

ADJOURNED BUDGET MEETING THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2008

An Adjourned Meeting of the Town Council (adjourned from Wednesday, April 30, 2008) was held on Thursday, May 8, 2008 at 5:45 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center with Chairperson Adil presiding.

Present: Councilors Cascio (arrived at 6:45 p.m.), Console (via conference call), Forrest, Hemmann, Kotkin, Roberts, Walsh (arrived at 7:50 p.m. and left at 8:30 p.m.) Deputy Mayor Montinieri and Chairperson Adil

Also present: Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, Lisa Hancock, Finance Director, RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, Michael Kohlhagen, Superintendent of Schools, Karen Clancy, Director of Business Services, Karen Baldwin, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Administration, Italia Negroni, Ph.D., Director Karen Clancy, Director of Business Services, Fred Bushey, Supervisor of Curriculum Maintenance and Instruction, Fred Bushey, Supervisor, Maintenance & Operations, Andrew Lees, Interim Director of Special Services, Dennis Colcolugh and Paul Dudley of Data Services, Brian Clement, Chr. Advisory Committee of Information Technology, Insurance Agents of Record: Chris Munroe, Health, and Greg Bedula, Casualty & Property, and Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk. Coordinator

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk took attendance.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Michael Kohlhagen, Superintendent of Schools, provided handouts that responded to questions asked by Councilors at prior meetings. He said that it was his goal to improve communication and to really create a budget process that addresses the Town's concerns. This is the first year of a multi-year fine tuning of a very strong budget process. He said that he is already looking at the next budget cycle to continue to look for ways to save money. He said that:

- The District Reference Groups and Per Pupil Costs handout shows per pupil expenditures. The Board of Education continues to look at where Wethersfield falls.
- The District Personnel Assignments Supported through Grant Funding handout helps to explain the other money that helps offset the budget.

Karen Baldwin, Assistant Superintendent for of Human Resources and Administration, said that these pages highlight the two Federal Grant awards that the Board of Education receives. There are significant Federal Grants: the Education and Secondary Education Act of the Consolidated Grant Fund and the Individual with Disabilities and Education Act (IDEA). These two grants significantly offset the personnel account by over \$800,000.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the money goes up based on the Town's need.

Karen Baldwin said that Title I of the Consolidated Grant can go up based on need. In the 2007-08 year, the Town did receive a greater award. The IDEA can also go up but it has not and the Board of Education is not anticipating that it will.

Councilor Kotkin said that back in March there was a discussion on what drives the Board of Education budget increase. Some of that were health insurance and the salaries. The salaries are higher because there are so many people at the higher end. One of the other reasons was that more dollars are being spent on paraprofessionals for special education students. He asked if any of that increase is being covered through additional grant revenue or through tax dollars

Karen Baldwin said that it was more the latter. The Board of Education is always looking for grant money to pick up a portion of an additional paraprofessional salary or all of the salary. The Board of Education has to inform the Federal

Government how it is using these grants. Revisions are written whenever they can be to add additional positions and to place the money in different accounts.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the \$850,000 was a hard number or if that number might change.

Karen Baldwin said that the number is pretty much accurate.

Karen Clancy, Director of Business Services, reviewed the projections. She said that the Board of Education used 327,918 ccf's of natural gas in 2006-07. Part of that, 138,758 ccf's, was purchased through a CRCOG agreement with HESS. That is the firm account. The projected cost with fees included Michael Kohlhagen said that there is a revised utilities' report and update projections handout. He said that they diligently looked at usage through the energy management system. This is an accurate projection based on the information.

Karen Clancy, Director of Business Services, reviewed the projections. She said that the Board of Education used 327,918 ccf's of natural gas in 2006-07. Part of that, 138,758 ccf's, was purchased through a Capital Region Council of Governments' (CRCOG) agreement with HESS. That represents the firm account. The projected cost with fees included is \$1.48 per ccf. The \$1.27 per ccf is locked in until December 2009. The 189,160 ccf's is the balance of the 327,918 that represent interruptible accounts. The Town has an agreement with Connecticut Natural Gas (CN&G) for these. This agreement ends in August 2008. Her contact at CN&G said that the Town can estimate \$1.95 per ccf. There is a projection of \$2,912 for heating oil to heat the water at two schools. That number is based on \$3.59 per gallon cost for the oil. The additional costs are for the energy managers, for training and software. The total for all of these projected expenses is \$579,511. There is a 5 percent contingency that is added in. The total estimated energy cost is \$608,486. The original request was \$649,394. Based on the revised reports from energy management, the amount was reduced by \$40,000.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri asked how many places have stored oil.

Karen Clancy said that all school buildings have stored oil.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri asked how many gallons of stored oil are sitting in the ground.

Fred Bushey, Supervisor of Maintenance and Operations, said that the Board of Education gets weekly readings from the Head Custodians at the schools during the heating season, especially in the schools that have manual interruptible service. This is when the gas company asks the schools to curtail gas because of the weather. When the temperature drops below 15 degrees, the buildings switch over to burning oil. Most of the tanks in the district are 5,000 gallon tanks with the exception of the high school which is a 10,000 gallon tank.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri asked if there was a stock of oil that could be pumped out and gotten rid of at higher rates and return the funds to the Town.

Fred Bushey said that it was not possible. The schools need the oil in the ground in case there is no gas to burn. All of the boilers are dual fuel boilers in case there is a gas eruption in Town or the Town is asked to stop using the natural gas.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that he is not suggesting not having the oil, but rather selling it now when the rates are inflated and then buying it back again at the lower prices that the Town is receiving under its contract.

Fred Bushey said that he has never done that before. He can look into it.

Karen Clancy said that the Board of Education has not locked into rates yet. She calls every month but has been advised that the prices are still too high to lock into. Under electricity, the actual kilowatt hour used for 2006-07 was 4,528,523. The Town is locked in at .09690 costs per kilowatt hours through June 2009. There is a .02 pass through cost that is included and an average distribution cost of .065. The total cost for electricity is \$823,738 and with the 5 percent contingency the total cost is \$864,925. The original request was for \$817,347. The electricity budget needs to be increased by \$47,578. There is an overall increase to the utilities of \$6,670 but subsequent to the Board approved

budget, two things came to light. One is that the Town will get reimbursement for its Project Choice students. There are 13 students and the Board of Education will receive \$2,000 per student. The tuition was budgeted net of this \$26,000. Next year, the Board of Education will get \$2,500 per student. That is an additional \$6,500. The other thing is that the Middle School will be putting its newsletter on its website. That will result in a \$3,200 reduction in the Middle School postage account. Overall, the budget shows a \$3,000 decrease.

Councilor Kotkin asked if there are other changes.

Karen Clancy said that these are all of the changes so far.

Councilor Kotkin said that during the budget hearing, Mr. Kohlhagen mentioned that there was some additional requirement for after school monitoring that the State was pulling back on the requirement for. He asked if that was reflected in the budget.

Karen Clancy said that it was not.

Michael Kohlhagen said that he is prepared to take that \$20,000 reduction.

Councilor Kotkin said that there was a program that the Town took advantage of last summer with interruptible electric service. Is that amount for Town buildings or schools, too?

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that is for the buildings with generators. She said that the High School may be on it. It is a program through Northeast Utilities that during the summer with high heat and humidity the Town can actually have Northeast Utility take a building off line and use the generator back up. This is done on a rotating basis. The Town gets paid for doing that. It only happened once last year.

Fred Bushey said that the High School has a generator that only powers one panel, the boiler and certain heating aspects. The only place that the Board of Education could capture that savings would be in the schools that have chillers and the chillers could be taken off line.

Bonnie Therrien said that it would have to be for an entire building.

Fred Bushey said that larger air conditioning units have been taken off line in the past depending on what is happening in the schools during that day. It usually happens in the afternoon when most of the schools are not being occupied.

Councilor Forrest said that he was looking at usage for natural gas and electricity. He asked if the trend is moving upwards.

Karen Clancy said that building by building, it increases every year for the most part.

Michael Kohlhagen said that a Technology Assessment Report was completed for the Board of Education. He thought that it was important that the Town Council had the report for its discussion with Data Services later in the evening. He also responded to comments made by a resident at a prior meeting. He said that Ms. Clancy would discuss the current budget and how it relates to the proposed budget.

