

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

TOLLAND TOWN COUNCIL HICKS MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER 6th FLOOR COUNCIL ROOM

MARCH 27, 2018 – 6:30 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: William Eccles, Chair; David Skoczulek, Vice-Chair; Brenda Falusi; Tammy Nuccio; John Reagan; Paul Reynolds and Christine Vincent

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT: Steven Werbner, Town Manager; Michael Wilkinson, Director of Administrative Services; Lisa Hancock, Director of Finance and Records; Christopher Jordan, Assistant Finance Director; Scott Lappen, Public Works; Walter Willett, Superintendant

- 1. Call to Order:** William Eccles called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance:** Recited.
- 3. Moment of Silence:** Observed.
- 4. Public Participation (2 minute limit):** None.

John Crickmore of 31 Cook Road: He questioned if the money they are putting back in for the troopers is actually money they save, and if we will be \$200,000+ in the hole for the next budget.

Ms. Skoczulek said they are still looking at a long term option for police services.

Crickmore asked when they are going to have these conversations about cuts, because he is not seeing them. He is not seeing any major cuts. No one wants to cut, but what are they going to do?

Mr. Eccles said they are still in discussions about the future of the troopers. Tolland will be looking at a \$9m hole that they will need to work on piece by piece.

- 5. Consideration of the Town Council's Proposed FY 2018-2019 Budget**
- 6. Approval of Budget Resolution**

David Skoczulek motioned to accept the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Town Council has reviewed the Town Manager's proposed budget and has made certain modifications to estimated revenues and expenditures, the details of which will be properly incorporated into the total budgetary document by the Town Manager and Director of Finance and Records;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby adopts a FY 2018-19 Town Operating and Capital Budget in the amount of \$56,170,697 to be appropriated as follows:

CATEGORY	AMOUNT
Town Government	\$11,916,184
Board of Education	\$39,642,607
Debt Service	\$ 4,550,000
Capital	\$ 61,906
TOTAL	\$56,170,697

Said appropriations shall require an increase of .86 mills for a mill rate of 35.34.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Manager, pursuant to the requirements of the Town Charter, is authorized to advertise this budgetary outlay as part of the April 23, 2018, Annual Budget Presentation Meeting at the Tolland High School Auditorium at 7:00 p.m.

Seconded by Tammy Nuccio.

Ms. Nuccio asked if they feel this is the best they can do. Mr. Eccles said the vast majority of this increase is due to a guesstimate. He thinks this is the best they can do. He believes the BOE and the Town Manager have put forth responsible budgets, which reflect the will of the people for the most part. In both cases, compromise is required. They are not asking for the sky. Mr. Skoczulek agrees. He is comfortable with it, believes it is a smart budget. Mr. Reynolds said he believes the budget is a good budget. He thinks they need to look at the revenue side. They are making assumptions as to what the State is going to give them, and they are dipping into the Fund Balance for a second year in a row to hold the increase at .86 mills. This will get harder and harder as the years go on. Mr. Reagan said he doesn't like raising taxes, but thinks this budget is responsible. The State is in a bad situation. He thinks the budget put forth by the BOE and Town is good. Ms. Falusi agreed. She said everyone is aware of what is going on, and they put forth a budget to keep services within the community. Ms. Vincent is reluctant to raise taxes, but understands the balance that the town has to make between the lack of revenue coming in from the State and lack of revenue in general, as well as maintaining the services. She is not sold about adding the two resident troopers. She is concerned about dipping into the Fund Balance, and she thinks the BOE could have done a better job.

{Mr. Crickmore spoke at this point. See the Public Comment section above.}

Ms. Nuccio is concerned about what Mr. Crickmore is saying. They are going to keep using the Fund Balance if there continues to be holes. With regard to the State Troopers, Mr. Werbner said they are in the midst of a contract. There is an opt-out provision, if they need to reduce the number. The problem is if they want to go back and increase them, the process will become longer. With regard to the level of service, the question is what the tolerance is for service reductions. It's not only about the dollars.

Ms. Nuccio spoke about how she could get the budget to zero. She listed out various reductions, which were out-of-the-box and on the back of a napkin. Mr. Eccles said these discussions should have occurred prior. He agrees that there is some out-of-the-box thinking that could happen, but Ms. Nuccio is asking for major realignment. Based on the calendar cycle, it is too late. Ms. Nuccio said they should pass this budget. David Skoczulek said if the Referendum doesn't pass, they could then look at her suggestions. Ms. Falusi said she has attended many BOE meetings. They have started their out-of-the-box thinking. She doesn't think there is a lot of appreciation for where the BOE has gotten. Mr. Reagan said the Council members do appreciate what the BOE has done. Mr. Eccles agreed, and recognized their work.

All in favor. None opposed.

