

MINUTES OF SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING - MONDAY, MAY 8, 1995

FOR FISCAL YEAR 1995/1996

23RD BOARD OF REPRESENTATIVES

STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT

A Special Meeting of the 23rd Board of Representatives of the City of Stamford, Connecticut was held on Monday, May 8, 1995, pursuant to a "Call" issued by President Mary Lou Rinaldi. The Meeting was held in the Legislative Chambers of the Board of Representatives, Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard, Stamford, Connecticut. The "Call" was for 8:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 p.m. by President Mary Lou Rinaldi after both political parties had met in Caucus.

The "Call" of the Special Meeting was read by President Mary Lou Rinaldi.

"I, Mary Lou Rinaldi, President of the 23rd Board of Representatives of the City of Stamford, Connecticut, and pursuant to Section 2-10-4 of the Stamford Charter, hereby call a Special Meeting of said Board of Representatives to consider and act upon the Operating and Capital budgets for the fiscal year 1995/1996 as transmitted by the Board of Finance on April 12, 1995, pursuant to provisions of Section 8-30-3 of the Stamford Charter."

INVOCATION was given by Representative Nicholas Pavia, R-10.

"Let us pray. Dear Lord, You know us better than we know ourselves, so, help us tonight as we deliberate on the budget for the future of everyone concerned. Dear Lord, let us do Your will in everything we do and say, and treat each other with respect and love. Amen."

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG was led by President Mary Lou Rinaldi.

ROLL CALL was taken by Clerk Annie M. Summerville. There were 35 members present and five absent. Absent were John R. Zelinsky, Jr. (excused), William Doyle, Kit Martinsen, David Scalzi and Mildred Perillo.

The Chair declared a quorum.

MACHINE TEST VOTE was taken by President Rinaldi. The machine was in good working order.

PRESIDENT RINALDI reviewed the process. She said that the Chair of the Fiscal Committee will make a motion to approve the operating and the capital projects budget as amended by the Fiscal Committee. She said that there will be a continuous rolling motion; the budget will then be presented, page by page, department by department with the Chair of Fiscal reading the reductions proposed by the Committee. She said that if any members would like to make further reductions, they can make motions from the Floor; if the Board chooses to take no action, we will go on to the next page, and that will be done until the budget is finished; once a page is turned, we will not go back to discuss the items on the page.

BUDGET PRESENTATION

FISCAL COMMITTEE - Carmen Domonkos, Chairwoman

REP. DeLUCA said that he realized that the Fiscal Committee and many of his colleagues spent numerous hours reviewing the budget. He said that considering this and the lean budget, he Moved to accept the budget as transmitted by the Board of Finance. Seconded.

Rep. DeLuca said that looking at the cuts made by the Fiscal Committee, he feels there are not enough votes to eliminate the \$600,000 for backyard pickup, therefore, the other two cuts recommended by the Committee would equate to roughly \$246,000. He said that the \$246,000 would not have the slightest impact whatsoever on the mill rate. He recommended that the operating and capital budget as transmitted by the Board of Finance be approved.

REP. DOMONKOS said that she thought Rep. DeLuca's idea was a good one. She said that she wished Rep. DeLuca had proposed his idea before her Committee had done so much work on the budget.

Rep. Domonkos said that the Committee found the budget to be very lean. She said that if any substantial cuts are to be made, they will be to services as there are very few places where cuts can be made. Rep. Domonkos stated that if it is decided not to eliminate backyard garbage pickup, and it appears from comments that that may be the case, that was a significant cut. She said that she would support Rep. DeLuca's motion.

PRESIDENT RINALDI asked the Parliamentarian if there was anything in the Charter that prohibits the Board from approving the budget as suggested or must the Board go page by page?

PARLIAMENTARIAN HOGAN said that there is nothing in the Charter that prevents the Board from taking the action except that the action must be taken separately on the operating budget and on the capital budget.

PRESIDENT RINALDI asked if Rep. Sherer agreed?

REP. DeLUCA said that a similar motion was made approximately 10 years ago and there was no backlash or repercussion.

REP. BOCCUZZI said that he had no opposition to Rep. DeLuca's motion but the Fiscal Committee made three specific cuts and those cuts should be considered separately. He said that his suggestion is to amend the motion to accept the budget as presented by the Board of Finance with the exception of the three cuts recommended by the Fiscal Committee. He said that the Board should hear why the Committee made these recommendations.

REP. SUMMERVILLE said that years ago, when the motion to accept the budget as transmitted was made, the Fiscal Committee gave a report and after Fiscal's report, a motion was made to accept.