Karen Clancy said that the resident looked at a document that showed expenses through February and then made his own projections for the remainder of the year. For example, his health insurance showed a \$100,000 surplus while the Board of Education's shows a \$400,000 deficit. From the resident's projection of a \$1,000,000 savings, the Town can take \$500,000 out of it. There are so many fluid accounts that the Board of Education will not have any definitive numbers until the end of the year. The resident made assumptions that are not accurate.

Michael Kohlhagen said that the retirement dollars have not been transferred to the Town yet. That account has a small deficit, too.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that Councilor Roberts is familiar with the education budget. She should be briefed on

the difference between what is provided and what is conjecture. He said that the resident's comments need to be challenged publicly and with the correct information. It would be prudent to make a few comments during the Councilor Comment portion of the meeting to dismiss the resident's comments.

Councilor Kotkin said that originally the Board of Education was looking for a \$47,000 decrease in the electricity budget from the current year to the next fiscal year. Now, the Board is saying that it will stay the same. Is staying the same adequate?

Karen Clancy said that it was adequate. For this year, it appears to be on budget through February.

Councilor Kotkin said that it was a mild winter and asked if the Board of Education was on budget for heating for the year.

Karen Clancy said that as of February it seems to be on budget or only slightly over.

Councilor Kotkin said that the Town is looking for no increase in heating and the Board of Education is looking for a 10 percent increase.

Bonnie Therrien said that the Town can't take part in many of the Board of Education regional programs.

Chairperson Adil said that he would like this looked at with the energy consultant to see if it makes any sense to combine some contracts.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that he heard the Superintendent speak about some opportunities for upcoming renovations that include possible grant money. He asked if some of the grants may be available for energy needs today as well.

Michael Kohlhagen said that a group will be at Emerson Williams School this week with vendors to look at the current heating system for recommendations for a total energy efficient system. Grant funding will then be worked on for this project. He is hoping to find immediate funding for the project and use it along with the allotted Capital Improvement money to do the project this summer. He said that he is also working with a contractor for the lighting of Cottone Field for part one of a two phase project. He said that he hopes phase one will be done this summer. He is cautiously optimistic that there will be a plan for the first phase in the next few months and the project could be, with appropriate approvals and private funding, completed over the next several months. The second phase would be tying in of the lights with, post-referendum, the energy programs at Wethersfield High School, including the solar lighting at the High School. He thanked the Town Council for sending the energy consultants to the Board of Education.

Councilor Kotkin said that at the Budget Committee meeting, he received a handout that said \$440,000 for the replacement of the system at Emerson Williams. He asked if the Superintendent would be satisfied with the \$200,000 currently in the budget because he feels grant money will be found.

Michael Kohlhagen said that he continues to hope that the initial boiler project will be fully funded but it being partially funded has forced the Board of Education to look at the opportunity through the expertise of those involved in the referendum to see if there is a potential for grant writing for this need. He said that it is more expensive to purchase more energy efficient units. This will be a boiler upgrade.

INSURANCES

Chris Munroe, Insurance Agent of Record, said that the approach this year is like years past. He said that he starts the renewal process officially in January. Unofficially, he starts working with the Town and Board of Education in October, November and December to get a snapshot of how claims are running and how they will line up for July 1st. He does this to avoid being caught off guard when Anthem gives him the official renewal. Things have not tracked well for the Town of Wethersfield from the claims stand point. It can be traced back to January 2007. Prior to that the Town has had good years in terms of the self-insured plan and how it has run. Typically, the plan has generated manageable renewals, single digit renewals, with year end settlements with margins in place. That all changed in the

early part of 2007. There has been significant claim utilization since then. There has been a real surge in large claims, individual claims over \$50,000. Prior to January 2007, the Town would see 5 or 6 claims a year that ran in excess of \$50,000. For the last two plan years, the Town has seen a jump from 9 to 11 large claims per year. This year, from July through February, there are 15 people who have generated claims in excess of \$50,000. There are a handful of people slightly over the \$50,000 threshold but there are 6 or 7 people over the \$100,000 threshold. These claims have hurt the Town over the past 15 months. The renewal numbers that were first released in the January/February time frame are looked at the various components like fixed cost, stop lose fees, projected claim fees and compare them against what is currently budgeted for the year. It is a 17.5 percent increase. This is a comparison between what Blue Cross is telling the Town to budget versus what the Town budgeted for the current plan year. The current plan year was not the recommended amount from Blue Cross. The decision was made based on a lot of factors on the table to move off of the Blue Cross number by about 5 percent. It has actually worked against the Town. Based upon the latest update, there is some evidence that the increase may be in the realm of 16.5 percent. He said that his recommendation to the Town is to stand on the 17.5 percent. The claim volatility has hurt the Town the most. The Town continues to see volatility. The Town moved off of Blue Cross' number last year and is paying for it. The year to date deficit is the exact amount that the Town pulled off of last year's recommended number.

Chairperson Adil asked if that 17.5 percent was for the Town or Board of Education or both.

Chris Munroe said that he rates it with everyone in the same bucket. He looks at all 700 active employees and 140 retirees and the associated dependents. Everyone goes into the same bucket and he comes up with an aggregate increase and then it is allocated back to the Town and Board of Education.

Councilor Kotkin said that the handout shows, through March, that the Board of Education is at a \$450,000 deficit. How has the Board of Education been able to offset that without coming back to the Town for additional dollars?

Michael Kohlhagen said that the Board of Education has been tracking the health care for the year. There has been a budget freeze since early fall. \$300,000 has been realized from the freeze that the Board of Education is holding for the balance. Additional funds have been set aside through additional freezes to make sure that the Board of Education can cover the deficit. Materials and supplies are not being purchased. Some text books and instructional supplies may fall behind in being purchased.

Councilor Kotkin said that one item that came up with the Insurance Committee is joining a buying coalition for prescription drugs. He said that he doesn't think anything is in this budget but asked what would be the earliest it could be implemented and what could the savings be.

Chris Munroe said that there is a drug coalition that has been out there for a couple of years. The drug firm that is driving it is Merck. Merck works with a lot of traditional insurers but basically are their own prescription drug manager. The consultant who has been helping them with the coalition is Segal. Segal has a number of municipalities that are part of it. Segal came and made a presentation and took the information relative to how the Town is spending its money from a prescription drug standpoint and how claims are tracking and what is being paid in Admins fees and RX rebates. He said that he crunched some numbers and feels the Town and Board of Education would save about \$80,000 to \$100,000 a year, a 1 percent savings. He will continue to explore this but he has to look at whether it will have any disruption for the Town employees. Anthem has its own formula on how they categorize drugs and base the co-pays for members. Anthem prepared a list of 2,500 drugs that represent every drug that a Wethersfield member has used over the last 12 month. He said that he gave that list to Segal and asked how the Anthem formulary matches up with Merck formulary. He said that he hopes to have an answer in another week or two. If it comes back that there will be no impact on the members and limited disruption, then the Town can move forward with strong consideration. It is too soon to do anything for July. Looking to January gives the Town enough time to get the message out to members to say that this will be similar coverage.

Councilor Kotkin asked if this would be subject to union negotiations.

Bonnie Therrien said that if the coverages were exact, she would not have to go through negotiations. If there was a change she would have to. Chris Munroe is meeting with the groups soon with her to discuss the switch over to the

Teacher's Health Insurance Plan so the timing is right.

Chris Munroe said that there are two programs that are being promoted. One is being sponsored by Representative Chris Donovan. His program invites any interested municipality to come into the same plan that is currently being offered to State employees. It is a fully insured program. At a meeting six weeks ago, he received preliminary information about the rate structure and plan design relative to what employees would enjoy as part of the proposal. He said that his concern is how the Town employee benefits match up with State employee benefits in term of the richness of the benefits. The State benefits are richer and there is an estimated increase in benefits of about 20 percent or \$2,000,000. That would be upcoming costs. There would still be legacy costs. The connection with Anthem would continue as claims that are not reported. It would be about \$800,000 in legacy costs that would come through. He does not think he can recommend this plan as a viable option. In State Treasurer Nancy Wyman's plan, the benefits that would be offered are somewhat in line with what the employees have today. There are some differences but nothing dramatic. The concern is that it would be costly to the Town. This plan would be a 6 percent increase or \$515,000, over what the Town is currently paying. There will still be legacy costs, too. It would be about \$1,200,000 to roll into the plan. The other thing that is a concern is that it is not simple to say that on this date and time the Town is rolling all 700 people over to the plan. The collective bargaining process doesn't go away. The unions would have to agree to move over. The hope for switching programs was to see a dramatic change and that is not the case. This plan is not a fully insured plan. It is self-insured on the backend. These are the rates for next year, it can fluctuate each year.

