Board of Finance Member Jay Dorso/yes; Board of Finance Member Jim Kilduff/yes; Board of Finance Member Jim Zalot/yes; motion passed.

To move to schedule a date for the annual Budget Referendum for the purpose of adopting a Budget

Town Councilman Tom Zagurski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilwoman Ana LeGassey, to schedule May 31, 2017 from 6:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m., as the date for the annual Budget Referendum for the purpose of adopting a budget and to include the advisory question. This motion was approved unanimously.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Town Councilman Tom Zagurski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilwoman Ana LeGassey, to adjourn at 11:18 p.m. This motion was approved unanimously.