

April 16, 2009

The April 16, 2009, Town Council Meeting was called to order by Colette Matarese, President, of the Foster Town Council at the Benjamin Eddy Building, 6 South Killingly Road, Foster, Rhode Island, at 7:00 p.m.

The following members were present:

Colette Matarese, President,
John Lewis, Vice President,
Lynne S. Rider,
Roger L. Hawes,
Joe Cardillo,
John J. Bevilacqua, Town Solicitor

Also present:

Kelli Russ, Treasurer
Russ Dannecker, Budget Consultant

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

Lynne S. Rider moved, Joe Cardillo seconded, and it was unanimously so voted to go into Executive Session at according to 42-46-5a(2) Collective Bargaining and 42-46-4 & 5 (a1) personnel, and to reconvene in open HEARING session and further to keep the minutes of said meeting closed and the minutes of all Executive Sessions held previous to this meeting be closed and remain to provisions of the General Laws of Rhode Island 42-46-4 & 5

Colette Matarese, aye; Joe Cardillo, aye; Lynne S. Rider, aye; Roger L. Hawes, aye; and John Lewis, aye.

**EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

John Lewis moved, Joe Cardillo seconded and it was unanimously so voted to come out of Executive Session at 7:45 p.m. There were no votes taken in executive session.

Colette Matarese, aye; Joe Cardillo, aye; Lynne S. Rider, aye; Roger L. Hawes, aye; and John Lewis, aye.

2009 BUDGET

Colette Matarese, Council President, announces that copies of the budget are available in the front of the room. The Budget as of the last budget meeting, revenues are down 7.1 percent and that's because of decreases in state aid, mostly. Foster-Glocester Regional's Operations budget is level-funded on last year's budget and we gave them 100 percent of capital. They had asked for a 4.75 increase in Operations, but we level-funded. The Paine School we did reduce by \$150,000, a negative 3.4 percent. We'll go through all of the items afterwards. On the municipal budget, we decreased 13.1 percent, so that our expenditures total were a negative 6.9 percent, but it still leaves additional property taxes needed of \$38,147.

All departments were reviewed. In the municipal side, all clerks' salaries were level-funded. All adjustments made on the copies being reviewed are adjustments made to reflect actual amounts instead of an estimate. Planning reflects no increase in salary. One item for consultation in capital was removed from capital

and placed into operations because it belonged there. Building & Zoning shows a salary cut of 6.7% due to a decrease in hours from 22-½ to 21 hours per week. There also shows a reduction in the Electrical Inspector and Plumbing Inspector, this is questioned by Roger Hawes. Roger Hawes motioned, John Lewis seconded and it is unanimously so voted to level fund these three inspectors' salaries the same as other departments.

Colette Matarese, aye; Joe Cardillo, aye; Lynne S. Rider, aye; Roger L. Hawes, aye; and John Lewis, aye.

Mr. Peterson suggests from the audience that it would be a good time to look into sharing these inspection duties. Roger Hawes notes that there is a sharing agreement for coverage with other towns. Mr. Hawes asks Mr. Peterson if he thinks \$2732 is too much to pay an inspector? Colette Matarese notes that job sharing will be looked into.

Julia Parmentier noted that the Building Inspector's education expenses were cut, and noted that it seemed unfair to expect that to be covered. Kelli Russ, Treasurer, noted that because he is current he does not need it this year but will in the future.

Tax Assessor is down 9% and shows no increase in salary. Kelli Russ, Treasurer, notes that the Opal agreement needs to go back up to \$4365. John Lewis moved, Joe Cardillo seconded and it was unanimously so voted to increase the Opal agreement item to reflect the negotiated contract.

Colette Matarese, aye; Joe Cardillo, aye; Lynne S. Rider, aye; Roger L. Hawes, aye; and John Lewis, aye.

More money, \$30,000, had been added to the contingency because of the likelihood that the state would cut motor vehicle income. \$9,000 was budgeted originally. Even if we are cut, this amount wouldn't be enough to make up for it. John Lewis motioned, Lynne S. Rider seconded, and it was unanimously so voted to cut the contingency from \$30,000 down to \$9,000.

Colette Matarese, aye; Joe Cardillo, aye; Lynne S. Rider, aye; Roger L. Hawes, aye; and John Lewis, aye.

Human Services shows a negative 2.8 percent on the bottom line, no increase in salary. Northwest Nursing Assoc. is cut to a zero amount, Colette Matarese, Council President notes that we are giving them a tax break and thus helping them in that way. Mental Health Assoc., Comprehensive Community Action, and Western RI Home Repair, are all areas we felt we needed to support but we did decrease overall by 26 percent.