Greg Bedula, Casualty & Property, said that he handles the worker's compensation and the liability, automobile, and property insurances (LAP). It includes the Police, public officials and the umbrella coverages. The Town has had a tough year from a claims standpoint with the fire at the Keeney Center. It is coming in at about \$600,000. There is a fairly substantial reserve on the Police professional side. Unfortunately, it has not been good on the worker's compensation side either. There have been some worker's compensation issues on the Board of Education side for the past couple of years. There has not been any pattern or real frequency of claims. There are just a couple of claims each year. In terms of raw numbers, on the LAP side the total premium last year was \$525,000 and the losses were \$725,000. The loss ratio is 95 percent, 60 percent is breakeven. There are two scenarios that are being looked at now: a pure rate increase of 6 percent and then the exposure base increase on top of that which will bring the LAP policy to \$568,000. The other option is to increase the property insurance deductible from the current \$5,000 to \$10,000 and that will keep the rate increase to only 4 percent. It would save about \$10,500. The premium would then be \$558,000. The thing to think about is how many property claims the Town will have. If it has two, it breaks even and only one the Town makes money on it. If it is looked at historically, it would make sense to increase the premium. There is not a frequency of property loss but a severity. His concern is that it is easy to have a series of vandalism losses or Town vehicle claims.

Councilor Hemmann asked if this included the Town vehicles as well, not just the buildings.

Greg Bedula said yes. He said on workers' compensation, he began working in March on the numbers. The Town has come in very close with these numbers as well. As far as the pricing, CIRMA has two coverage parts to the policy: one for the Board of Education and one for General Government. The Board of Education side has been unprofitable over the last few years. General Government pays in more money because it has more hazardous class codes for Police, Maintenance and Parks and Recreation. CIRMA is bringing in a 7 percent rate increase on the Board of Education side and a flat rate on the General Government side. He just needs to adjust for the exposure bases. The expiring workers' compensation premium on the General Government side is \$251,000 and the exposure based increase is \$262,000 that is purely a payroll increase. On the Board of Education side, the expiring premium is \$181,000 and it will be coming in at \$203,000. It is a 5 percent exposure increase and 7 percent rate increase.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the Town side was budgeted at that amount.

Lisa Hancock said that it was.

Stacy Hodges, Chairperson of the Board of Education, asked if that experience of good and bad years was experienced by both the Town and Board of Education sides in the past.

Greg Bedula said that the loss ratio of about 60 percent is profitable. This current year, the Board of Education is going

to be about 85 percent. Last year, it was 253 percent and the year before it was 73 percent.

Councilor Forrest asked if there was any risk management that the Town could put in place to break this pattern.

Greg Bedula said that there has been a steady loss control presence by CIRMA. It is to their benefit, as well as the Town to break this pattern. CIRMA does have a new initiative that he has reviewed with the Insurance Committee that would make a more scheduled effort to work with the Town in general, not just with the losses.

Bonnie Therrien said that there is a Safety Committee made up of employees from the unions and the Board of Education that meet on a quarterly basis with a representative from CIRMA. She said that she reviews all of the incidents that have occurred during that quarter. The CIRMA representative, along with the Committee members, works to figure out how to avoid similar incident from happening. A Risk Manager would be wonderful, but the Town can't afford one.

Councilor Forrest asked if these incidents fall into category areas.

Greg Bedula said that they are pretty widespread. One example is that the Committee did pick up on a problem on the general liability side with slips and falls on Town sidewalks with the elderly. A lot of work was done by the Town to address that with its sidewalks. These incidents have dropped off.

Councilor Hemmann asked if the Board of Education budgets for the workers' compensation or does the Town allocate the money.

Lisa Hancock said that the Town has its own and the Board of Education its own.

Karen Clancy said that it was budgeted along with an audit for \$20,000.

Karen Baldwin said that CIRMA offers programs for slips, trips, and falls that have been used in the schools.

Bonnie Therrien said that they offer defensive driving with Police and Physical Services, too.

Councilor Roberts said that she has sat through a lot of budgets and feels that there has been a real difference this year. She thanked Mr. Kohlhagen for his proactive leadership as well as his staff. She said that she thinks he has a real handle on the budget and was impressed that he personally reviewed all purchase orders. He has managed the Board well and has worked towards better collaboration.

Chairperson Adil said that he echoes Councilor Robert's sentiments. It is obvious that the Superintendent worked hard to fine tune this budget. He said that the Town Council will do its best not to disappoint him. The Town Council is looking carefully at the entire budget picture. He thanked the Board of Education and Superintendent for their attendance at the meeting.

DATA SERVICES

Paul Dudley, Data Services Coordinator, said that he would like to relate the budget to the more general components of what the Division does. The mission statement addresses the service component of the Division. The Division develops and supports technology to make people productive in their work. The measure of the Division's success is how productive the people who use the technology are. He gave a list of major environments or platforms the Divisions supports. The only item on the list that will be going away is the oldest system. Everything else will be with the Town. New programs bring in further demands for support and intervention. The bottom of the page shows the current census of users, PC's and servers and the staff that supports them. In conjunction with discussions with the Technology Committee and Mr. Colcolugh of the Board of Education, he has been trying to systematize what he does and standardize equipment in an effort to make things more manageable and efficient. In the PC fleet, there are standards that are being established as benchmarks. For hardware specifications, he would like all PC's to be able to run Office 2007. Only about 75 percent of the PC's are able to do that now. Dell is the Town's PC provider. The Town is able to get consistent configurations with Dell and they are easy to work with. He would like to introduce more

network printers. The operating system, of which almost all are on XP, is about to break as the Town moves into Vista. There are a mix of releases of Office in use now. Historically, PC purchasing has been an initiative of Departments. There is no uniformity in the PC fleet. The Division is trying to establish consistency and uniformity by centralized purchases. This year there was a request for 19 PC's, the Town Manager reduced it to 10. Under procedures, the Department is trying to develop some consistency in how it does things. Imaging software is one example. The impact to the proposed budget, as far as meeting the needs of the Department and the user community, the strengths are that it does sustain the current staffing, covers the existing maintenance contracts and licenses, makes improvements to equipment for the backup services, and routine operating costs are adequately covered by the Town Manager's budget. The weaknesses are that it has a considerable cut in the PC replacement, it eliminated the Office 2007 upgrade, and it doesn't address the need for additional staffing. The PC replacements were to phase out the oldest PCs as seen on the PC matrix handout. The replacements would be for machines older than three years old. If the Town projects that pace of replacement, the Town is on a ten year replacement cycle. This reduction may work for one year but it will not work moving forward because the Town will continue to fall behind the curve. Currently, the Town PC's are using everything from Office 97 to Office 2007. The requested budget included updates to Office 2007 for 48 existing machines. That has been entirely eliminated. The implementation of Office 2007 will have to be an incremental one. The benefit of doing it across the board, all at once, is that users don't have to deal with problems exchanging documents. It is also easier to support. The staffing request, the need for staff has been with the Town forever. The technology continues to grow.

Bonnie Therrien said that this has been her number one priority this year and last year. This Department is desperate for help.

Paul Dudley said that it is difficult to quantify but he can see the effects of not having enough people and the effects of increased demand for services. There is not as much follow through and requests for assistance are not always timely. He is also running into conflicts with high priority projects and deferring less critical projects. The framework for the budget is that the Town is in a reactive mode this year. If that kind of constraint is applied to and discriminately to the operation, it will do some long term damage. The proposed budget is a working standstill, maintenance budget. When the Town stands still in this type of business, it is really slipping backwards. Technology has to be kept up to date along with services.

Bonnie Therrien said that the Town did try to combine services with the Board of Education but what was tried didn't work for the Town. There still is a way to combine the IT services. Part of the recommendation is to look at the whole thing but that additional body would still be needed to make it work. The way that was done with a 75/25 percent split just wasn't working. She did take it out of next year's budget.