- 7. Approval of a resolution authorizing the form of the ballot for the May 1, 2018 budget referendum and any subsequent budget referendum; the time and place for the budget**

referendum; authorizing the Town Manager or his designee to place the required legal notices in the local newspapers; and authorizing the preparation and printing of an explanatory text and the mailing of same to local residents and in addition sent out via the Town's Tolland Notification system and included with absentee ballots in accordance with the provisions of CT General Statutes 9-369b explaining the budget referendum question.

David Skoczulek motioned to accept the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Tolland Town Council has adopted a proposed FY 2018-2019 Town Operating and Capital Budget to be considered by the Tolland electorate at a May 1, 2018 budget referendum; and

WHEREAS, the Council must now establish the appropriate ballot language for this referendum and the date, time and place of said referendum;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Tolland Town Council the following:

1. The ballot question for the May 1st referendum shall be worded as follows:

"Shall the Town of Tolland's proposed 2018-2019 budget of \$56,170,697, reflecting a spending increase of \$450,450 or .81% which requires a tax rate of 35.34 mills for an increase of .86 mills or 2.49%, be adopted? Yes/No."
2. The time and place for the referendum shall be between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on May 1, 2018 at the Tolland Public Library Program Room.
3. The Town Manager or his designee is hereby authorized to place the required legal notices in the Journal Inquirer and other places as conditions permit, advertising the May 1, 2018 Referendum and the April 23, 2018 Annual Budget Presentation Meeting.
4. The Town Manager or his designee is authorized to prepare and print an explanatory text and the mailing of the same to local residents; to be included with absentee ballots and documented via the Town's Tolland Notification system in accordance with the provisions of CT General Statutes 9-369b explaining the budget referendum question.

Seconded by Tammy Nuccio.

Mr. Eccles said he believes the mailer needs some work. He suggested they save some money by making it just one color at print time. He also thinks the wording lacks clarity. He would like to work with the Town Manager's office on revising it. Also, he mentioned they have been asked what they would do if they received excess funds. He suggested adding #5 to the resolution. After discussion amongst the Council members and Mr. Werbner, the proposed language would read:

5. Funds in excess of what was assumed for state revenue will be moved to the General Fund Fund Balance to offset potential holdbacks or future year reductions in State aid.

Ms. Falusi is not comfortable agreeing with this. This is the first she is hearing of it. She asked if this could go on a future agenda so that they can think about it. Mr. Reynolds agrees with Mr. Eccles. They are taking money from the Fund Balance, so they should be replacing it. Mr. Skoczulek and the remaining Council members, except for Ms. Falusi, agreed that the money should go back into the Fund Balance.

Mr. Skoczulek motioned to withdraw his previous motion; Seconded by Christine Vincent. All in favor. None opposed.

David Skoczulek motioned to accept the following *amended* resolution:

WHEREAS, the Tolland Town Council has adopted a proposed FY 2018-2019 Town Operating and Capital Budget to be considered by the Tolland electorate at a May 1, 2018 budget referendum; and

WHEREAS, the Council must now establish the appropriate ballot language for this referendum and the date, time and place of said referendum;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Tolland Town Council the following:

1. The ballot question for the May 1st referendum shall be worded as follows:

“Shall the Town of Tolland’s proposed 2018-2019 budget of \$56,170,697, reflecting a spending increase of \$450,450 or .81% which requires a tax rate of 35.34 mills for an increase of .86 mills or 2.49%, be adopted? Yes/No.”

2. The time and place for the referendum shall be between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on May 1, 2018 at the Tolland Public Library Program Room.
3. The Town Manager or his designee is hereby authorized to place the required legal notices in the Journal Inquirer and other places as conditions permit, advertising the May 1, 2018 Referendum and the April 23, 2018 Annual Budget Presentation Meeting.
4. The Town Manager or his designee is authorized to prepare and print an explanatory text and the mailing of the same to local residents; to be included with absentee ballots and documented via the Town’s Tolland Notification system in accordance with the provisions of CT General Statutes 9-369b explaining the budget referendum question.
5. **Funds in excess of what was assumed for state revenue will be moved to the General Fund Fund Balance to offset potential holdbacks or future year reductions in State aid.**

Seconded by Christine Vincent. William Eccles; David Skoczulek; Tammy Nuccio; John Reagan; Paul Reynolds and Christine Vincent were in favor. Brenda Falusi was opposed.

**Mr. Werbner reminded that the Referendum will be on May 1, 2018.
Voting will take place at the Tolland Public Library in the Program Room - 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.**

8. Adjournment: David Skoczulek moved to adjourn the meeting; Seconded by Tammy Nuccio at 7:11 p.m. All were in favor.

William N. Eccles, Chairman

**Michelle A. Finnegan
Town Council Clerk**