

FREEPORT TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING #12-93

MAY 25, 1993 - 7:30 P.M.

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

SUMMARY AGENDA

ITEM #106-93 TO CONSIDER ACTION RELATIVE TO THE ADOPTION OF
MUNICIPAL AND SCHOOL BUDGETS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1994.
(PUBLIC HEARING)

OTHER BUSINESS

Freeport Town Meeting # 12-93
Freeport Town Hall Council Chambers
May 25, 1993 - 7:30 P.M.

	Regular	Special	X	
<u>Chairperson's Call To Order</u>		<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Excused</u>
Kirk Goddard, Chairman, Mast Landing		X		
Edward Bradley, Flying Point		X		
Andrew Arsenault, U.S. Route #1		X		
John Nelson, Vice-Chairman, Harb Cottage		X		
Cary Veilleux, Wardtown Road		X		
Randall Bennett, Park Street		X		
Elizabeth Ruff, Durham Road		X		

FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS:

To take action on the following items of business as read by the Council Chairperson.

ITEM #106-93 To consider action relative to the adoption of municipal and school budgets for fiscal year 1994. (Public Hearing)

MOVED AND SECONDED: That the proposed Municipal and School Budgets for Fiscal Year 1994 be subject to Public Hearing. (Councilors Ruff & Veilleux) (7 Ayes) (0 Nays)

Chairman Goddard asked Carol Hudson to give a brief overview of the school budget. Mrs. Hudson explained how the School Committee carefully and thoughtfully developed the school budget. The 1993/1994 proposed school budget request is \$7,907,363 which represents a 5.8% increase over the 1992/1993 school budget. Enrollment as of 5 weeks ago was 1,199 students which represents an increase of 65 students. This is an increase of 5.7% which accounts for much of the 5.8% operating increase.

Dale Olmstead gave a quick overview of the municipal portion of the budget. He gave a 5 year history of the budget. The budget for the current year is actually \$1,000 less than the budget for 1989. Municipal employment levels have dropped 12% over the past 4 years. Last year non-union Municipal employees stepped forward and volunteered to give up salary increases to meet the Council's objective of no increase in the budget. He publicly thanked Municipal employees for this gesture which helped to reach the goal of no increase in the municipal budget. The budget this year is up 5.6% and the major increases are: raises, the solid waste budget, demolition transfer station, utility accounts, hydrant rental, Fire & Rescue payroll, new Municipal Building and utilities. As for the revenue side of the budget, there are two major changes. One proposal is a \$55 per ton demolition tipping fee at the Landfill that will be paid by the resident before the material is moved to another location. Another proposal is a \$55 private peddler application fee. Other

changes in the revenue stream is that Freeport is expecting a \$50,000 gain in state revenue sharing and \$187,000 in property taxes based on new evaluations.

Mr. Olmstead urged people to read the packets that are available comparing Freeport to other towns in the area. He pointed out that if the budget is approved as presented, tax rates will increase 6.9% and roughly 4% of that comes from debt service for the new municipal buildings and the new county jail, both of which were approved by the voters of either this town or the county. If both of these two service increases were taken out, there would be a municipal budget tax increase of 2-3%. He mentioned the Winslow Park budget and explained that it is comprised of several parts. He also pointed out the Municipal budget options that he primarily cut out of the budget and these items have been put before the Council for consideration. They are not part of the budget package at this point. If the Council were to consider any of these items, they would have to add them into the Municipal Budget.

Chairman Goddard explained that the Council has had two workshops on the Municipal and School budgets and tonight is the public hearing. He indicated that everyone will have an opportunity to express their opinions. There will be deliberations tomorrow night and Thursday night and the budget will be adopted a week from tonight. He opened the meeting up for public comments.

Jonathon Robinson, Library Trustee, explained that the major item in the Library budget is an increase for the purchase of books. He indicated that he hoped the Council is concerned about the intellectual well being of the citizens of Freeport and would support this increase.

Anne Wold had a general comment to make concerning the challenge of creating budgets. She mentioned that she and her husband have attended budget hearings in the past to find out what was going on, not to find fault with what is going on. She has been concerned about the tone at recent Council meetings and would like to see problems discussed, problems solved and a dialogue maintained without rancor. She encouraged everyone who speaks tonight to follow the Golden Rule: "to do and to say unto others, as you would have others say and do unto you."

Mary Jane Krauss spoke in support of increased funds for the purchase of Library books. She feels that the money spent on Library services is the best buy for the bucks that this community will have. There is something at the Library for everyone.

Frederick Lowe indicated that he watched the School Committee follow very good zero based budgeting. The budget was passed with a 5-1 margin with one member being absent. He sees an alarming situation developing with our school budgets. So much pressure has been placed on the School Committee to hold the line, he feels that it is endangering the quality of education. He feels that pay raises during the past few years have been very small, and when catch-up time arises, the raises seem exorbitant. He feels that they should be paid fairly. He urged the Council to pass the School Budget. He is opposed to the expenditure of funds for the A-T-L at this time since he feels the funds would be better spent on education. He feels that the A-T-L is not critical in a year when expenses should be held. It will not prevent jobs from coming into the community, but an uneducated labor force will. He would like to see additional funds given to the School Committee to eliminate the need for user fees. He feels that additional funds should be given to

the School Committee for book procurement. He suggested adding \$130,000 to the school budget for enhancement purposes.