Trash pickup shows a 7.5 percent decrease upon negotiating with Mr. Rambone.

Police Department reflects some adjustments because there were some items under-budgeted last year. There are no increases in salaries. On the dispatchers' salary line item, John Lewis moved to cut, Lynn S. Rider seconded, and it was unanimously so voted to cut \$9,500 which reflects a pay freeze.

Colette Matarese, aye; Joe Cardillo, aye; Lynne S. Rider, aye; Roger L. Hawes, aye; and John Lewis, aye.

Kelli Russ, Treasurer, noted that any increase in the salary line item in the budget for the police department would be for a step increase. Dog Officer shows no increase, pound fees are still in negotiation.

Emergency Services, the ambulance stipends were adjusted to reflect actual number of runs. Public Works show a reduction in staff of two people. Libraries have been restored from a 15% decrease to a 10.5% decrease. Recreation reflects a decrease in salary because fees were being put into a separate checkbook but no expenses were being taken out of that for the people who staff that program, so that has been adjusted.

Capital Budget \$26,409 for a police car. \$100,000 for highways and buildings. \$15,000 for a used street sweeper. \$170,000 for the ambulance for a total of \$311,409. We tried to get that as close to what we're putting in there for this year as we could.

Paine School operations were reduced by \$150,000 of what was enacted last year. The Governor's package is projecting a decrease in what was supposed to help the towns. Colette Matarese, Council President, questioned whether there had been any contract negotiations yet. It was determined that no one was speaking with the teachers.

A letter was read from Mrs. Helen Dixon, teacher at Paine School explaining what the results of the budget cuts would mean to the school. The budget stands at \$4,367,058, which was level funding, reflecting the layoff of one teacher and level-funding salaries. Colette Matarese, Council President, asks Mr. Moore, Paine School Principal, if the town council were to cut it another \$150,000 would it mean more layoffs. He agreed that would be the case. John Lewis asks how we can level fund as a council, and know that the teachers and aides have offered the same, and not take it out of the budget because the School Committee won't sit down with them. If we put that amount back, they are still short because the School Committee is not negotiating. John Lewis suggests that if we went back up to what they asked, then reduce it by \$94,500 altogether, from what we can determine is over-budgeted, it would hold the school harmless. John Lewis moved, Joe Cardillo seconded to set the Paine School budget at \$4,272,556.

John Bevilacqua, Town Solicitor, states that the original proposal that was made can always be adjusted at the Financial Town Meeting. To act on something without having the correct amounts can't be done. The Council does not possess the authority to do that. Colette Matarese, asks for a poll to add \$54,498.

Joe Cardillo, yes; John Lewis, yes; Lynne S. Rider, yes; Roger Hawes, yes; Colette Matarese, no.

Foster-Glocester Regional, at the last meeting, Colette Matarese reports that they were level-funded for Operations and Capital. We accepted their number. Again it was noted that changes could be made at the Financial Town Meeting.

John Lewis notes that the overall budget is decreased from last year so the 2 percent for Capital is also decreased. Russ Dannecker, Budget Consultant provides a summation of \$12,680,761.

Lynne S. Rider moved, and Roger L. Hawes seconded, and it was unanimously so voted to adopt the budget of \$12,680,761.

Joe Cardillo, yes; John Lewis, yes; Lynne S. Rider, yes; Roger Hawes, yes;
Colette Matarese, yes.

Colette Matarese, Council President announces that the public hearing is closed.

**CONCERNED
CITIZENS**

Mr. Peterson thanks the council for their hard work on the budget and for guarding our taxes. He recommends sending separate tax bills noting one for the schools, and one for everything else.

Russ Dannecker, Budget Consultant, thanks the council for the opportunity to work on the budget for them.

Gordon Rogers complains about the condition of North Road and is referred to the Director of Public Works.

Lynne S. Rider thanks Mr. Peterson and others who attended and worked at the Rabies Clinic.

ADJOURNMENT Lynne S. Rider motioned, Roger Hawes seconded, and it was unanimously approved to adjourn at 9:30 p.m.

Joe Cardillo, yes; John Lewis, yes; Lynne S. Rider, yes; Roger Hawes, yes;
Colette Matarese, yes.

A digital sound file is made a part of the record for a complete account of the council meeting.

Submitted By

Carol Lyons
Deputy Town Clerk