

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
TOLLAND, CT

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

2017 APR -3 AM 8:32

Shila M Bailey

MARCH 30, 2017 – 7:30 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rick Field, Chair; William Eccles, Vice-Chair; Robert Green; Paul Krasusky; Kristen Morgan and David Skoczulek

MEMBERS ABSENT: Joseph Sce

OTHERS PRESENT: Steven Werbner, Town Manager; Mike Wilkinson, Director of Administrative Services; Lisa Hancock, Director of Finance and Records

1. **Call to Order:** Rick Field called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** Recited.
3. **Moment of Silence:** Observed.
4. **Public Participation (2 minute limit):**

Katrin Hinrichsen of 192 Goose Lane: She doesn't think it is responsible for them to go on a starvation budget.

Bob Pagoni of 27 Barbara Road: He wants to have someone explain the \$1.2m. What happens if they don't get the \$1.2m?

Mr. Field said they are putting up a budget that they hope fails. He said he doesn't understand why they are worried about something in a budget that is going to change when they find out what the numbers are. These numbers are hopefully going to change.

Sam Adlerstein of 164 Pine Hill Road: He encourages them to vote for option D. Option E reduces the BOE budget by \$1.2m. The BOE does not have the variation to handle what that \$1.2m would cause. Option D is more consistent with what they are saying.

Brenda Falusi of 4 Laurel Ridge Road: She agrees with other speakers. She would like them to vote for the highest number available. She offered to assist in getting information out for 'no' votes.

5. **Consideration of the Town Council's Proposed FY 2017-2018 Budget:**

Mr. Field began by saying that they picked options D and E at the last meeting. He asked the Council members where they each stood.

Mr. Eccles said understands the public's concern regarding what happens if they don't get the grant that they are expecting to use to offset the \$1.2m that they are reducing out of the BOE's budget. The educational cost sharing grant is 25% of their budget, yet they don't question that it can also be cut in the middle of the year, or whenever they want. They all know that the numbers they are dealing with are fictitious. They need to get this out there as if they were handling this

for real. They could not in good conscious put an extra \$1.2m against the town residents, expecting that the Governor's budget was going to pass, and the \$1.2m would flow to the BOE. It would go to the BOE, except that they taxed the residents an additional \$1.2m that they did not need to tax them. He leans towards E.

Mr. Green echoes Mr. Eccles' sentiment, and commented that this is a terrible situation. He has listened to everyone that has come his way. There are great arguments on both sides, but he ultimately comes down to E and the affordability issue. He doesn't believe it is going to pass, but they need to look at all the citizens.

Mr. Krasusky said a lot of what has been said holds true. Despite which of these scenarios they pick, it is almost irrelevant. Once they have tangible information, they all want to reset the meter and start from ground zero. He feels they are dealing with a budget that is dealing in hypotheticals and doesn't have value. They need to have time to receive the data that they need and make decision. If he is discounting the Governor's data, then he is discounting all the data. He is leaning to D.

Mr. Skoczulek is torn, but he leans towards E. He thinks all of it will come back, and they will be back renegotiating where they want to head. He believes the town should put a budget forward that only reflects increases that have to do with what the state has passed down to us.

Ms. Morgan is leaning towards D. They know they will be back here, so she wants to go with the worst case scenario. She hears what others are saying, but she believes D is the most sensible.

Mr. Eccles said he knows this is going to shock people no matter what they do. They all understand that this stinks. They are not here tonight to decide what the final budget is. He is in full support of what the BOE is trying to do, but he has a problem arbitrarily throwing another \$1.2m tax out there, which may or may not be true.

Mr. Krasusky, who spoke for all Council members, said they all agree that once data is received, they are all willing to hit the reset button and look at this from scratch.

Mr. Eccles commented that there is no explanation of why they are reducing the BOE's budget on the pamphlet being sent to the residents. He wants it understood that they are expecting the grant to come in. Mr. Werbner said he can include an asterisk to explain why the BOE's budget is being reduced and what the \$1.2m will bring it back to.

Mr. Field encouraged the Council members to get letters out and talk to the public. They need to explain what they are doing and why.

6. Approval of Budget Resolution

Bill Eccles 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 2017-18 Town Operating and Capital Budget in the amount of \$57,495,195 to be appropriated as follows:

CATEGORY	AMOUNT
Town Government	\$11,892,927
Board of Education	\$38,975,960
BOE Teachers' Retirement Contribution	\$ 1,934,215
Debt Service	\$ 4,550,000
Capital	\$ 142,093
TOTAL	\$57,495,195

Said appropriations shall require an increase of 5.88 mills for a mill rate of 40.07.

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 20, 2017, Annual Budget Presentation Meeting at the Tolland High School Auditorium at 7:30 p.m.

Seconded by Robert Green. Rick Field; William Eccles; Robert Green and David Skoczulek were in favor. Paul Krasusky; Kristen Morgan were opposed.

7. **Approval of a resolution authorizing the form of the ballot for the May 2, 2017 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 in accordance with the provisions of CT General Statutes 9-369b explaining the budget referendum question.**

Bill Eccles motioned to accept the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Tolland Town Council has adopted a proposed FY 2017-2018 Town Operating and Capital Budget to be considered by the Tolland electorate at a May 2, 2017 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 2nd referendum shall be worded as follows:

"Shall the Town of Tolland's proposed 2017-2018 budget of \$57,495,195, reflecting a spending increase of \$1,688,613 or 3.026% which requires a tax rate of 40.07 mills for an increase of 5.88 mills or 17.198%, 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 2, 2017 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 2, 2017 Referendum and the April 20, 2017 Annual Budget Presentation Meeting.

4. The Town Manager or his designee is authorized to prepare and print an explanatory text and mail same to local residents in accordance with the provisions of CT General Statutes 9-369b explaining the budget referendum question.

Seconded by Robert Green. All in favor. None opposed.

Mr. Field said no one is happy tonight. The State put us between a rock and a hard place. Since the State has not helped them at all with the 'hold harmless' bill, they have to move forward. They have cut the referendum costs, by having one polling location at the Tolland Library. There will most likely be two or three referendums before they get a number. He asked residents to encourage their friends and neighbors to vote no.

Mr. Krasusky asked the public to stay informed of the process as the State's numbers become real. Once that occurs, they will be able to formulate their 'real budget'.

Mr. Field said once they get some new numbers to work with, everything will be back on the table, and they will start like they did on day one. All the Council members agreed.

8. Adjournment: Bill Eccles moved to adjourn the meeting; Seconded by Robert Green at 7:54 p.m. All were in favor.

Richard J. Field, Council Chair

Michelle A. Finnegan
Town Council Clerk