Ken Mann feels that a 9% increase in spending on the Municipal side will generate a tremendous increase in taxes. He indicated that the Council has not set the tone as to what they consider acceptable. He feels that it is not acceptable to him. He mentioned that he had no idea why there is such an increase in heating oil money from 1993 to 1994. Mr. Olmstead advised that he should read the executive summary which would explain the situation to him. He indicated that he was concerned with the proposed payroll for the Town Manager, the Codes Enforcement Department, and the Assessing Department. He also was concerned with the amount of money being allocated for travel and training for various departments. He feels that salaries should be studied. He is also sure that there could be some savings in the salt budget. He would like to see the appropriation for salt reduced. He feels that the town should have a part-time Town Planner. He is sure that volunteers would be willing to do some of the planning functions. He recommended that the Council reduce this 9% increase to 5% as has been done in recent years.

Peter Moulton advised that he finds it objectionable to allocate funds for the A-T-L on Lower Mast Landing Road during these economic times.

Fred Palmer advised the Council that they are the elected body and they should manage the town. He wants them to make reasonable decisions. He wants to see a good quality education in this town. He believes that decisions about salt, travel, etc. is the Council's job when they evaluate their managers. If the Council doesn't like the jobs that the school administrators or the town administrators are doing, he recommended that they dismiss them. If the Council likes the jobs they are doing, let them do it and provide them with the funds they need to run this town. He has seen the Council taking ten cents here and there out of the budget over the past few years. He urged Councilors to take charge of the town and make reasonable decisions based on the information that has been provided and pass this budget. He indicated that if the citizens do not like what the Council has done, they will get rid of them. If the citizens like what they have done, they will vote them back in.

Mary Kennedy agreed that the Council should think about passing a budget that the citizens can live with. She feels that citizens have a right to comment in whatever way they are capable of. She expressed concern with the money allocated for travel, education and training, COG and MMA dues. She was sure that these things could be trimmed. She also expressed her concern for the \$45,000 being allocated for legal fees.

Steve Daye, Electrical Contractor, advised that he has had problems with the Codes Enforcement. When trying to take out electrical permits, he finds he has to go back two or three times to find out when he will have an inspection. It costs him money and his customers money. Because of inspections he has a lot of dissatisfied customers. He questions the amount of payroll and travel time for the Codes Enforcement Officer.

Dick Doucette of Lower Mast Landing Road indicated that he is in favor of the A-T-L that is being proposed on his road. He advised that he has seen a marked increase in the use of his road by walkers and bikers. Since the road is being reconstructed, he feels this is an ideal time to construct

the bike lane. He urged the Council to leave this item in the budget.

Al Fagone wanted the public to know that the A-T-L being proposed on the Lower Mast Landing Road will not be the last one. He overheard a Councilor remarking that the next project will be on the Desert Road when this lane hasn't even been started yet.

Diane Dennison indicated that she walks on the Lower Mast Landing Road and does not feel that an A-T-L is needed. She wants the rural character of Freeport maintained. She cares about the people that cannot afford the tax money spent on A-T-L's. She does not want Freeport to resemble Massachusetts. She feels that the money would be better spent for education. She hopes the Council will approve the school budget.

Charlie Smith advised that the town has a lot of land adjacent to the Lower Mast Landing Road and if the town is going to develop the playing fields. If it is going to happen, it would be nice if young people could safely get there. It would make sense to install it while the road is being reconstructed.

Laura George indicated that she is in favor of supporting the school budget. She wants the quality of education to continue to grow in Freeport.

Eileen Petersen spoke in favor of the school budget and urged Councilors to support it. She mentioned that the School Committee has worked very hard and if there is any possibility of adding any additional money, she would like to see it happen.

Gloria DeGrandpre indicated that she supports the school budget. She feels that education is going well in Freeport and she would like to see it continue.

Betsy Ruff indicated that she was happy to see so many people here and appreciated all their participation. She added that their input is very valuable.

MOVED & SECONDED: That the Public Hearing be closed (Councilors Ruff & Bennett (7 Ayes) (0 Nays)

MOVED & SECONDED: That the proposed Municipal and School Budgets be tabled until June 1, 1993. (Councilors Veilleux & Bennett) (7 Ayes) (0 Nays)

Chairman Goddard pointed out that the discussions that will take place during the next two evenings will be critical to determining the outcome. He urged all the administrators to be in attendance to answer questions that might come up. He indicated that amendments from Councilors would be welcomed tomorrow night.

MOVED & SECONDED: To adjourn at 8:40 p.m. (Councilors Veilleux & Bennett) (7 Ayes) (0 Nays)

The foregoing was recorded by: Sharon Coffin

Sharon Coffin

Recorder