

Meeting Minutes
Town of Montville Town Council – Public Hearing – Wednesday, April 21, 2010
Council Chambers – 7:00 p.m.

Town of Montville Town Council Notice of Budget Hearing

Notice is hereby given that a Public Hearing will be held at Town Hall Council Chambers, 310 Norwich New London Turnpike, Uncasville, Connecticut on April 21, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. on the Board of Education budget on April 22, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. on the General Government budget of the Town of Montville for the fiscal year from July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011.

1. **Call to Order**

Chairperson Jacobson called the Public Hearing to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

3. **Roll Call**

Present were Councilors Beetham, Buebendorf, Caron, Hillman, Jacobson, McFee, and Murphy. Absent was Councilor Buebendorf. Also present was Mayor Jaskiewicz and Superintendent of Schools Pamela W. Aubin.

3. **Board of Education 2010-2011 Budget Public Hearing**

Pamela W. Aubin, Superintendent of Schools gave a power point presentation regarding the 2010-2011 budget request. She discussed the many awards efforts put forth by the teachers and staff at all of the schools. She outlined the district's goals and successes over the past years and stated the district officials are aware of the current economic situation and are only asking for enough money to maintain the district's current programs and services. She discussed the Montville Public Schools Mission Statement, stating the Board of Education is in partnership with the community and will provide each student with the opportunity to receive the highest quality education in a safe and secure environment. In recognizing the diversity of the community which will provide each student with the opportunity to develop to his or her maximum potential, gain the necessary skills to become a lifelong learner, develop critical and creative thinking and gain an awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity and similarity, while becoming a self-fulfilling, responsible and contributing member of an ever changing global society. Ms. Aubin discussed the goals for the upcoming year and stated the budget is a reflection of a community's values and Montville residents want a quality education for their children with ongoing effort toward continuous improvement in a cost effective manner. She discussed budget priorities and guidelines and budget constraints. She stated she is proud of the staff, the programs and the return in investment in the curriculum and programs and is very proud of the students who attend the schools. She discussed the past three budgets as they compare to the proposed budget this year. She stated the proposed increase is in the amount of 1.98%, or \$712,509 more than the current year. The proposed budget calls for the elimination of 1.5 school teaching positions, the three assistant principal positions at the elementary school and one maintenance position, but no staff members are expected to lose their jobs due in part to retirements in the upcoming year. She explained how the budget is allocated, stating the majority of the money is allotted for salaries, followed by benefits, supplies and equipment, tuition and miscellaneous other expenses. She stated the 1.98% increase will enable the Board of Education to maintain class size including the reduction of the teaching positions, no new positions will be added, current programs will be maintained, reductions in the cost of heating fuel will provide additional savings and savings due to moderate health insurance projections and reduction in the cost of liability insurance and in tuition will also provide additional savings. Ms. Aubin concluded by stating the budget presented is a reasonable and sensible request that will ensure the quality of education the citizens of Montville deserve.

Chairperson Jacobson invited members of the public to come forward to address the Council.

David Rowley, Chairperson of the Montville Board of Education - spoke in favor of approving the budget as presented. He stated they are only asking for what they need to maintain what they currently have, there is nothing extravagant or unnecessary in the budget request. He stated Montville has a spectacular school system as it is stated on the "Proud of our Schools" signs throughout the Town. He encouraged the Council to approve the 1.98% increase in the budget as requested.

Pam Aubin stated there were many people who worked very hard and did a lot of work to prepare this budget and she feels it is a fair and reasonable request.

Denise Banta, Chesterfield Road - stated funding the educational system is everyone's responsibility, not just those who have children in the school system. She stated everything comes full circle and some day she will not have children in the system but will still be responsible to pay for it.

Jeff Carver - discussed his disappointment with the school system, stating his son graduated from Montville with very little vocational abilities and was not prepared or educated enough to go out in the world and get

a job. He stated the school did not do a good job with his first son and now that he has another son in the system he is hoping their have been improvements in the learning curriculum.

