

**MINUTES
FREEPORT TOWN COUNCIL MEETING #09-2005
TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
MAY 3, 2005 – 7:00 P.M.**

CHAIRPERSON'S CALL TO ORDER

PRESENT ABSENT EXCUSED

Thomas Rumpf, P.O. Box 819, S. Freeport	x
John Arsenault, Prout Road	x
Charlotte Bishop, Maquoit Drive	x
Rich DeGrandpre, Timber Ridge Road	x
Frederick White, 45 Pleasant Hill Road	x
James Cassida, 5 Timber Ridge Road	x
Genie Beaulieu, P.O. Box 74	x

Chair Rumpf called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS: To waive the reading of the Minutes of Meeting #8-2005 held on April 26, 2005 and accept the Minutes as printed.

MOVED AND SECONDED: To waive the reading of the Minutes of Meeting #8-2005 held on April 26, 2005 and accept the Minutes as printed. (Arsenault & Bishop) **VOTE:**
(7 Ayes)

SECOND ORDER OF BUSINESS: Announcements

Chair Rumpf reminded everyone of the meeting schedule for the budget workshops that was modified at the last Council meeting. Public sessions are scheduled May 10 from 8-9 a.m. or as long as necessary and May 11 beginning at 5 p.m. for members of the public that have questions on the municipal budget. There will be a workshop on the School budget on May 16. A regular Council meeting and discussion on the budget will take place the following evening. Final vote will be on May 24.

THIRD ORDER OF BUSINESS: Public Comment Period – 30 Minutes (Non-Agenda Items Only)

There were no public comments so Chair Rumpf moved on.

FOURTH ORDER OF BUSINESS: To take action on the following items of business as read by the Council Chairperson.

ITEM #51-05 To consider action relative to the adoption of a Fiscal Year 2006 Operating Budget for the Town of Freeport.

BE IT ORDERED: That a Public Hearing be scheduled for May 17, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers to discuss the adoption of a fiscal year 2006 Operating Budget for the Town of Freeport.

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED: That copies be distributed equally between the Town Clerk's Office, the Town Manager's Office and the Freeport Community Library for inspection by citizens during normal business hours and the notice be placed on Freeport's local cable channel 7 and the Town's website. (DeGrandpre & Bishop)

Councilor Beaulieu suggested tabling this item until after Mr. Olmstead's presentation. Other Councilors agreed.

MOVED AND SECONDED: To table Item 51-05 until after Dale's Presentation this evening and then vote on it. (Beaulieu & Arsenault)
VOTE: (7 Ayes).

ITEM #52-05 To consider action relative to an appointment to the Freeport Community Center Advisory Council.

BE IT ORDERED: That Charlotte Bishop be appointed to the Freeport Community Center Advisory Council. (Cassida & Arsenault) **ROLL CALL VOTE:** (7 Ayes).

Chair Rumpf noted that he appreciates Councilor Bishop's willingness to serve on this Council.

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. Planning Board Update

Alan Caron, Chair of the Planning Board, gave an update on where they are relative to their timetable. They expect to get the subdivision information back to the Council at the end of May or beginning of June. One area they are not finished yet is on the affordable housing issue, which has proven to be very complicated for lots of reasons. They have spent hours trying to determine exactly what affordable housing is and how they would regulate it. They have concluded that the definition of affordable housing they will report to the Council is up to 100% of median income, completely incentive based. He answered questions for Councilors. More discussion followed.

Mr. Caron noted he will be stepping down as Chair later this month but found it to be an interesting time to serve on the Planning Board. He encouraged the Council to recognize how

important the cooperative relationship is between the Council and Planning Board and hopes the lines of communication will be kept open. If there are any concerns, he urged Councilors to pick up a phone and call the Planning Board Chair.

