

**TOWN COUNCIL OF NEW CANAAN
SPECIAL MEETING
April 16, 2008
4:30 pm in the Board Room of Town Hall**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dr. Mark DeWaele, Chairman
Kenneth Campbell
Kathryn Devereaux
Paul Foley
Christine Hussey

Elizabeth Jones
Stephen Karl
Tucker Murphy
Thomas O’Dea
Johnny Potts
Penny Young

MEMBER ABSENT: Richard White

ALSO PRESENT: George Maranis, Administrative Officer; Gary Conrad, Chief Financial Officer; Jeb Walker, First Selectman and member, ex-officio, of the Town Council; Frank DeNicola, Director of Public Works; John Howe, Superintendent of Parks and Tree Warden; Tiger Mann, Assistant Director of Public Works and Senior Engineer; Mose Saccary, Highway Superintendent of Operations.

Dr. DeWaele called the meeting to order at 4:38 pm. Mr. O’Dea read the Notice of Meeting and took the roll, noting the absence of Mr. White and Ms. Hussey (who arrived at 4:54 pm.)

Mr. Conrad reviewed the Town’s 2008-2009 budget, commenting on each Department in the sequence presented in the “Call.” General Government, Public Safety, Public Works, Recreation, Library, Human Services and Outside Agencies. He focused on increases over the prior year and the reasons therefor. He then recapitulated the Capital Expenditures budget, as well as the Board of Education operating budget. He next reviewed, in some detail, the budget for Debt Service for 2008-2009. He commented on Revenues and Enterprise Funds, and briefly reviewed the process to be followed in approving the 2008-2009 budget at the Annual Budget Meeting.

Dr. DeWaele then brought up for discussion the letter just received from The Parks Department Staff asking the Council to eliminate from the Department’s budget the hiring of an Assistant for the Superintendent of Parks, and giving the reasons for this request – basically, that there was a greater need for additional staff, not supervisory personnel. Mr. Mann presented the case for the hiring of this person, as did Mr. Howe, who focused on the extended span of command now stretching his supervisory responsibilities. Comment was also made that it would be preferable to fill the position from within. There seemed to be unanimous consent among the members that the job was needed, and note was made that the hiring had been approved by every required Town body, Commission and Department.

Returning to other aspects of the Budget, note was made of the declining increase in the Grand List from the prior year, as well as the decrease in projected revenues. At the end, the amount to be raised from taxation for the Town showed an increase of 6.46% over the prior year, but Mr. Conrad speculated that the final increase, to be set by the Board of Finance, would fall in the 4% to 4 ¼ % range. In this regard, Mr. Conrad noted that the General Fund balance was strong, allowing for transfers to equalize the mill rate.

Discussion then resumed on the letter from the Parks Departments staff. Ms. Jones described her recent visit to the Public Works Department garage, observing that workers felt disenfranchised and that there “definitely was a problem.” Ms. Hussey said that she was willing to support the hiring of the Assistant, but that every effort should be made to promote from within. Ms. Young commented that she was comfortable with the vetting process for the position, but also agreed that the appointment should, if possible, be from within, and that the apparent discontent should be addressed. Mr. Foley, Dr. DeWaele and Mr. O’Dea were in general agreement with all of these comments, with Mr. O’Dea warning that promotion from within should not be a requirement, but only if there is a properly qualified individual. Some discussion followed on the means by which the staff is supervised, and Ms. Jones confirmed that the Assistant’s position was non-union one.

There being no further business, the Council Voted unanimously to adjourn at 5:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas O’Dea, Secretary