REP. SHERER said that he agreed with Parliamentarian Hogan and that there was no prohibition against voting in its entirety to approve as well as taking certain items. He said that the items recommended by Fiscal can be discussed and then a motion can be made to approve everything else.

REP. SUMMERVILLE withdrew her motion to Second Rep. DeLuca's motion.

REP. DeLUCA withdrew his motion.

REP. DOMONKOS requested that the following be made part of the record: The Committee held eight meetings and most of the Fiscal members were present. The last meeting was held on Saturday, May 6, 1995 at 9:00 a.m. Members present were Gloria DePina, John Hogan, William Joram, Ralph Loglisci, Elaine Mitchell, Maria Nakian, Nick Pavia, Ronald Sabia, Donald Sherer, Carmen Domonkos; also, Annie Summerville, Frank Harrison and Dr. Daniel Cook. The Committee reviewed the 1995/96 budget and recommendations were made on reductions. The recommendations follow in Rep. Domonkos' report.

REP. DOMONKOS thanked the entire Fiscal Committee for their dedication and indepth involvement in the budget review process. She said that the process becomes more difficult each year as costs increase and revenues remain constant.

Rep. Domonkos said that Subcommittee Chairs, Maria Nakian, Elaine Mitchell, Donald Sherer, Ron Sabia, Gloria DePina and Ralph Loglisci deserve a big thanks for taking the responsibility of meeting with the major department heads and assisting in presenting their budgets. Rep. Domonkos said that Rep. Pia was present at most of the meetings and his interest was appreciated. She thanked Rep. Summerville for assisting in arrangements for Saturday's meeting and for participating in the deliberations. Rep. Domonkos thanked Anne Kachaluba and Marge Cocolis for their hardwork in assuring that all of the backup and paper work was in place for the meetings. Also, Rep. Domonkos thanked Frank Harrison, Budget Director, for attending the meetings and providing needed information, and department heads, their commissions and staff who deserve a lot of credit for remaining resilient through a grueling seven-month budget process. She said that hours of valuable staff time is spent on budget issues that could be better spent on delivering services and there has to be a better way.

Rep. Domonkos stated that there are several areas where the Committee has made comments and recommendations; they will be noted in a transmittal letter to the Mayor. She said that the entire budget is driven by salaries, almost all of the positions are union, and the Committee feels it is encumbent upon the Board to become involved in the position the city and the Board of Education takes in the negotiation of their labor contracts. She said that Mr. Grebey and the Board of Education have indicated they would welcome sitting down and reviewing the current contracts and the restrictions they operate under and have the Board's input before negotiations begin--waiting until the Board is required to vote and appropriate the money is too late.

Rep. Domonkos said that the Committee had the following comments:

Department 110, the Environmental Protection Board, the majority of the Committee felt that the cut of the environmental planner will seriously hinder the effectiveness of the department especially with the surge of new construction and development in the city.

Department 113, the Human Rights Commission, the full Committee felt that the position of investigator should be added back into the budget.

Department 230, the Law Department, the cut in the consultant line to pay for appraisers and consultants for the appeals cases before the department at this point, could potentially cost the city in tax revenue if we should lose the decisions in court for two large properties who are challenging their assessment.

Department 240 and 247, the MIS, the Board of Finance eliminated two positions to implement the Management Information System, one accounting and one technical, should be reconsidered and that possibly the position of assistant to the Finance Commissioner for MIS should be modified to fill one of those slots. The two positions are key to implementing the MIS function that has been committed.

Department 250, Assessor's Office, the elimination of the contracted services for KVS technical services will render the new appraisal system useless. The monthly software updates and technical assistance are vital to keeping the assessor's records current. Revaluation that the Board requires to be done more often will be impossible without the updates.

REP. DOMONKOS said that the proposed cuts recommended by the Committee are as follows:

Department 207 Economic Development, line 7901, proposed cut of \$30,878 for new position of administrative assistant. The Committee felt that there should be administrative support provided either by the Mayor's office or other departments within the city to provide the service that the Economic Development department indicated they needed. The administrative assistant was added to be the office person to answer phones and to provide information to potential companies calling the office. The Committee felt the service is needed and should be provided but there should be more creative planning within the city to provide this service through other departments.

Department 350 Division of Collection, line 7905 budget reduction, \$600,000. The Committee did not have a burning desire to eliminate backyard pickup but felt the citizens of the community have been hearing political people talk about this for several years and no one has had the courage to bring the subject up. The Committee felt it should come before the Board to have the Board decide about these services. Going through the budget, every line except salaries was either the same or less than last year's. If the Board feels there is a need to cut a service, it should prioritize and any significant saving in the budget would be backyard pickup.

