

**Town of Montville Finance Committee
Special Meeting Minutes of Thursday, June 3, 2010
Town Hall – Council Chambers – 6:00 p.m.**

1. **Call to Order**

Chairman Murphy called the Special Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

3. **Remarks from the Public**

Chairman Murphy asked three times if there was anyone who would like to come forward to address the Committee.

4. **Discussion Regarding the Proposed 2010-2011 Budget**

Chairman Murphy explained the Committee met on June 2, 2010 and it was the consensus of the Committee at this meeting to request the department heads attend this meeting in order to discuss the budgets from the Planning & Zoning Department, Building Department, Information Technology, and Public Works Department.

Chairman Murphy invited Planning Director, Marcia Vlaun to come forward to discuss the amended land use budget with the Committee. Ms. Vlaun indicated she has amended her budget to reflect a zero percent increase at the request of the Town Council. She stated she has cut back as far as she can and ultimately decided to eliminate \$7000 from Consulting Services, explaining this is money she had earmarked for use toward a study for the purpose of recruiting business to move into town and she stated made the cut because she was asked to reduce her budget but her position is the town should be aggressively pursuing economic growth for the future. She explained if the Mayor would release the freeze on the money existing in this year's budget, combined with the \$7,000 requested for next year, she would have the money to cover the cost of the proposed study. She cut \$3000 from the advertising line item to make up the remainder of the money to bring the budget down to -4.77%. She discussed various options for saving the town money in the future including utilizing staff for in-house work when possible and closing the Fair Oaks School. She discussed her projected work load for the upcoming year, predicting approximately two hundred and fifty residential housing units and several proposed commercial buildings. Councilor Caron spoke in favor of restoring the \$7,000 to the land use budget, stating it is in the best interest of the town to promote economic growth. Chairman Murphy asked Ms. Vlaun to state the number of employees in her office and the function of each person.

It was the consensus of the Committee to direct Ms. Vlaun to restore the \$7,000 to the land use proposed budget and to submit a script reflecting all changes and amendments made to the budget to the Committee and Town Council for consideration.

William O'Neill, IT Manager discussed his proposed budget with the Committee. He stated he has abandoned his request for \$15,000 to fund a part time position although he could desperately use the help. He reviewed the details of his job and explained to the Committee a town of this size can justify a full time Information Technology position. He explained all of the increases to the budget are for things beyond his control, such as contractual obligations, internet connection fees, increased prices for products, software, licenses and services. Councilor Beetham stated he would like Mr. O'Neill to submit a budget with a 1% increase. Councilor Caron stated he is in favor of trimming the budget but not cutting so deep it hurts the department. A discussion was held regarding security issues

Motion made by Councilor Beetham, seconded by Councilor Caron to recommend Mr. O'Neill amend the Information Technology budget to reflect a 1% increase excluding salary. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 3-0, all in favor.

Donald Bourdeau, Public Works Director, discussed his proposed budget with the Committee, stating he has cut back as far as he can go and he is comfortable submitting the 2010-2011 budget at -3% less than last year's request. He explained any further cuts could be potentially detrimental to the town. He discussed the sand/salt budget and a computerized system that distributes the correct amount of product to the roads. He explained he is doing the best job he can do with the money that is available to him and he will continue to do so. Discussions were held regarding over time, fuel costs, building maintenance, cell phones, paving and equipment maintenance and rental.

Motion made by Councilor Beetham, seconded by Councilor Caron to make a favorable recommendation to the Town Council to approve the Public Works budget at submitted. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 3-0, all in favor, motion carried.

Lt. Bunnell and Sgt. Collins discussed the proposed 2010-2011 Public Safety budget with the Committee. Lt. Bunnell stated there have been no increases to commodities except for training, the thirteen percent increase is all salaries. He explained he has to purchase protective vests this year as well as various failing equipment and can not cut the budget back any further. He explained the department is short three officers. Councilor Beetham opposes the budget increase and stated overtime has doubled since last year. Sgt. Collins stated during economic hard times crime goes up and it is all the department can do to keep up with the domestic violence, burglaries and crimes that go on in town. Lt. Bunnell stated there were over 7000 calls that required investigation last year and over 15,000 incidents that required attention by a police officer. He stated the police department is open 24/7 and calls for help can not be ignored. Ms. Fafard explained the budget this year depicts a "true" budget of realistic costs and stated the over time line item has not been budgeted properly in past years. Councilor Caron and Mayor

Jaskiewicz stated they are not in favor of cutting back the budget and jeopardizing public safety to residents.

Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Murphy to forward the Public Safety budget to the Town Council with recommendation for approval as presented and to maintain the number of police officers at 23. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 2-1 (Beetham opposed)

Vern Vesey, Building Official reviewed his department's 2010-2011 budget with the Committee and explained it is a bare bones proposal and he is not sure he can run his department with the numbers proposed. He reviewed all the cuts made to the budget, discussed the functions of the office, the total number of employees and their job functions. He reviewed the numbers of permits issued, inspections performed, plan reviews, telephone time required, violations issued, blight officer responsibilities and proposed construction projections for the upcoming year. Councilor Beetham requested documentation regarding income generated from the Building Department for the past three years.

Councilor Beethan left the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Katherine Christopher, Human Resource Director, stated her line item falls under the Mayor's budget. She discussed her job description and things she has accomplished since she began work six months ago. She stated any town with over seventy five employees can justify a full time Human Resources position. She explained benefits to employees as well as management and how having a person on staff can save the town money when they do not have to consult an attorney for every issue. She discussed health care reform and how this will affect employees. Councilor Murphy requested documentation regarding the costs savings to the town and how this position benefits the town and its employees. He stated there are Councilors who are in favor of eliminating this position and this information could be helpful in justifying the position. He recommends Ms. Christopher attend the Town Council meeting in June to explain to them exactly what her job entails and the benefits of maintaining the position.

5. Discussion Regarding the 2011 Revaluation

Lucy Beit, Town Assessor, discussed the 2011 town wide revaluation with the Committee. She stated the town went out to bid for this service and four bids were opened on May 28, 2010 from companies interested in performing the revaluation. The companies were asked to bid on four options. Option A included performing the full revaluation with full inspections, listing and measurements of all properties including residential, commercial, industrial and exempt real estate, sales verification and the statistical analysis inherent in the modeling of the town in order to create the market value of all properties for mass appraisal purposes and to comply with State law. Options B, C and D were similar to Option A but with the Assessor's office taking on more of the inspection requirements with each option. The bids were competitive. She stated the

town wide revaluation is scheduled to take effect October 1, 2011. Ms. Fafard thanked Ms. Beit for offering to take on revaluation duties, stating her efforts are greatly appreciated and she admires the office dedication and generosity in offering their services for the good of the town. She stated the bids all came in much lower than anticipated for even greater savings.

6. Remarks from the Public

Jon Leonard, Chestnut Hill Road, Uncasville, is not in favor of keeping the Human Resource position, stating the position does not generate savings to the town. He suggested the town take the School Resource Officer out of the school and put him back on duty in the police force to save money and he discussed the Public Works line item for cell phones, stating they do not need town issued cell phones because most of the employees have their own cell phones and do not use the town phones anyway.

Councilor Hillman made suggestions for further cuts to the budget including the School Building Commission office supplies, cell phones and a type o in the Public Works budget for guard rails should be \$18,000, not \$1,800.

Councilor Buebendorf thanked all of the department heads for attending the meeting and submitting a zero percent increase where possible, they put in a great effort by doing so. She spoke in favor of keeping the Information Technology position in the budget, stating the town knew there were costs associated with this position going into it and this position is vital for security of the Town. She stated if you cut too much out of the budgets the town will pay in the long run when everything catches up. She discussed cutting the town stipen paid to the Town Councilors each year and it was the consensus of the Councilors to look into the possibility of doing so.

Mayor Jaskiewicz spoke in favor of keeping the Human Resource Director position in the town, stating any town with over seventy five employees can justify the position. He stated this person is an advocate for the employees and he hopes the Town Council can justify the position.

7. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Murphy to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 2-0, all in favor, motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Audrey Ulmer, Recording Secretary for the Town of Montville