Susan Waters - commended the school system for meeting the needs of students and said she would normally support the school budget but times are tough right now and people are struggling. She suggested the Town look into ways to cut back just as residents are being forced to do in these tough economic times. She offered to help to look into ways to reduce the budget further.

Rhona Clark, - spoke in favor of approving the Board of Education budget with the 1.98% increase. She stated she understands the needs of the school system and stated the proposed budget does not include any fluff or unnecessary expenses. She encouraged the Council to approve the budget as it was submitted.

Joel Farrier - stated he does not live in town but is a teacher in the Montville School system. He believes in funding the schools and understands the financial situations people are in these days. He stated this years budget is a "bare bones" budget and encouraged the Council to approve it without cuts. He stated the best cure for fixing the economy is to invest in education.

Carrie Baxter, a member of the Board of Education - discussed her role as a voice of the people. She stated she grew up in the Montville School system and went on to get a Masters degree in education. She has five children in the system and is very proud of all the teachers and staff that work there. She stated she is proud to be a resident of Montville and proud her children are receiving a quality education. She encouraged the Council to approve the budget as requested and to continue to give the children of Montville the quality of education they deserve.

James Wood, a member of the Montville Board of Education - explained this is his eleventh budget process this year. He stated the budget is fair and objection. He understands the economy is difficult but encouraged the Council to approve the budget request of 1.98% and stated by giving the children a quality education today will ensure these students will become the leaders of tomorrow.

Angela Surpedy - spoke in favor of approving the budget as requested, stating she has a special needs child in the Montville School system that is receiving a great education and is having a fabulous year because of the teachers and staff in the school system. She encouraged the Council to support the budget and stated she is very proud of each and every staff member in the schools.

Robert Mitchell, a member of the Board of Education - encouraged the Council to approve the budget as proposed and stated there were many people who worked very hard and did a great job preparing a fair budget.

Tracy Whitfield, a teacher in the Montville School system - stated she has been teaching for eleven years and has a child in the school system. She stated she loves working in the schools and is proud to be a part of the children's education. She spoke in favor of supporting the budget and is happy her son has the opportunity to receive such a great education.

Chairperson Jacobson asked three times if there was anyone who would like to address the Council regarding the Board of Education proposed 2010-2011 budget request.

4. **Remarks from the Councilors**

Councilor Murphy stated there will be budget hearings scheduled over the next week and encouraged members of the public to attend. He stated the Council will listen to what the Mayor has to say and will discuss proposed cuts along the way.

Councilor Caron did not comment.

Councilor Beetham inquired regarding State funding and if it is guaranteed this year. He was assured by Ms. Aubin that the funding would be received this year although it has not been documented or received to date. He commended Ms. Aubin for a great presentation and stated times are economically tough for everyone and stated the Board of Education will be very lucky if they are granted the full 1.98% increase they are asking for. He hopes to come to a compromise both sides can live with.

Councilor Hillman inquired if Ms. Aubin anticipates any mandates that may affect the budget this year. She discussed possible seatbelt mandates, special education and in school suspension laws. She stated she is very pleased with the presentation given by Ms. Aubin.

Councilor Jacobson commended the Board of Education, the district staff and the Superintendent of Schools for all their hard work and dedication to the schools. She stated the investment is an appropriate word to use when speaking with regards to the education of the towns children.

5. **Remarks from the Mayor**

Mayor Jaskiewicz stated he values education and has proposed cuts to the 2010-2011 budget because of the economic hard times everyone is experiencing and he predicts the upcoming years are going to get tougher. He stated the taxpayers elected him as their Mayor and it is his job to make the tough decisions in the best

interest of the Town. He thanked everyone for coming out to express their concerns and thanked everyone for their professionalism in expressing their points of view.

6. **Adjournment**

Councilor Jacobson closed the Public Hearing at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Audrey Ulmer, Recording Secretary for the Town of Montville.