Councilor Forrest said that he remembers the Town put in some new servers from the Capital Accounts, in the hopes that it would lower some calls because the equipment was better. Was that accurate with the purchases?

Paul Dudley said that the network upgrade will be what makes this a sound network because it has the capacity to carry the volume of traffic that the Town has and run it intelligent. He said that he is looking forward to getting it in. The renovations have kept things in flux and so it has not been purchased yet.

Councilor Forrest asked what is the cost to add 5 computers back into the budget.

Bonnie Therrien said that it was \$ 9,722.

Councilor Hemmann asked what the issues would be with Vista and XP.

Paul Dudley said that the Town should not rush out and implement it right away. He said that there is licensing that allows the Town to buy the new release and retrofit the old one. It can be done easily with the imaging. One of the old machines can be configured and then it can be sent to the others.

Councilor Hemmann asked how he tracks requests for service currently.

Paul Dudley said that he does not have a formal way of doing that. It is something that he has avoided because he does

not want to create an additional layer of overhead to delivering the service. He simple does what has to be done.

Councilor Hemmann said that she suggests using Quickbase. If the Town has one or two licenses it can still be released out to respondents on the internet so that if someone needs to make a request, he can make a format and then they can send it and it can be tracked. It is simple for the person filling out the request. It is a Microsoft program.

Lisa Hancock said that the Town is talking with the Board of Education about their software that is used for tracking.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the Town ever gets any donations from large corporations.

Bonnie Therrien said that the Library did for some of its public computers. She said that it may be more trouble to maintain. She said that the Town is trying to get all its computers to conform.

Paul Dudley said that he tries to stay away from those donations and he keep's the Town on a replacement schedule to remove older machines.

Councilor Roberts asked if he had to choose between getting all the replacement computers and putting everyone on Office 2007 or adding a position in the Department, how would he rate the item.

Paul Dudley said that he would put Office 2007 last. The other two things are more survival oriented. He would put the position at the top. That would make a difference right away. He would hate to fall behind in the replacement, but it could possibly be recouped in the following year.

Bonnie Therrien said that a part-time position could be made or the position could be filled later in the year.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that these things may work but it depends on the kinds of service the Division needs that individual to perform.

Paul Dudley said that the ideal thing would be to start someone off with the least common denominator areas like troubleshooting printers and PC issues. The higher one goes on the systems, the more specialization that is needed. Ideally, he would like to bring someone in on the generic level and bring them up to the more complex parts of the environment.

Councilor Hemmann asked if there is a job description in place for an Information Specialist.

Lisa Hancock said that there is a draft version of it developed.

Paul Dudley said that there is one on the books, but he doesn't know how up-to-date it is.

Brian Clement, Chairperson of the Information and Technology Committee, said that a lot of good things have happened over the past few years as far as technology. It is important to continue on that path. The basic need things that are being removed from the budget discourages him greatly. The deletion of some PC's from 19 to 10 does not seem like a lot but PC's on desktops equates to efficiency within a business environment. If employees don't have the tools to do the job the business flounders. It is critically important to have the hardware and software. It will save money in the long term because the IT staff doesn't have to spend as much time running around fixing little problems. If everyone is on the same platform, training costs are less, too. Roughly 25 percent of the 95 computers are greater than 5 years old. The Town talks about upgrading to different operating systems like Vista, a big memory hog with machines that are four, five, six years old, it will fail. There needs to be reasonable hardware with a cycle plan in order to maintain the systems. He said that he would like to see these costs reinstated. The Town will benefit from them.

Chairperson Adil asked how he would prioritize the items that could be replaced in the budget.

Brian Clement said that he doesn't know that he is in a position to answer the question. He would like to talk to the Data Services staff and Town Manager to see what they hope to accomplish with the position. That is a really tough choice. It is hard to say no to an additional set of hands to help but could many of the support related issues go away

with a fleet of desktops with the appropriate software on them. What does the Town want to accomplish? He said that this budget is going to put the Town further behind in its technology.

Councilor Kotkin said that the age of the computers is substandard. He said that he doesn't know that he can support a full time position.

Councilor Roberts said that based on what Brian said, by purchasing new equipment, some of these service issues will go down.

Paul Dudley said that a large part of the support activity that the Division has that tied to a PC or printer, has to do with a software environment that a person uses. To be effective with those environments one must master it and provide vertical dimension support. It requires more of an immersion in things than a first level support position would.

Councilor Roberts asked if the server would be paid for out of this year's budget.

Bonnie Therrien said that it would.

RaeAnn Palmer discussed the Geographic Information System (GIS) survey. She said that a needs assessment was done to look at where the Town was using GIS as opposed to where it could be used to enhance business. Two former GIS experts came in to do the survey and analysis for the Town. At a preliminary meeting today, they determined that the Town should move to an ESR platform, as opposed to the map info platform and develop a user base through training. As the Town goes along, all the data that is collected on an individual property in Town could be put into this system for a centralized place for the sharing of data. The first assessment would be for about \$15,000 in software to get all of the Departments up and running on the software and an additional \$5,000 for training. The Town would not need to rebuild the data base but would start with the MDC data base. At least five or six people would have to be trained on the software. The Town's GIS person would be trained on how to create the databases. Someone in Engineering would be trained to convert all of the paper maps to electronic maps.

Councilor Kotkin asked how much time, when the renovations are done, and MUNIS is up and running, will be freed up.

Bonnie Therrien said that there are always other projects beginning. The renovations have definitely taken a lot of Paul Dudley's time.

Lisa Hancock said that there will still be things for Data Services to do with MUNIS.

Paul Dudley said that it will relieve him from doing all the cyclical business and end of the year work. His work now will be more troubleshooting.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Lisa Hancock said that the revenues will come in at 100 percent, tax collection is up, the interest on investments is drastically reduced so there will be about \$900,000 to end the year. On the expenditure side, she is estimating a possible savings of \$257,000. Part of that has to do with Police private duty which there hasn't been as much of this year. It is dependent on the revenue coming in to support it. So there is a savings, but the revenue to support it is also not there. It will not all be available to use.

Councilor Kotkin asked what page she was on.

Lisa Hancock said that she was giving an overview, but some of the information is on page 3.

Chairperson Adil asked for some information about the retiree benefits.

Councilor Kotkin said that he had asked if the Town could bill for future retirement benefits when it billed for police overtime.

Lisa Hancock said that she didn't think so.

Bonnie Therrien said that maybe the Town should look at how it bills for private duty in general. She will look at it.

Lisa Hancock said that as of right now, \$257,000 will be added to the Fund Balance at the end of the year. The Undesignated Fund Balance began the year at \$6,686,000. The Town is still estimating to be around the 8.5 percent Fund Balance for the current year.

Councilor Kotkin said that on page 3 of the Expenditure Analysis, it said that the Town anticipates a savings of \$257,000. He asked if that was from under spending the budget.

Lisa Hancock said yes.

Councilor Kotkin asked if that anticipates the Library turning back \$60,000.

Lisa Hancock said yes.

Councilor Kotkin asked how much would be added for the over collected revenues.

Lisa Hancock said that it is not certain that there will be an over collection of revenues. There are also some shortfalls as well.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri asked if these numbers are through the end of March.

Lisa Hancock said that they were. The investment income for March was \$45,000. Last year, in the month of March, the Town collected \$139,000.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri asked what the shortfall projection was.

Lisa Hancock said that the shortfall will be about \$230,000.

Councilor Kotkin said that property collection is up by about \$500,000 but interest will be down by \$200,000.

Lisa Hancock said that interest is down and the ECS grant is down, too.

Bonnie Therrien said that the conveyance tax was not passed but the State is talking about a special session. Also, there are recommendations that the Town use only half of the CRRA money in case a judge orders a payback.

There was a discussion on page 4, as to whether the Town Council budget could be cut.

On page 11, the Town Attorney budget was discussed.

Bonnie Therrien said that there will be a primary in August. The money is not in the budget for this primary. Money is in there for a separate referendum if needed.

Councilor Forrest moved **"BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO ADD \$13,000 TO THE REGISTRAR OF VOTERS BUDGET FOR A REFERENDUM IN AUGUST (ACCOUNT T 1150-52225)"** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilors Console and Hemmann voted Nay. The motion passed 6-2-0.