2. Presentation of Proposed FY 06 Operating Budget for the Town of Freeport

Mr. Olmstead distributed notebooks to Councilors and walked them through the format of the Municipal Budget. He reminded Councilors that the Town does a lot of bulk purchasing and a lot of items are seasonally related. The revised schedule of various workshops and presentations was provided. He explained the Municipal Budget Options for 2006. The Council's directive to Municipal administrators was to produce a budget of no more than 3%. The municipal side's increase is less than the 3% cap. He noted that two fire fighters/EMTs and a part-time janitor were not included in the budget in order to keep below the 3%. He has concerns for the cleanliness of the Town's buildings so he will continue to push for a part-time janitor next year. The landfill operates 4 days a week and it is not very convenient for contractors. The revenue stream at the landfill will be calculated by the Finance Director. There is a big increase in paving materials this year, which is driven by the cost of oil. The Town will be paving less. This budget is not a maintenance budget. An additional silver bullet has been requested by Bart Carhart. The price of salt has gone up significantly this year. He explained that FEMA will be giving Freeport \$57,000 for two storms.

The Fire Chief will be asking for permission to apply for two positions funded under the National Safety Grant Program. This is very similar to the cops program. If we apply and are awarded funds, we would hire individuals and be responsible for 10% of their salaries in the first year and then a higher percentage in subsequent years until we would own them in year five. We would be obligated for keeping them on the payroll for an additional year after that. This is a good topic for discussion at workshop. He gave a prioritized list to Councilors should they decide to fund more than the maintenance list:

- #1 would be #8
- #2 would be #5
- #3 would be #7
- #4 would be #1
- #5 would be #6
- #6 would be #2
- #7 would be #3
- #8 would be #4

Councilors will have to make a decision on:

- Whether to allow the Fire Chief to apply for the Safer grant for additional personnel
- A staff pool vehicle for the Fire Department.
- Whether the Net Program is doing what it was hoped to do.
- A Recreation Needs Assessment for the Recreation Commission
- \$600 request from Tri-Town Penguins for maintaining snowmobile trails

- **FMA's request for an increase in the funding of Depot Street Restrooms**

Discussion on funding the restrooms followed. Mr. Olmstead has not added this to the budget. Councilor Bishop asked for the list of businesses that are required to have restrooms open to the public. Enforcement was postponed in order to give the merchants time to get their restrooms opened. This will need to be discussed at the workshop.

Other Budgets were mentioned but Mr. Olmstead did not have a lot to talk about. The Town will be leasing space in the new Community Center. Freeport Economic Development Corp. is flat from a year ago. Councilor White asked if a report is available on their activities. Councilor Arsenault offered to provide it.

The Debt Service Budget is dramatically reduced. This is the first decrease from RWS in ten years.

Tax Rate Analysis – this is the latest version. He walked everyone through each category. The Municipal Budget by itself would lower the municipal tax rate by 18 cents.

The initial School Budget called "School Budget One" would have increased the tax rate by 61 cents. Since that time, the School Committee has recommended a lower total, which would increase the tax rate by 48 cents. "School Budget Two" would result in a 31-cent tax rate increase. Variations were provided. If held to the 3% cap, "School Budget Six" would result in a 16-cent tax rate increase. Discussion followed. This is the first time the Town is looking at a tax rate decrease in Mr. Olmstead's 23 years. The Council pledged to return the additional aid to education to the voters a year ago.

Mr. Olmstead noted that the municipal budget was cut by \$11,000 because certain employees chose to buy an additional week of vacation in the off-season. New numbers came in from Augusta late last week on municipal sharing and aid to education, which has been increased to \$241,000. . He is cognizant that taxpayers in Freeport and statewide are looking for tax relief. If we don't give it to them, they will take matters into their own hands. Tax rates were discussed. All the new taxes raised have been spent and not gone to the taxpayers. Discussion followed.

Financial statements from various agencies were also provided. Mr. Olmstead walked Councilors through the miscellaneous pages in their notebooks. If any changes are determined necessary, they need to be made before setting the public hearing. Discussion followed on excise taxes, the \$9,000 revenue stream from Yarmouth for our General Assistance Administrator, Homestead Exemption reimbursements, solid waste fees, cell phone tower monies, revenue increases in building fees and receiving a better rate on the Town's investments. On the municipal side, there are new revenues of \$245,000.

