

**VERNON TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
Rockville High School
70 Loveland Hill Road
Vernon, CT**

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2008
7:00 P.M.**

A) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL:

Present: Daniel Anderson, Bill Campbell, Daniel Champagne, Mark Etre, Bill Fox, Marie Herbst, Nancy E Herold, Harry D. Thomas, Michael A. Winkler

Absent: Sean O'Shea, Pauline Schaefer

Entered During Meeting: Brian R. Motola (7:55 PM)

Also Present: Mayor Jason L. McCoy, Town Administrator John Ward, Recording Secretary Jill Kentfield, Town Clerk Bernice Dixon

Recess (7:07 PM)

Council Member Anderson, seconded by Council Member Campbell made the following motion:

PROPOSED MOTION:

MOVE TO RECESS THIS SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING UNTIL THE CONCLUSION OF THE TOWN OF VERNON ANNUAL TOWN MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Motion carried unanimously.

There were approximately 105 citizens present at the Annual Town Meeting in addition to the Mayor and members of the Town Council.

Town Clerk Bernice K. Dixon read into the record the legal notice of the annual Town Meeting and certified that the notice was posted on the bulletin board of the Town Hall on April 13, 2009, and published in the Rockville Reminder on April 13, 2009.

Mayor McCoy called for nominations for a moderator. Council Member Anderson, seconded by Council Member Herbst made a motion to nominate James Luddecke as the moderator. Council Member Thomas, seconded by Council member Winkler made a motion to nominate Attorney Cummings as the moderator. Mr. Luddecke deferred his nomination to Attorney Cummings.

Nominations for moderator was closed. Motion to nominate Attorney Cummings as the moderator passed unanimously.

As Moderator, Attorney Cummings explained the requirements necessary to speak at the Annual Town Meeting as to residence, age and ownership of property. He reported that pursuant to chapter 7-7 of the CT General Statutes, a petition was delivered to the town clerk within 24 hours of this meeting, which requires the budget to be sent to Referendum rather than voting at the Annual Town Meeting. He informed the citizens that tonight's meeting would serve as a public forum for residents to make comments and ask questions regarding the proposed 2009 – 2010 budget. The Referendum vote will take place at Center 375, 375 Hartford Turnpike on Saturday, May 9, 2009 between the hours of 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM.

Mayor McCoy thanked everyone for their attendance. He provided the citizens with budget highlights. He explained there will be a box at the referendum for citizens to provide comments.

The Moderator then asked if there was anyone present who wished to comment on the proposed budget.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mary Oliver, 15 Dobson Common Circle. Spoke regarding the increase in budget revenue, personnel, and the lobbyist. She also spoke against the budget vote being held on the Saturday before Mother's Day.

Peter Kosak, 34 Farmbrook Lane: Spoke in favor of the budget along with asking Town Council Members to consider picking up the costs for lights and fire hydrants in his neighborhood.

Bill Dauphin, 11 Olive Lane: spoke regarding the benefits the Town has to offer and everyone in the community who pays taxes has the right to these benefits. He also spoke about considering projects such as schools and roads each year when voting on the budget.

Gale Scott, 65 Vista View: Spoke regarding the fact that not everyone is able to receive the benefits mentioned earlier.

Herbert Slicer, 561 Hartford Tpke.: Asked Town Council Members to provide better communication regarding the budget. He also asked members to consider cuts when dealing with unions.

Edie Chernack, 50 Cubles Dr.: Quoted information from a Town of Ellington meeting minutes where the Town Manager spoke. She is also opposed to the Saturday election and Lobbyist funds. She also spoke about her road, which need work.

Pierre Lisee, 210 Skinner Rd.: Requested Town Council Members keep politics out of the Town Council Meetings.

Ken Poliquin, 73 Vernon Center Heights: Spoke regarding his opposition to the budget.

Bill Smith, 30 Vernwood Dr.: Spoke regarding his opposition to union labor concessions in the budget.

Michael Winkler, 20 Gottier Dr.: Congratulated Mayor McCoy on the final version of the budget. He explained the property value increase is based on the phase-in process. He has concerns that the Board of Education has not informed Town Council Members where the \$300,000 cuts are going to be made. He is in favor of the budget.

Tom Didio, 112 Box Mountain Drive: Spoke in favor of Education being a #1 priority. He is opposed to the lobbyist. He also is opposed to the vote for referendum taking place on a Saturday. He asked Mr. Luddecke about the effect of the budget on taxes. Mr. Luddecke provided an explanation and requested homeowners that have questions speak to the Town Assessors office or visit the Town website.

Mayor McCoy spoke about lobbying efforts that he has had to perform since taking office.

