



PALMER TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, June 17, 2009 @ 7:00 PM
Town Council Meeting Room, Palmer Town Building
Minutes

1. Called to order at 1906
2. Roll Call:
 - a. Present: Mr. Magiera, Mr. Burns, Mr. Backus, Mr. Hebert, Mr. Williams, Ms. Barry, Mr. Dinuovo, Mr. Remillard, Mr. Streeter, Guest Ms. Salzmann
 - b. Absent: Mr. Duguay
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Consent of the Agenda Order: Ms. Barry moved to strike item 5b; seconded by Mr. Dinuovo, vote was unanimous to strike item.
5. Agenda Items:
 - a. Resolution 2009-41: Transfer Funds from Police Part Time Officers to Police Contract and Expenses
 - i. Mr. Hebert moved, Mr. Backus seconded motion to transfer funds
 - ii. Discussion: Mr. Streeter recapped resolution
 - iii. Question about Police academy fees for Mr. McNally and guarantees of service in the future
 - iv. Discussion about putting money into repairs of aging equipment: when is old too old? What were total costs for repair to radio equipment? Can we have those figures next meeting?
 - v. Vote was 8-0-0 to transfer funds
 - b. Resolution 2009-42: Re-authorize 53E1/2 Revolving Accounts stricken by motion
 - c. Discussion: FY 2010 Budget:
 - i. Ms. Barry read list of cuts that were made from school budget
 - ii. Budget under discussion is fluid document; please be available next Monday and next Wednesday as we don't know yet which meetings we will need
 - iii. Mr. Dinuovo would like to see expenditures for FY 08 and 09 at next meeting to check expenditure patterns
 - iv. P. 3- \$10,000 line item new to this budget for adding part time health agent
 1. Figure is based on number of inspections and follow-up of complaints but concrete information will be available at next meeting
 2. Are we charging adequate fees for these services? Mr. Streeter is researching fee levels
 3. Current staffing levels are not meeting level of inspections recommended by state
 4. Agent would be more thoroughly equipped to handle inspections than current staff
 5. Stipend \$500? For 2 people; info to follow

6. Board of Health will still be viable but won't do inspections or receive inspection stipends
7. Can anyone from the Board be promoted into Agent position? No one is qualified
- v. P. 4: Building inspector: What does he do when nobody's building?
 1. Intent is to have him cover zoning enforcement when he is not following up on building permits and inspections
 2. Does he enforce Tag Sale Bylaw? No, that is the Town Manager or his designee.
- vi. P. 5: Dept. of Public Services discussion:
 1. 12.7% telephone increase-What is that for?
 2. Item was under budgeted; item reflects resolution from Town Council to add additional funds
 3. How many phones are we paying for? All phones here and some cell phones for necessary personnel
- vii. Fuel account: is it over funded for FY 2010? We are locked in for next year; figures appear to be on line
- viii. P.6: Dept of Public Service:
 1. Computer Maintenance Services-not itemized any more; up 66% over 3 years without getting anything for it
 2. We need to begin replacing parts to lessen maintenance costs
 3. Cost is not just hardware but ongoing maintenance of network and systems
 4. Short term issues with the system are different than addressing contractual problems
 5. Munis and Vision systems should be doing own maintenance and services
 6. Mr. Streeter recommends this item in budget; we have consistently under funded IT infrastructure and we're trying to correct this problem
 7. As budget increases it doesn't appear that issues are being fixed
 8. Going this year from break-fix type of contract to proactive contract with inclusive services over this FY; provides maintenance and IT services to us rather than hourly fees to fix breakages
 9. There were significant issues over the past year
 10. In FY 2011 where will this number be? Trending down? Hardware replacement? As they see what we need we can use capital outlay to make best use of replacement equipment. Issues have been addressed:
 - a. Offsite backups
 - b. Offsite monitoring AV and Spyware
 - c. All OS are currently XP
 11. We have no plan in place yet; have not seen assessment of IT needs
 12. Please break down numbers for each service? Azaya doesn't break down numbers; they have no idea what budget will be. They have separate 6-month contract to bring things up to date. We have had no issues over the past 5 months
 13. Why are not maintenance costs lower with no issues?
 14. We need a game plan from Azaya, and we need to move on from here.
 15. This service plan is a tight contract and is reasonable cost for this
- ix. P.7: Position being eliminated for Conservation Agent, 10 hours per week
 1. Can be absorbed according to Conservation Commission
 2. Who will be customer contact during the day when members are at work? Issue needs to be addressed; might be absorbed in Planning dept. or by answering machine
- x. P. 8: Town Report is still done on line? Yes, we no longer send it to be printed
 1. Recreation Director funding and position discussed
 2. Position is in charter and should be budgeted