Councilor Kotkin moved **"BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO REDUCE ACCOUNT**

T1060-5001 TOWN TREASURER SALARIES AND WAGES BY \$1,800" seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Bonnie Therrien said that this was a request by the Treasurer for a salary increase for himself and the deputy.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Roberts said that the Town Manager talks about how bad the situation was before with the computers and the Data Services Division. She said that she would like to get the 19 computers and Office 2007. Next year, the Town Council can assess whether a position is needed when the Town has some experience with MUNIS and the new server. In a huge budget, to add 9 computers will create more productivity and less calls for service.

Councilor Roberts moved **"BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO ADD \$17,500 FOR NINE COMPUTERS AND \$21,600 FOR OFFICE 2007 UPGRADES TO ACCOUNT T1062-5412 - IT EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE"** seconded by Councilor Hemmann.

Councilor Cascio said that when asked the question, the Data Services Director said that he would rather have the hands.

Councilor Roberts said that she was not convinced that the hands are what are needed. Once MUNIS is running, ADMINS is gone, the new server purchased and the equipment is updated, so the impact will be different.

Councilor Hemmann said that there was really a nebulous answer when she asked about the job description. He articulated the need for the PC's and all computers on the same platform.

Bonnie Therrien suggested moving ahead, while the Data Services Director could be reached for his comments.

On page 38, Tax Collection, the Town Council discussed the addition of a part time position.

On page 48, Central Office, the Town Council discussed the increase in postage.

On page 52, General Office Supplies, Councilor Hemmann said that this is an area for consolidating services with the Board of Education.

Lisa Hancock said that the paper is bid out with the Board of Education together for an economy of scales. Some office supplies are done that way, too. Only one bid is done.

Councilor Hemmann said that she would like to see the entire business office consolidated. She has been talking about this for a long time.

RaeAnn Palmer said that there was a discrepancy between budgeted numbers because Office 2007 was not included in the purchase price of the computers. The price of the computers increases, but the cost for the Office 2007 decreases, because it is included in the new computer purchases.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

On page 54, Town Wide Radio System, the Town Council had a discussion on terminating the professional services contract. The Town Attorney said that it could be done.

RaeAnn Palmer said that \$10,000 needs to be kept in place, in case the Town needs a real technical frequency study done.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **"BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: THAT THE TOWN WIDE RADIO SYSTEM PROFESSIONAL SERVICES ACCOUNT T1068-5220 BE REDUCED BY \$25,000"** seconded by Councilor Cascio.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

On page 64, Planning Councilor Kotkin said that he is having trouble matching up this year's request from last year for the Economic Development Improvement Commission (EDIC).

RaeAnn Palmer said that there was \$73,789 for Economic Development last year and Planning was \$256,924 last year. Now they have been combined. The original budget for 2008 is \$275,916.

Councilor Kotkin said that Keiler is a firm that big companies hire. His experience with them is that it is an expensive agency. If there are specific items like e-marketing that is one thing, but to pay for story placement in a publication is very hit or miss and difficult to connect a specific story with an increase in tourism. He asked if other Councilors were in support of this expense. He said that this is a lot of money to spend on a high powered agency on a small targeted group.

Councilor Console said that he agrees that this is a lot of money and would be in favor of cutting it out of the budget.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that Keiler was part of the bid process for marketing. They came in at about 1/3 of the cost. It is on a project basis or an hourly basis, depending on the scope of the project. They are actually working on a fraction of their normal cost. They did provide their comparable fees for doing like work. The Globe article was done at about 25 percent of the cost. The interest in working with the Town is based on the historic significance of what the Town is doing. He said that having seen them in action, he believes the Town is getting a remarkable amount of service for the money being spent. In a broad sense, Economic Development and Tourism work on a shoe string budget. It is slightly up, with most of the increases in matching grant proposals. He would urge that the Town not cut this. He said he was actually going to ask for an increase for some of the requests of the Tourism Commission for magazine and brochures for the visitors' bureau. He said that he concurs that the Town Council needs a way to identify a plan of action to provide quantifiable ways to measure the impact of this advertising including accounts and retail numbers to see if there is a relationship. There needs to be a better link to measure what these impacts are. If you take out the Planning salaries, this is a very small budget for what the Department is doing. He said that it is important to the Town to stay on the screen. He urges the Town Council to not cut from this budget.

Councilor Forrest asked if there is anything quantifiable for the \$14,000.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that the two people working with the Town will come in and give the Town alternatives. They will work with the money that the Town gives them. They will tell the Town what it can get for the money and the Town will prioritize it. He said that the Town Planner is also using this line item to foster business development, too. It is hard to measure these items.

Councilor Forrest asked what is the return on the \$14,000 for the Town's businesses and taxpayers.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that Keiler is going to meet with the EDIC subcommittee for communications and marketing and give the Town a list of projects that it can do for the allotted money. He said that the original budget request was for \$33,000 for tourism advertisements. The Town Manager gave them \$8,000 that is shared with EDIC. Charles Forsdick's letter shows that three of the advertisements that the Commission really needs are the Greater Hartford Visitors Guide, the Greater Hartford Hotel Guide, and Journey's AAA. These three are the most critical three publications. The \$33,000 represents the original \$16,000 plus two additional publications. After the Town Manager's line item recommendation, they went back and said that they realize they can't get the two new ones but the original \$16,000 is needed for the three publications. The EDIC requested the \$8,000 be put back and is returning money this year through a grant. It is a relative match. He would encourage the Town Council to replace the original \$8,000.

Councilor Kotkin said that he appreciates the comments. He said that he has directed firms like Keiler in the past and feels that one is most effective when they are direct on a specific campaign or project. He said that it was difficult for him to see what they considered successful. He said that he doesn't want to pull the rug out from under the program, but he can't grasp results or how the Town will measure results.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that the presentation that he was at was weaker than Keiler's actual work. The people who are doing the hands on work for Tourism and Economic Development were not at the meeting. There is a lot of work going in to initiatives that are yielding results. He said that he thinks the grant that Senator Fonfara put money towards the horse and buggies, because he recognizes that the Town needs some help. There are excellent people working on the Tourism Commission and EDIC that were not at that meeting. The accountability request is completely reasonable and that he would be very surprised if that request was not met within the next six months.

Councilor Kotkin said that based on the Deputy Mayor's comments, he will not make a motion to change the budget up or down.

RaeAnn Palmer said that the Marketing Study Grant that the Town received from Tourism is to develop a very strategy specific plan. It would create very specific marketing plans that the Town is looking for.

Councilor Cascio said that without the proper accounting tools, then what you work for to get to a level can be put down. Why did the Town Manager remove that amount from their budget, knowing how tight the budget is? Is this a program that can take a year off given the economy?

Bonnie Therrien said that there are no numbers in next year's budget because there is no way to measure it.

Councilor Cascio said that he knows that the Town needs to get its name out there, but in today's climate, the number of convention goers is down. If that is what the Town is looking for, for convention goers to come into Town, then he thinks that is the wrong vehicle for the Town to go with. His concern is where the money is being spent for advertising. In his line of business, when he does event planning, the numbers are down.

Bonnie Therrien said that with the increase in gas prices, people may stay in the State this year and advertising may help. There has to be a way to measure its success.

Councilor Cascio said that he is hopeful that the Deputy Mayor will work with the group to make that happen.

Bonnie Therrien said that the Town Council can approve the money and say that it wants to see a plan in place.

Councilor Cascio said that he doesn't want to see something cease, but wants to see it measured.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that he would like to suggest that any expenditure in the advertising or marketing area needs to have a litmus test before it is approved. It is reasonable. The Historic District Brochure that goes into hotels and rest stops works and it is the biggest single expense of the total budget. The other items are more let's try and see if there are any results. He said that he would be willing to tell the group, as its liaison, that the Town Council wants feedback before those expenditures are pulled.

Councilor Cascio asked that the Town Manager ask if other communities have been down this road, at the next Capital Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) meeting.

Bonnie Therrien said that the way to go for economic development and tourism is really websites and not the print stuff.

Councilor Cascio said that he applauds the efforts of the members of these committees. He said that the Town is going green and asked how that affected the brochures.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that the Committee has not changed the brochure, so that the template can be used and the brochures from one year to the next can be used.

Councilor Console said that while he is opposed to it, he will pass on making a motion.

Councilor Roberts said that she would like to come back to this after other cuts are made and the Town Council knows where it stands. She said that this may be the year when people stay in the State and that the Journey's AAA magazine

may be useful.

