

**REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING
TOWN OF DARIEN, CONNECTICUT
FINANCE & BUDGET COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of a Meeting Held on March 14, 2011
“DRAFT”**

On March 14, 2011, a meeting of the RTM Finance & Budget Committee was held in Room 119 of the Darien Town Hall with eleven of fifteen members present.

Present were:

Jack Davis
Terry Duffy
Michael Harman
Kirk Hoffman
Bruce Orr
Nora McIlree
Deb Ritchie
Anita Rycenga
Bill Smith
Marc Thorne
Reilly Tierney

Absent were: Charles Brode, Tim Schwarz, John Price, Jim Palen .

Guests in the audience included: Dr. Falcone, Kim Westcott, Elizabeth Hagerty-Ross, Heather Shea, Clara Satori, Amy Bell

The Chairman, Bruce Orr, called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

Chairman Orr proposed an addition to the agenda, under “other business”. The addition proposed was the power point presentation created by Jack Davis regarding special education. All approved with the exception of Marc Thorne.

Discussion began regarding the upgrades proposed to the Middlesex Middle School gymnasium. The facility is more than 50 years old and the wood floors are worn, bleachers approaching the end of their useful life as well as the dividing door. Two new backboard units are needed due to the configuration of the new bleachers. The total cost is estimated to be \$314,000. Ms. Westcott said that the BOF asked the BOE to find some money that could be contributed to the project and they found \$37,000 that could be applied making the net cost \$277,000. This improvement has been deferred for the last two years due to economic conditions. Approving now will enable them to contract to get the work done by August 2011. Ms. Westcott added that asbestos testing was conducted on the floor and the results came back free and clear. This will be 2010/11 budget.

Marc Thorne moved to approve and Jack Davis seconded and the vote was unanimously in favor.

The proposed amendments to P&Z permit fees were reviewed and discussed. Chairman Orr had attended RTM PZH committee meeting last Monday evening where Mr. Ginsberg gave an overview. Fees were last looked at and adjusted in 2008. The most significant change is when one applies for a zoning permit. Anita Rycenga asked how our fees compared to neighboring Towns and Chairman Orr said Mr. Ginsberg said we were in the middle. Assuming same applications as 2010, the new fee structure would bring in an additional \$36,000, \$34,000 of it attributable to zoning permits. Jack Davis raised a question as to why this needed to come before us if the fees had been separated from the ordinances.

Bill Smith moved to approve and Marc Thorne seconded and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Discussion regarding proposed changes to the pension ordinance language began. Members of the committee expressed concern and best wishes for John Price who has always been our “go to guy” for a better understanding of these pension matters. Get well soon John! We need you, we miss you. The proposed language affects two sections of the ordinance. One for “normal” retirement and one for “earlier” retirement. Current language stipulates ten years of service for benefit commencement and the proposed language changes that to five years. The current early retirement language for any member who has attained his 55th birthday is problematic. In the opinion of Karl Kilduff and Kate Buch this change will have little to no fiscal impact since the actuary currently bases contribution calculations on the five year vesting schedule. Nancy Markey, Director of Human Services suggests there will be an additional \$6,000 in cost given the current staff. There is a difference between cost vs. funding and Chairman Orr requested that Reilly Tierney take on the project of researching the details of this change, reporting back to the committee in order that we may make an informed decision. The pension board approved this change in Oct. 2010 per Chairman Orr.

Bill Smith made a motion to approve seconded by Bruce Orr. Votes were as follows:

Jack Davis	NO
Terry Duffy	Abstained
Michael Harman	NO
Kirk Hoffman	NO
Bruce Orr	YES
Nora McIlree	NO
Deb Ritchie	NO
Anita Rycenga	NO
Bill Smith	YES
Marc Thorne	NO
Reilly Tierney	NO

The vote failed.

Next the minutes for the Jan. 18, 2011 special meeting and regular meeting were up for approval. Jack Davis requested that he and Michael Harman be listed as “excused” vs. “absent” for the regular meeting since they left to attend a BOE meeting. Motion was made by Chairman Orr to approve the change and minutes, seconded by Nora McIlree and unanimously approved by all in attendance of those meetings.

Jack Davis began going through his power point presentation analyzing data regarding special education services. Chairman Orr recommended that the data be fully vetted by the BOE and Kim Westcott while willing, said she cannot make it a priority at this time due to staffing considerations. Dr. Falcone expressed gratitude for the magnitude of Jack’s work (as we all did) and said the children are number one followed by the management of the delivery of services. It is desirous that there be an integration of technology to measure and manage special education.

Marc Thorne retracted his objection to making the addition to the agenda and moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 p.m.

Dated: March 15, 2011
Respectfully submitted,
Anita M. Rycenga, Member
RTM Finance & Budget Committee