3. Revenue generating position; kids and parents pay fees and fees should almost pay to fund position
 4. Position could partially be compensated through the coffers of the athletic groups.
 5. Also makes scheduling and coordination easier
 6. Right person in place can make money for town
 7. We have let a lot of money fall through by not funding this position
 8. This item has to be looked at again before final budget
 9. We have no job description as yet but ideas from Wilbraham and others
 10. Charter idea was originally to support town-wide year round recreational activities
 11. Mr. Burns moved to fund director position at salary of \$18,000 and \$2,000 in expenses; Mr. Dinuovo seconded motion
 12. Ms. Barry: Are our priorities right? We are starting next year in the hole \$800,000 plus. This has got to stop at some point
 13. Mr. Backus: We can not afford this at this time
 14. Mr. Magiera: this is a position that could fund itself; to continually ignore charter is bad precedent and tough choice
 15. Charter didn't take into account affordability
 16. We have no support in town for overrides; it's not easy doing all this stuff
 17. How do we convince town that these increases are necessary?
 18. Can't forget debt exclusion for \$7 million
 19. Vote: 6-2-0 with Mr. Backus and Ms. Barry opposed; motion carried to fund director position
- xi. P.9: Council on Aging update from Mr. Streeter
 - xii. P. 11: Memorial Day- What will change for next May? Possibly refreshments may have to be curtailed unless donated; maybe honoraria cut for bands; Community Policing is used for security
 - xiii. P. 12: replaced some custodial services; was originally budgeted for 9 months. Electricity line item was left as is during construction
 - xiv. P. 13: Palmer Town Building-Can we hire a person for cleaning instead of outsourcing a contract? Additional insurance and retirement costs would make contract more efficient; contract covers services to whole bldg including cells, etc.
 - xv. P.14:
 1. Remove salaries for Planning board; people were laid off today
 2. Reducing hours of Planning clerk affect Planning board? Reserved for executive session
 - xvi. P/ 16: Town Council salaries will be removed
 1. Number reflects only 6 months salary
 2. Can we receive copies of town audit? Yes, when they come in
 - xvii. P. 18: Public Finance-we shouldn't be paying for education-signed document between previous manager to cover education for accountant; this is final payment and final decision on position is up to current manager
 1. Education and offer of position are two different issues; also guarantee of years of service pursuant to contract
 2. Mr. Streeter will review contract and report
 - xviii. P. 19: Veterans Services: Tight budget. Re-verify number with Val Bernier
 - xix. Maps GIS System line item:
 1. One source updating program and map overlays are now available
 2. We don't have total expenditure for item if costs are laid to several different departments