Bonnie Therrien said that the next budget to look at is the Wethersfield Public Schools on page 74.

Councilor Roberts asked if the Board of Education has come in with a number that can be cut.

Councilor Kotkin said that he would like to make a motion and wants to know if it should be to the Department's Request or the Town Manager.

Lisa Hancock said that the Department Request is what the Superintendent proposed.

Councilor Kotkin said that the letter from the Board of Education Chairperson stated the final Board Budget number as \$44,337,633.

Councilor Kotkin moved **"BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO REDUCE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET OF \$48,337,633 BY \$120,000"** seconded by Deputy Mayor Montinieri.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that this is a cut that the Board of Education is offering to make.

Chairperson Adil said that is correct. He received that number from the Chairperson of the Board of Education.

Councilor Kotkin said that some small items were mentioned tonight. He said that last year he wanted to be more aggressive with the Board of Education budget. It turns out that the Town Council shouldn't have made any cuts because the Board of Education got hit hard with insurance costs last year. He said that the Board of Education is \$400,000 in the hole this year because of the insurance, but have found a way to piece it together so that the Board of Education did not have to come back to the Town for contingency dollars. He said that he remains concerned with health insurance costs. The teachers are paying every year a larger portion of their overall healthcare bills. This healthcare issue is really bedeviling the Town. He said that he is not comfortable going above the \$120,000. He said that personally he is glad that the Board of Education is adding a guidance position at the high school as well as another history teacher. He said that these are very limited initiatives.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that historically there has been a perception that the Board of Education has wiggle room. He said that he hasn't seen that tone since he has been involved. He said that the Board of Education has done a much better job getting to a real number and not leaving wiggle room.

Councilor Console said that he is very disturbed by the increase to this budget.

Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilor Console and Hemmann abstained. The motion passed 6-0-2.

Councilor Forrest asked about the request for a part-time juvenile officer.

Bonnie Therrien said that she would like to see what the impact really will be for a new part-time juvenile officer. A new law may be passed but it doesn't take effect until 2010. All of the Towns are going to go to their legislators about the cost for this position.

Councilor Roberts asked about the overtime budget. How much is this year's budget over?

RaeAnn Palmer said that this budget has an almost \$200,000 savings this year in general. Even though the budget used a lot of overtime in the beginning of the year, now that the Chief has his full staffing back, this should be the right number.

Councilor Roberts said that she thought that the Chief had mentioned a 3.4 percent salary increase that was not in the overtime budget.

RaeAnn Palmer said that the overtime this year was built on the assumption that the Department did not have its full staffing levels. Now it has its full contingent of staff and should use less of the overtime.

Bonnie Therrien said that if the Town Council wanted to add anything to this budget, it could add money for the computers, laptops, and cameras.

Councilor Forrest said there may be a savings with lawsuits with the cameras on the cruisers.

Bonnie Therrien said that from a liability standpoint that would be great.

Councilor Kotkin asked about the Town Manager's cut to the Standby for Storms account for the Fire Department.

Bonnie Therrien said that it can be made up if need. This year, they only did it once.

Councilor Roberts asked about the difference between the Department request's and the Town Manager's request.

Bonnie Therrien said that it was for a raise of 3.5 percent for everyone.

Chairperson Adil asked if anyone had anything for Emergency Management Services (EMS). Street Lights?

Bonnie Therrien said that the Street Lights account has been moved to another account.

Councilor Console asked what the Historic District Coordinator increase was from.

Bonnie Therrien said that they were looking for additional hours for the position.

Councilor Console said that he would be in favor of that increase. The person in that position is spread really thin.

Bonnie Therrien said that it is an extra \$5,000.

Councilor Console asked if the floater was being used here.

Bonnie Therrien said that the floater position is in her budget. The floater is working in the Building department now.

Councilor Hemmann said that the priority in that Department was for the Property Maintenance Inspector.

Bonnie Therrien said that it would be an increase of \$4,841.

Councilor Kotkin said that it doesn't seem like there is any big construction occurring in Town. Do they really need the hours?

Bonnie Therrien said that this time of year, the permits are crazy and that is why the floater is helping out. The inspections are getting delayed because the inspectors are helping with property maintenance.

Councilor Kotkin said that if the work is more seasonal can the maintenance inspector hours be adjusted to more this time of year and less in the winter.

Lisa Hancock said that the increase would only increase the worker's compensation. There are no fringe benefits.

Councilor Kotkin moved "**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO ADD \$2,421 TO ACCOUNT T1530-5001 FOR ADDITIONAL HOURS FOR SIX MONTHS OF THE YEAR FOR THE PROPERTY MAINTENANCE INSPECTOR**" seconded by Councilor Forrest.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Bonnie Therrien said that page 139 is the Street Light budget.

Councilor Kotkin left the room due to his full time employment with Northeast Utilities.

RaeAnn Palmer said that based on the numbers that she received from Northeast Utilities and confirming them based on what was paid this year, she said that the budget could be cut by \$50,000. The Town pays about \$32,000 a month, multiplied by 12 months and adding 10 percent, the budget can be cut without shutting off any street lights.

Chairperson Adil said that some streets have a lot of lights on them. Is there a study that can be done to see if all of the lights are needed?

Councilor Hemmann said that the lights have to be removed from the poles.

Chairperson Adil said that he heard that the lights can be turned off for a year to see what the impact would be and then they would decide.

Bonnie Therrien said that she will see if the Town can have all of the lights looked at. Some areas of Town have lights very close together.

Councilor Roberts moved **"BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO REDUCE THE STREET LIGHTS ACCOUNT - T1542544-5254 BY \$50,000"** seconded by Councilor Cascio.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Kotkin returned.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri asked for the line item for janitorial and cleaning supplies for Town Hall, does that number reflect that Town Hall is not really open and is combined with the Library.

Bonnie Therrien said that there is one person who cleans. It hasn't changed.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that the Library Board has shown decreases in these accounts.

Bonnie Therrien said that the Library will not have a janitor until it opens back up.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri asked if the Physical Services Division has discussed any cuts for sand and salt.

Councilor Cascio asked if the Town Manager saw a difference with overtime and the increase of \$10,000 with Town property.

Bonnie Therrien said that she did not receive the complaints that she had received before.

Councilor Cascio said that he would like this revisited. This is looking at avoiding instituting another staff person.

Councilor Cascio moved **"BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO REINSTATE THE \$10,000 FOR LAWN CARE OVERTIME TO ACCOUNT T1550-5002"** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Councilor Forrest asked for more information about this position.

Chairperson Adil said that this was dollars that were added last year to do the stuff that wasn't getting done. It was removed this year.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Forrest moved **"BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO REMOVE MOSQUITO & LARVACIDE (\$12,680) AND MOSQUITO SPRAYING (\$12,860) IN ITS ENTIRE AMOUNT FROM ACCOUNT T1550514-5335"** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Chairperson Adil asked why Councilor Forrest wanted to remove this.

Councilor Forrest said that it has very little effect on the mosquito population in Wethersfield.

Councilor Hemmann said that the health issues that mosquitoes carry are significant. There are a lot of stagnant areas in Town. As a nurse, she is opposed to this motion. The spraying keeps the population down.

RaeAnn Palmer said that the Town could get the tablets from the DEP to put in the storm drains. If the Town tests and has bad mosquitoes, the DEP will come in and spray.

Councilor Cascio asked why the DEP was getting involved now.

Bonnie Therrien said that the DEP has always provided the tablets.

RaeAnn Palmer said that the chemicals that the Town purchases are stronger.

Councilor Cascio asked if the Town would spot spray areas.

Bonnie Therrien said that the \$12,860 mosquito spraying throughout June is for one spraying of the Old Wethersfield area prior to the graduation ceremony.

Councilor Kotkin said that he would be willing to support the removal of the mosquito & larvacide line item, but keep the mosquito spraying throughout June line item in the budget.

Councilor Hemmann said that the Health District recommends this spraying.

Bonnie Therrien said that the mosquito and larvacide line item pays for spraying of all standing waters in the whole Town. The second item, mosquito spraying throughout June, is for Old Wethersfield and some other key spots.

Councilor Roberts asked why the spraying was done in June.

Councilor Hemmann said that May is so wet and then they all hatch in June.