Mr. Didio: spoke against the comments regarding opposition to unions.

Christy Vale, 100 Dobson Road: Provided information about the Board of Education budget. She provided information about personnel including the position for Assistant Town Administrator. She also provided information regarding the cost of holding referendums. She also spoke about the cost of education for each student attending school.

Gordon Gibson, 836 Hartford Tpke: Requested the moderator when taking votes, hold a vote regarding how many people would prefer the Saturday referendum vote.

James Hoover, 155 Trout Stream Dr., Chair of the Flood and Erosion Board: Spoke about his appreciation of the Mayor and his commitment to the Town. He asked the Board of Education members to take notice of a high voltage transformer behind the high school with a gully behind with flood waters flowing through it. He also spoke about the final phase of the re-evaluation payments and requested another re-evaluation as soon as legally possible. He also spoke about the Saturday vote, along with unfunded mandates. He is in favor of the lobbyist.

Carl Slicer, President of the Vernon Taxpayers Association: Spoke in favor of the lobbyist. He also spoke about the number of foreclosures in the Town of Vernon. He congratulated Town Council Members on their efforts in creating the budget.

James Luddecke, 54 Crestridge Drive: Spoke of his 28 years in attending town meetings and provided a historical view of budget process where town meetings were discontinued and brought back again by former Mayor Marcham.

Myron Krueger, 55 Edith Road: Spoke regarding the lack of budget information provided to Vernon residents. He verified the budget was available on-line and asked Council Members to have better communication regarding the viewing of the budget. He also spoke about the classroom sizes within the Board of Education.

Mayor McCoy provided information about unfunded mandates, which take place in many the Town of Vernon Departments besides Dept of Education.

Joe Grabinski, 623 Dart Hill Rd.: Spoke about personnel, and union issues.

Mary Oliver, 15 Dobson Commons Circle: Stated that the Town does have an assessment of unfunded mandates and that the Town should be able to communicate their needs to the Representatives and Senators.

Bill Dauphin: Spoke about the compensation of town and school employees.

The Moderator took the following votes:

Citizens voting to increase the budget: **total votes: 6**

Citizens voting to decrease the budget: **total votes: 5**

Citizens voting to support the budget as presented: **total votes: 26**

Those citizens who prefer a Saturday vote: **total votes: 22**

Citizens who prefer a Tuesday vote: **total votes: 17**

Either day: **total votes: 1**

Adjournment (9:10 PM)

The moderator requested a motion to adjourn the Annual Town Meeting. A motion to adjourn was moved and seconded from the floor.

9:16 PM – Council Member Herold left

Reconvene Town Council Meeting (9:16 PM)

Mayor McCoy called the special Town Council meeting back to order. Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Anderson made a motion to reconvene the Special Town Council meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Thomas made the following motion:

PROPOSED MOTION:

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY MOVES TO PRESENT THE TOWN COUNCIL APPROVED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009-2010 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$76,089,866 TO THE ELECTORS AND QUALIFIED TAXPAYERS TO VOTE ON BALLOTS AT THE BUDGET REFERENDUM TO BE SCHEDULED FOR SATURDAY, MAY 9, 2009, AT CENTER 375, 375 HARTFORD TURNPIKE, VERNON, CONNECTICUT, BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 6:00 AM AND 8:00 PM, AND TO AUTHORIZE AND DIRECT THE TOWN CLERK TO PUBLISH A WARNING OF SAID REFERENDUM AT LEAST FIVE DAYS BEFORE THE REFERENDUM AND TO PHRASE SUCH ITEM IN A FORM SUITABLE FOR PRINTING ON SUCH PAPER BALLOTS OR BALLOT LABELS IN ACCORDANCE WITH CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES 7-7 AND OTHER LAWS. THE DESIGNATION ON THE BALLOT LABEL FOR A "YES" OR "NO" VOTE SHALL BE AS FOLLOWS:

"SHALL THE TOWN OF VERNON ADOPT A BUDGET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$76,089,866 FOR A PERIOD COMMENCING JULY 1, 2009 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2010?"

Discussion took place. Council Member Etre requested the actual cost of a referendum be shared with Council members at the next Town Council meeting. Council Member McCoy commented that the only reason we are having a referendum is because they received the petition within the 24 hours of this meeting. This is a forum where Town Council Members can hear comments from residents. He informed Council Members comment sheets will be available at the voting place. Motion carried, Council Members Winkler and Fox opposed.

ADJOURNMENT (9:30 PM)

Council Member Thomas, seconded by Council Member Motola made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Received:

Approved:

Respectfully Submitted,

Jill Kentfield
Recording Secretary

[REDACTED]