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- xx. P. 20-Treasurer-Collector's Office
 - 1. Lockbox system explained by Mr. Streeter-bills mailed in go to a PO Box for processing into a file that updates our system and posts income to our accounts
 - 2. Office has been overwhelmed in the past doing posting by hand; should make office more efficient
 - 3. On line bill pay is ready to go; no cost
- xxi. P. 21: Police Dept: eliminated one cruiser; replaced 3 last year; maintenance seems high since we have been replenishing fleet.
 - 1. Can we look at overtime budget line item and how does this apply? We bill overtime hours out to private duty time even within town departments
 - 2. Last year we made a point of tightly budgeting overtime; we still appear to be within budget but it will be close especially with community policing going away
 - 3. Have we reduced the number of part time people? Number reflects non-use of part time police to cover shifts; was budgeted but not used so was dropped
- xxii. P. 22:Planned retirements in Public Safety? None known
- xxiii. How many hours does dog officer work? Will find out
- xxiv. P. 23: Park expenses: can funding be used wherever needed?
 - 1. Overtime should be level funded instead of increased
 - 2. Sometimes maintenance is done on Saturdays or fields are prepped; we have told parties involved that fields will be maintained during the week
 - 3. Bargaining of job descriptions
- xxv. P. 25: WWTP-Salaries line items \$64,000 discovered and moved to separate line item in budget
 - 1. We had increased sewer fees
 - 2. Made some adjustments and reductions; adding line items pertaining to nitrogen reduction but still finding out what we need to do
- xxvi. On P. 27 budget has actually increased some due to reallocation of funds
 - 1. General expenses: Medical supplies: supplies needed to have on hand for emergencies due to handling and storing chemicals on site
 - 2. Have we resolved situation with Monson?
 - a. No, still working on the problem and discussing the new contract
 - b. This budget assumes they will pay \$240,000 owed
- xxvii. P. 28: Unclassified expenses
 - 1. Retirement board can't forgive remaining balance of retirement fund
 - 2. Recommend paying off remaining COLA reimbursement obligation in good faith over a number of years with no penalty
 - 3. Unemployment figures: \$377,000 from school board including health insurance
 - 4. Did we take into consideration reduction in hours for town employees in unemployment figures? Present number is high
- xxviii. P. 33: Projecting lottery receipts down significantly? Yes, now general Government line item
- xxix. Tried to rework budget without use of stabilization fund; auditor found item \$100,000 in local Medicare Reimbursement receipts of recurring revenue (Special Education funds) that should have been coming through town; when we reduced school budget we didn't take into account health insurance savings so we have been able to justify budget without using stabilization funds.
- xxx. Mr. Dinuovo tabled talk of using stabilization funding for school budget until next meeting; discussed Northampton's override for schools and police while protecting seniors from taxes
- xxxi. Mr. Streeter will verify Medicare reimbursement figures with Mr. Charko

- 1 xxxii. There may be additional funding resolutions before end of year to cover present budget
2 shortfalls
- 3 xxxiii. Allocate any additional funding toward snow removal shortfall to free up funding in next
4 FY budget
- 5 xxxiv. Discussed revising budgets and gathering last two FY expenses by next meeting
- 6 xxxv. Library figure at current funding level is figure used in certification formula next year;
7 Mr. Dinuovo will check out and report next week
- 8 xxxvi. Ms. Barry: we still have had no budget discussion
- 9 xxxvii. Ms. Salzmman: Please look hard at list Ms. Barry read at beginning of meeting
- 10 1. Please bring found money to schools
- 11 2. Converse is in last year of underperforming school; at this level state will step in
12 next year and restructure
- 13 3. This budget is disastrous for schools; huge layoffs and unreplaced teacher
14 retirements
- 15 4. We're trying desperately to keep doors open at this point
- 16 xxxviii. Mary Salzmman: Please call representatives about what is happening with schools; Town
17 is responsible to support education and we're not doing it. It is hugely disrespectful to
18 leave our educational system to others. Palmer is poor town; we have eliminated many
19 electives.
- 20 xxxix. Tuesday meeting 7 PM with more numbers from Mr. Streeter; some councilors are
21 unavailable next week
- 22 xl. School union meeting discussion about wage concessions; vote was unanimous to meet
23 when numbers are final to further discuss savings and concessions to offer to the town
- 24 xli. Discussion of town, teacher, taxpayer responsibility and sacrifices involved in meeting
25 those responsibilities
- 26 6. Mr. Burns moved to adjourn into executive session and adjourn there from at 2133, Mr. Dinuovo
27 seconded and roll call vote found all councilors voting to adjourn into executive session.
- 28 7. Executive Session per Chapter 39, Sec. 23B(3)
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30 Respectfully submitted by

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33 Ramon M. Dole
34 Recording Secretary