Councilors Forrest and Roberts voted AYE. Councilors Cascio, Console, Hemmann, Kotkin, Deputy Mayor Montinieri and Chairperson Adil voted NAY. The motion failed 2-6-0.

Councilor Forrest moved **"BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO GIVE THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS \$12,500 TO USE AS HE SEES FIT FOR MOSQUITO AND LARVACIDE SPRAYING IN THE MOST NEEDED AREAS"** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Councilors Forrest, Kotkin, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Montinieri, and Chairperson Adil voted AYE. Councilors Cascio, Console, and Hemmann voted NAY. The motion passed 5-3-0.

Lisa Hancock asked for a clarification.

Bonnie Therrien said that the two line items should be combined and the total amount reduced to \$12,500.

Councilor Kotkin moved **"BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO ELIMINATE ACCOUNT T1550542-5410 CLEAN ENERGY PROGRAM FUND"** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

Councilor Kotkin said that this was funded by Council this year.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that on page 149, the street sweeper has been reduced. He was thinking that the Town would get a larger reduction because the catch basins were kept cleaner. Why wasn't there a larger drop in the cost of cleaning the catch basins since the Town has switched to salt.

RaeAnn Palmer said that the Assistant Director of Physical Services said that the Town needs a year of cleaning before seeing how the budget is affected.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that he is posing the question, but doesn't have enough information to make a motion. He would like an answer to the questions from the Physical Services' staff.

Councilor Cascio said that there was some discussion regarding some idea of how the Town can help out with the budget of leaf collection. One option is to have an assessment on each house of \$22 for leaf collection.

Bonnie Therrien said that her biggest concern is what happens if someone doesn't pay the assessment.

Councilor Cascio said that the Town needs to start making a check list of what the Town is responsible for doing in its core services and compare it to some other Towns. Unlike the Parks and Recreation Department that is self sustaining, leaf pickup is an idea that got carried away. It costs close to \$220,000 and was suppose to be something to just help the community. Anything that is above and beyond the Town's responsibility, the Town needs to work on those services. It should be a goal of the Town Council. Also, he said that the Town caters to its citizens and is a full menu Town for its citizens. He said that he doesn't know why there can't be a central location for residents to drop off their Christmas trees.

RaeAnn Palmer said that the cost for Christmas tree pick up is about \$20,000 a year in labor. The money couldn't be cut from the budget, but the employees could be used elsewhere.

Chairperson Adil said that the employees can be redirected.

Councilor Cascio said that it would be a better use of manpower.

Councilor Kotkin said that it would not affect the budget. The Town Council should look at the policy.

Chairperson Adil said that the Town Council will do a core services evaluation in June and this can be added to it. He said that if the Town went to one leaf pick up, the savings would be about \$50,000.

RaeAnn Palmer said that the cost to run the program is \$216,000. For one pick up, it would be about \$162,000.

Councilor Cascio said that the Town needs to educate the residents. If the Town Council makes the decision now, residents may end up putting the leaves in the garbage and increase the tipping fees. The Town needs to have a plan.

Councilor Roberts said that it will be like the grass clippings.

Bonnie Therrien said that if the Town does one pick up, it will have to time it perfectly, after leaves have fallen but before the snow falls.

Councilor Cascio said that the services need to be examined and a core list of programs established.

Councilor Kotkin moved "**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO ADD \$23,180 TO DIAL-A-RIDE - ACCOUNT T1625-5220-6621 FOR A TOTAL OF \$229,000**" seconded by Deputy Mayor Montinieri.

Councilor Hemmann asked if that reflects the increase in fees.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that the revenue side also needs to be adjusted.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that the Library Board has given the Town Manager an updated budget that reflects a later startup date for the move. They are assuming within that amount the money they are saving from this year, but they are going to accommodate the Town Manager's budget and add positions in a staggered fashion.

Bonnie Therrien said that the Library Board also asked for an additional \$50,000.

Councilor Kotkin said that when the Finance Director said that with the under expended money from this year, \$60,000 was from the Library.

Councilor Kotkin moved **"BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO ADD \$50,000 TO THE LIBRARY FOR A TOTAL BUDGET OF \$1,754,585"** seconded by Councilor Cascio.

Councilor Kotkin said that later, he will ask that the same \$50,000 be taken from the fund balance for this purpose so that it will be a wash in the budget. He said that he can't tell the Library Board how to spend the money, but he would hope that it would fund some of the children's room staff.

Councilor Cascio said that his comments should be noted by the Library Board.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that the Library may not need the money now that the delay was noted. He said that he wondered if the Library Board could get accomplished what it wants without the addition.

Councilor Kotkin said that the delay isn't totally defined.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that he thinks that he and Councilor Cascio need to talk to the Library Board before taking a vote on it.

Councilor Roberts said that her only concern, is that the Town Council will be giving the Library everything it wants. It is not doing this with Physical Services, the Police Department or Fire Department. The Town Manager makes recommendations for the Town Council.

Councilor Cascio said that his concern is whether or not there will be enough money for the staffing once the Library is open.

Chairperson Adil asked why there was so much security for the children's area.

Bonnie Therrien said that there are different rooms and corners downstairs that need monitoring.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that in absence of a discussion with the Library Board, he would like to hold off on this vote and use the Town Manager's budget. He said that he is leaning towards thinking that the Town Council does not need to give the Library Board this entire amount.

Bonnie Therrien said that once everything is up and running, the Town Council can allocate money from the Contingency account.

Councilor Cascio said that he thinks what the Library Board is trying to do is be up and running and fully funded by March 1st. He asked if the Library Board could come back to the Town Council for staffing requests.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that this change that they are proposing will create a huge jump this year. This thing is being concealed because it is a partial year. Once the Town hires these people and ramps up programs, next year the

Town Council will be talking about cutting people. That will be a lot more painful.

Bonnie Therrien said that the proposed budget offers tons more programs that may have to be cut in the following year.

Councilor Hemmann said that maybe some of the programs can have a nominal fee attached.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that this qualitative discussion shouldn't be done on the fly during the budget session. The Town Council needs to be careful and recognize that it has asked every Department to make cuts. Adding the Library staff will create large increases in the next budget. The Library is on the list for qualitative adjustments next year and the Town Council may end up saying that it needs to make a 15 percent cut. He said that he would rather say that the Town Council will give you 5 percent now and it has to hold it the following year. The Library Board is camouflaging the large increase.

At 10:40 p.m., Councilor Console ended his teleconference call.

Councilor Kotkin withdrew his motion and Councilor Casio withdrew his second.

Councilor Kotkin moved "**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO REDUCE ACCOUNT T 1810 5001 FOR THE PART-TIME PARK AND RECREATION STAFF BY \$2,500**" seconded by Deputy Mayor Montinieri.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Kotkin asked why the Camp Sunrise account went from \$4,200 to \$2,700 and back up to \$4,200.

Bonnie Therrien said that it is set by the camp.

Councilor Roberts said that the bands for the Memorial Day Parade keep going up in their fees. This may have to be looked at next year.

Councilor Kotkin said that the water charge on page 197 shows that there either was something wrong or there is something wrong. There is no way the water bill should jump 300 percent in 3 years.

Bonnie Therrien said that a bill came in outrageously high and the Department and MDC have worked together, but can't found out what is wrong.

Councilor Kotkin said that he doesn't want to cut the budget, but he would like to know what is causing this increase.

Bonnie Therrien said that she will see if there is anything conclusive to report for Monday.

Councilor Cascio moved "**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO CUT \$ 7,000 FROM ACCOUNT T185822 5436 FOR WATER FOUNTAIN**" seconded by Councilor Hemmann.

Councilor Cascio said that he makes this motion, because there is no guarantee that this water fountain won't be damaged, too.

Bonnie Therrien said that this is a different type of water fountain.

RaeAnn Palmer said that it also includes a separate water connection. Now if the fountain breaks, the water has to be shut off to the entire area.

Councilor Cascio asked if this was a priority.

Bonnie Therrien said that a lot of the requests for this water fountain came from the bocce players.

Councilor Forrest said that it is important to have water at the parks. He said that there was the issue of wasting water when the fountain was broken, too. He said that he thinks it is an appropriate expense.

Councilor Cascio said that he thinks that it is not an appropriate expense.

Councilor Hemmann agreed.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that the Town is moving the park forward into the next phase, and having water down there is very important.