Mr. Olmstead quickly walked through the expense side explaining the changes that appear. A new phone vendor breaks out the school bills from the municipal bills. The General Admin budget has dropped \$6,000 year over year. Utilities have increased. \$9,000 is budgeted for extra help. The Town Hall has reduced 2 full-time positions, as well as hours throughout the building.

The system is working. Payroll lines have slightly increased in various departments. He explained the reasons why some grades were increased. The price of fuel has also increased in some budgets. Councilor Beaulieu asked how many employees are covered in the Police Department budget. Mr. Olmstead estimated that the number is 14. Councilor Beaulieu asked how many employees are covered under Dispatch. Mr. Olmstead advised that the number is 4. The medical supply line is increased because there are new drugs to be purchased and managed. The Town bids out catch basin cleanings. Brush control is a contractual situation and the increase is because of the price of fuel. Councilor DeGrandpre asked if the Town is using plastic culverts with smooth insides. Mr. Olmstead suspects that plastic is being used but Councilor DeGrandpre will check with Mr. Plummer. The Library budget is down this year because of personnel reductions. Recreation has the \$10,000 for the needs assessment. Councilor Beaulieu noticed the snowmobile line is incorrectly shown as \$1,000 whereas the request was for \$600. Fireworks have been increased by \$500 for the 4th of July.

Councilor Beaulieu would like to know how many full-time employees and how many part-time employees are employed by the Town in each department. If the public knew how much they get from such a small number of people, they would be amazed. Mr. Olmstead offered to generate this list.

Mr. Olmstead reminded the public that the budget he just went through is on the Town's website as well as Town Hall and the Community Library. The school budget is available on the Town's website, at the Town Hall or at the Superintendent's office.

Regarding Question #1, the Council reaffirmed in January that funds received for Aid to Education should be returned to the taxpayers. Chair Rumpf noted that if the Council chooses to do something else, it would not be honoring what it said it would do. He asked for feedback from Councilors. Councilor Bishop pointed out that this is not a reduction in the school budget. The schools will be getting the same amount of money minus new positions. They will be able to maintain what they have currently and not lose any services or programs. Mr. Olmstead noted that the school revenue would drop by \$164,000 and the tax rate would drop by 24 cents. Councilor Beaulieu pointed out that the Council would be giving the school credit for some of the other savings the Council has generated since the Aid to Education number is \$241,000. Discussion followed.

MOVED AND SECONDED: To take up Item 51-05 (DeGrandpre & Arsenault)
VOTE: (7 Ayes).

Councilor DeGrandpre noted that the Municipal side would reduce the mill rate by 18 cents. The School side will increase it by 31 cents so it is apparent that the school side will be getting a big chunk. This community continues to support education.

Councilor White noted his wife is a school employee and asked if there was any need for him to recuse himself. There was Council consensus that he should not recuse himself. He believes everyone is heading in the same direction whether it's reducing the tax rate by 24 cents or 25 cents. He is in favor of sticking by the Council's vote last year.

MOVED AND SECONDED: To amend Item #51-05 to direct the Town Manager to bring to public hearing on the 17th a combined Town/School budget that reflects the school budget increase indicated in Scenario 2A on the sheet dated. April 28, 2005. (Bishop & DeGrandpre)

Councilor Beaulieu pointed out that this would generate a combined 24-cent decrease in the mill rate.

ROLL CALL VOTE: (7 Ayes).

ROLL CALL VOTE ON ORIGINAL ORDER AS AMENDED: (7 Ayes).

3. Informational Exchange.

Mr. Olmstead pointed out that the Appointments Committee is meeting on May 17 at 6 p.m. to discuss appointments.

Councilor Bishop asked about extending the deadline for ordering the composters at the Land Fill. There will be a lot of traffic during the Spring Clean-up Days and they could be easily sold that weekend. Mr. Olmstead offered to order an additional 50 and make them available.

Adjournment

MOVED AND SECONDED: To adjourn at 9:07 p.m. (Bishop & DeGrandpre)
VOTE: (7 Ayes).

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Coffin
Council Secretary