Department 351 Land fill and refuse removal, line 5522 garbage haulaway bypass, reduce the line by \$215,000. The projection provided to the Committee by the Public Works Department when the tipping fee was considered was a projected total of 96,000 tons a year to be hauled away. The budget projection projected over 99,000; the department today indicated the tonnage coming into the transfer station has been decreasing. The Committee felt it would be prudent to cut the line by \$215,000.

REP. DOMONKOS said that above are the Committee's proposals for cuts.

REP. DeLUCA said that he recognizes the laborious task done by the Committee in reviewing the budget. He said that backyard pickup does not have to be eliminated and the other \$246,000 would not be noticed as far as the mill rate is concerned.

Rep. DeLuca Moved to accept the operating budget of \$268,066,550 as transmitted by the Board of Finance to the Board of Representatives. Seconded.

REP. MARTIN supported Rep. DeLuca's motion. He Moved to amend the motion by approving the Fiscal Committee's recommendation for the landfill and refuse removal cut of \$215,000. Rep. Martin's motion was Seconded.

REP. MARTIN said that it was clear that the tonnage was overbudgeted and the number was different than previously presented to the Board. He said removal is lighter and there will be a tipping fee increase July 1.

Rep. Martin said that on page 87 of the budget book, code 351, line 5522 haulaway garbage bypass, Fiscal recommended a \$215,000 cut leaving the line \$5,225,798.

PARLIAMENTARIAN HOGAN said that the motion should be to accept Rep. Martin's amendment and the section total changed to reflect the reduction.

PRESIDENT RINALDI called for a vote to cut \$215,000 from code 351.5522 haulaway garbage bypass. APPROVED by voice vote with no dissenting votes.

The bottom line now reads \$7,552,951, the 300 section total is \$26,731,317.

REP. DeLUCA Moved to approve an operating budget of \$267,851,550. Seconded.

PRESIDENT RINALDI proceeded to a vote to approve the \$267,851,550 operating budget. APPROVED by 33 yes and two no votes.

REP. DeLUCA said that he would yield to the Chairwoman of Fiscal to make the motion to approve the capital projects budget. Rep. DeLuca said that Chair Domonkos did a fantastic job and gave a good report.

REP. DOMONKOS said that the Committee made no recommendations for any cuts in the capital budget. She Moved for approval of the capital projects budget as transmitted by the Board of Finance totalling \$17,580,450. Seconded.

PRESIDENT RINALDI proceeded to a vote to approve \$17,580,450 for the capital budget. APPROVED by 33 yes and two no votes.

REP. DOMONKOS Moved for approval of the resolution adopting the operating and capital budget for fiscal year from July 1, 1995 to June 30, 1996 and exhibit A, authorizing bonding and declaration of official intent. She read the resolution which is attached to these Minutes. The operating budget is \$267,851,550 and the capital budget is \$17,580,450. Seconded.

PRESIDENT RINALDI called for a vote to approve the resolution and exhibit A. APPROVED by voice vote with two no votes, Reps. Maihock and Conti.

REP. LOGLISCI gave the Republican Caucus Report.

"This year's budget as presented to the Board of Representatives left no room for significant budget reductions which would translate to a mill rate cut. Therefore, the Republican Caucus of the 23rd Board of Representatives:

- "1. Stands united in its commitment to not approve any additional appropriations during fiscal year 1995-1996, barring truly unforeseen emergencies.
- "2. We urge the Board of Finance to reverse its policy of using the contingency fund as a means to restore budget cuts made by the Board of Finance and Board of Representatives.
- "3. Finally, we urge the Boards of Finance and Representatives to make all efforts possible to seek throughout the year all creative means to reduce the cost of operating Stamford's government.

REP. LOGLISCI (continuing)

"We respectfully request these views be made a part of the Board of Representatives transmittal for the budget year 1995/1996."


PRESIDENT RINALDI took the opportunity to thank the Fiscal Committee for all the hard work done over the past several weeks; their efforts and recommendations are respected and the quickness of this evening's proceedings should not shallow that in anyway.

ADJOURNMENT - Upon a motion duly made and Seconded and Approved by voice vote, the meeting was adjourned at 9:44 p.m.

Note: The budget as approved by the Board of Representatives is on file in the Town and City Clerk's office and the office of the Board of Representatives and can be review during regular business hours.

By Anne A. Kachaluba
Anne A. Kachaluba, Administrative Assistant
and Recording Secretary
23rd Board of Representatives

APPROVED:


Mary Lou T. Rinaldi, President
23rd Board of Representatives
MTR:ak
Enclosures