Councilor Roberts said that she thought the big issue was the wasting of water when the fountain was broken.

Councilor Cascio and Hemmann voted AYE. Councilors Forrest, Kotkin, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Montinieri, and Chairperson Adil voted NAY. The motion failed 2-5-0.

Councilor Roberts moved **"TO CONTINUE THE MEETING PAST 11:00 P.M."** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Kotkin moved **"BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO ELIMINATE THE \$200,000 INTEREST PAYMENT IN ACCOUNT T1920 5766 908"** seconded by Deputy Mayor Montinieri.

Councilor Kotkin said that if the Town doesn't sell bonds until late this year or early next year, the Town won't incur any interest payments until the next fiscal year. In that year, the debt services requirements go down by about \$250,000. He said that he thinks the Town's cash reserves are in fine shape. There is only \$3,000,000 or \$4,000,000 in possible bondable expenses unless there is any future land acquisition. There will be absolutely no impact on the Town's credit worthiness.

Bonnie Therrien said that after speaking with the bank representatives, she is comfortable with this.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Bonnie Therrien said that on page 202, the Town Council could change the deductible amount for insurance. She said that on page 208, there is a list of vehicles in the capital budget. On page 209, there are two lease purchase vehicles. She said that the deal with the airbags is that the Fire Chief would rather see, in the Capital budget the key system for \$30,000. He would rather give up the airbags for \$15,000. The Town Council would still have to add \$15,000. If the Town Council is interested in purchasing a dump truck from the Contingency Account, she would have to see how the rest of the year turns out.

Councilor Roberts moved **"BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO CUT \$15,000 FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT LOW LIFT PRESS AIRBAGS"** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Chairperson Adil said that this motion is to move forward on one of the Chief's priorities.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri said that it will be a wash because the Chief said that he can replace 1/2 of the locks this year at a cost of \$15,000.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Roberts said that she would like to add a dump truck back in. As of the other night, there was \$151,000 in the Contingency Account.

Bonnie Therrien said that she would like to wait until the end of the year and add the dump trucks to the list of items that need to be purchased, too.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **"BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO ADD \$15,000 FOR THE FIRE HOUSE KEY SYSTEM"** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Kotkin moved **"BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO ADD \$100,000 TO HAVE ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL AND HANMER RENOVATION TO THE BUDGET"** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Kotkin said on page 213, the Mill Woods Little League was cut from \$100,000 to \$75,000 and there are no bids in. There is \$39,000 in the Mill Woods escrow account.

Bonnie Therrien said that the Park and Recreation Director is using that as one of her revenue sources.

Councilor Kotkin said that this project is going to bid with several options. They have enough money for the base bid. With the \$39,000 and the \$700,000 from the State, and the \$50,000 that was put in this past budget year, another \$25,000 can probably be taken from this number. He said that it is a roll of the dice with the bids. He said that the Town may be able to get some fund raising for the project, too.

Councilor Kotkin moved **"BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO REDUCE THE MILL WOODS LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD ACCOUNT BY \$25,000"** seconded by Deputy Mayor Montinieri.

Councilor Cascio said that originally they requested \$100,000. The Town Manager reduced it to \$75,000 and now it will be reduced again to \$50,000.

Bonnie Therrien said that the Town doesn't know the prices yet. The first bid came in too high.

Councilor Kotkin said that there is the \$39,000 in the escrow account. That money is from the revenue of the use of the fields.

Councilor Forrest said that if the bids came in too high the first time, why lower the funding?

Councilor Kotkin said that the bids didn't come in too badly. It was just that the low bid company hadn't done this work before.

Chairperson Adil said that if the bids come in too high, the group may have to do some more fundraising. Other groups in Town have been asked to do the same

Councilor Kotkin said that if there isn't enough money, something like the dug outs can be replaced next year. The fields and underground piping will be done.

Councilor Roberts said that the Town always does projects this way.

Councilor Cascio asked if the Park and Recreation Director would be okay with this cut.

Bonnie Therrien said that she would probably not be alright with it.

Councilor Kotkin said that there is \$700,000 from the State, \$50,000 from this budget, and \$39,000 in the escrow

account. If the Town Council approves this \$50,000, it will be more than \$800,000.

Chairperson Adil said that the basic things can be done with this money.

Councilors Kotkin, Deputy Mayor Montinieri, and Chairperson Adil voted AYE. Councilor Cascio, Forrest, Hemmann, and Roberts voted NAY. The motion failed 3-4-0.

Chairperson Adil said that Councilor Walsh asked that the Town Council consider adding funding to the 375th Anniversary Committee.

Councilor Roberts moved **"BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO ADD \$10,000 TO THE 375TH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE"** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Chairperson Adil said that the Committee needs to know how much money the Town is allocating so that it can start to fundraise to reach its \$50,000 goal.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **"BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO ADD \$ 8,000 TO THE REVENUE ACCOUNT (T 1525-45825) FOR THE INCREASE IN DIAL-A-RIDE FEES"** seconded by Councilor Cascio.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Councilor Roberts asked for an update on where the budget stands.

Lisa Hancock said that the budget is at a mill rate of 34.85, which is a 1.91 mill increase. The overall increase in spending is 5.24%. 2.10% for the Town, debt and capital and 7.63% for the Board of Education. For the average household, the increase would be a 5.8% increase.

Councilor Cascio asked what the average assessment was on a house.

Lisa Hancock said that she has \$156,188 for the average assessment.

Bonnie Therrien said that the tax increase amount seems too high.

The Town Council took a five minute break to allow the Finance Director to run the numbers.

Lisa Hancock said that the totals are \$437,160 for the cuts and the add backs are \$212,701.

RaeAnn Palmer said that when you add those numbers into the spreadsheet, it drops the mill rate. The mill rate becomes 34.85, a 5.24% increase.

Bonnie Therrien said that the economy is bad right now and it is a gamble to increase the tax collection rate as Chairperson Adil has suggested. The tax increase is at 5.8% now. It was at 6.15%. The budget message and Public Hearing was wrong.

Lisa Hancock said that she thought what was being referred to in the budget message was the increase in the spending.

Councilor Kotkin said that the 5.53% was the expenditure increase. Because the Town is getting less revenue, then the tax increase is higher because of the lost revenue sources.

Chairperson Adil asked what the additional revenue would be with a 99% tax collection rate, instead of 98.6%.

Lisa Hancock said that it would be a 5.38% increase in taxes.

Councilor Kotkin said that he is comfortable with this, because the Town is doing a great job with it. There are more tools being used than before. The risk is that there aren't as many back taxes to collect and homeowners may fall behind in paying taxes.

Lisa Hancock said that change, brings the mill rate to 34.71.

Chairperson Adil asked what happens at a 99.2% collection rate.

Bonnie Therrien said that was too high.

Councilor Cascio asked if the Town Manager was comfortable with this.

Bonnie Therrien said that it is a gamble. In the worse case scenario, the Town will have to pay back money to CRRRA, the Conveyance Tax won't be extended in a Legislative Special Session, and the tax rate isn't collected. The Town will be in trouble. The Town would then have to have a budget freeze.

Lisa Hancock said that \$254,719 cut is needed to get under a 5.0% increase.

Councilor Cascio said that nothing is final yet. The Town Council needs to take some time to think about these things. The Town Council is meeting again on Monday.

Bonnie Therrien asked where the Town Council wants to be. She said that it is not possible to get below 5% though.

Councilor Cascio asked if the Board of Education could look at its budget again.

Councilor Kotkin moved "**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER APRIL 21, 2008 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS: TO SET THE TAX COLLECTION RATE AT 99.0 PERCENT**" seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Lisa Hancock said that the increase is 5.38%, with a mill rate of 34.71.

Bonnie Therrien said that she will e-mail the Town Councilors all of these numbers tomorrow.

Councilor Cascio said that his other question was about transportation fees for the schools.

Bonnie Therrien said that the Town is mandated to provide transportation by the State. Other States do not mandate this.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11:45 p.m., Councilor Roberts moved "**TO ADJOURN TO THE BUDGET WORKSHOP SESSION ON MONDAY, MAY 12, 2008 AT 5:00 P.M. AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER**" seconded by Councilor Cascio.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Dolores Sassano
Town Clerk

Approved by vote of Council June 2, 2008